

# HOW TO SAVE THE PLANET

A guide by the  
European Methodist Youth Climate Team

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY TAKE MEANINGFUL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

AS THE EUROPEAN METHODIST YOUTH CLIMATE TEAM, IN THE RUN UP TO COP27, WE DEVELOPED THIS GUIDE TO HELP AND SUPPORT LAY PEOPLE AND LEADERS IN THEIR MINISTRY WHEN IT COMES TO ECOLOGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE, BY GIVING THEM SOME TIPS AND SUGGESTION TO OPEN THIS CONVERSATION AT CHURCH.



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### GIVE THANKS



Human life, animal life and plant life are gifts from God. When we feel our heart beat, the birds singing and seasons changing, we see how incredible life is in all its forms. Reminding ourselves that every living organism is a gift from God will make us thankful for everything - also in nature - that we have received. Give thanks to God!



### COME TOGETHER

Find people from near or far - friends, family or members of your church - who are also concerned about the climate crisis and talk about what you can do together. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing - with the help of God - that ever has.

### HOLD LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE

The climate crisis is a structural and systemic problem which can only be solved with long-term political solutions. Speaking truth to power is essential for the necessary green transition. Write debate posts or social media posts, participate in climate protests, vote for politicians who are advocating green policies. Let your politicians and leaders - also in the church - know that you are waiting for them to take action.

### SPEAK UP

Speak up and let people know about the harmful effects of human activity on the planet. Make sure that pastors and lay people in the church are raising their voices about the stewardship for our common home.



### CHANGE YOUR WAYS

The Bible tells us to turn away from our evil ways - and right now people and countries are hurting the planet and our environment in vicious ways. We must ask ourselves in our personal lives and in our churches: What can we do to turn around and create lifestyles that do not worsen the climate crisis?



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### READ AND REASON



Reading can, believe or not, be an effective tool for fighting climate change. Studying scientific reports, following the news or reading relevant books will give you the necessary ammunition in the form of knowledge and arguments when you are talking to people and could give you creative ideas on how to engage in your fight as a climate justice warrior. And more importantly: Read your Bible and discover the many ways in which Scriptures are encouraging and challenging us to care and minister for God's creation.

### EAT GREENS AND BEANS



It's not only your mom and doctor that would tell you to eat your greens and beans. Actually it's also a way of doing good for the environment! A large part of our personal carbon emissions are coming from our diet. Reducing your consumption of meat and dairy products and instead eating more vegetables, fruits and legumes could mean a significant drop in your own - or in your church's - carbon footprint.

### SHARE YOUR RESOURCES



Giving generously and having a sharing heart are good Christian values for human life - and it's good for the environment and nature as well. Sharing our possessions with friends, families, or strangers on a virtual platform, is a way to reduce our consumerist behavior and ensure that our stuff is not collecting dust but is actually being used. More shops and community houses are offering to share or borrow things for a brief period. Next time you want to dress up for a fancy party, explore the opportunity of renting a dress or a suit. Try as well not to throw things out that aren't garbage, instead give your food or shirts away to someone who could need it.

### KNOW YOU ARE A SINNER

Every single person on the planet has a carbon footprint. Although great differences in the magnitude of emissions between people, countries and churches exist, we must remember that we are all contributing to the effects of climate change. In terms of a green lifestyle, none of us is a complete saint. But the good news is that we can all do something! Knowing that we are all climate sinners joined together in a common fight towards a green transition should fill us with humility and patience towards others. Instead of shaming, try to encourage others to take steps in the right direction and let them know what they can do to help our environment.

### REDUCE AND REUSE

We live in a throwaway culture and consumer society where the lifespan of things and products are extremely short. But it doesn't have to be this way! Think of the ways that you, and your church, can reduce and reuse items, so that we care for and protect the scarce resources of the earth.

Things you can do:

- Change the energy source in your home and church building to a greener source.
- Take public transportation when traveling and avoid airplanes - or take the bike, that's even better!
- Do you really need to buy new clothes? You probably don't.
- Limit the use of water, paper, plastic and other everyday stuff where it's possible.
- Reuse or repair old things instead of buying new products.



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### HELP THE POOR

Climate changes are most affecting people who have the least. Around the world, the poorest are living in areas that are hit the hardest by droughts or floods. Tragically, these people are also the ones that are the least responsible for exacerbating the climate emergency and its consequences. Rich nations, and the most polluting ones, have a moral duty to provide the sufficient support and money to people and nations who are fighting hard to limit the damages on nature, land and habitation. This also holds true for individuals and churches: Give what you can to the poor.

### PLANT HOPE ... AND TREES

"She who plants a tree, plants hope". Giving up on trying to create a better and greener future is not an option for Christians. In Jesus Christ our hope is found! That means that we shouldn't get discouraged or anxious about the future - but find strength and hope in that He who was, is and is to come will bring a rescue operation for all of creation. We can all take part in that operation by for example planting trees. Not only are trees capable of binding harmful greenhouse gasses; they would also serve as shade for the future generations to rest in.



### CONSIDER THE HEAVENS, THE MOONS AND THE STARS

Be more like the psalmist who in wonder and awe writes: "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." In other words: Practice experiencing, gazing and dwelling on the splendor of God's creation. Plant herbs and grow carrots if you can, taste the sweetness of fruits, smell the flowers in the field and say hello to the singing bird in the forest. When we as the psalmist consider the heavens, the moon and the stars we appreciate how the earth and sky are mysteriously and amazingly created and we humbly realise that we are not the masters of the universe.



### PRAY

The Bible shows time and time again that the right response in a time of crisis is to call upon the God of the heavens and the earth for help. We must not give up on praying - but instead we must "pray without ceasing" that the goodness of the Holy Spirit will deliver us from our trouble. We believe that God is acting in the world and therefore we trust that our prayers are heard by our Father in heaven, who loves us and loves all of creation. Pray that God's will be done, justice will be served and that all, especially people in power, will be moved to take action on creating a green future for generations to come.

### LOVE

Human life is all about three kinds of relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth. From the Bible we know that these three relationships have been broken; inside of us and outwardly in nature. The job now, as for the first people on earth, is to recover the three relationships and to see ourselves in relation to all of creation. In the created world of God we must realise that none, not even the sparrow, is superfluous but is ingrained with purpose. Understand that creatures, by God, exist in dependence on each other, to complete each other and in service of each other. In other words a relationship of love.



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