

ST MARY'S

the church at Islington's heart

Taking action on climate change – what we can each do

We all need to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions for which we are responsible. Some of us will have a bigger carbon footprint than others, some of us have more scope to make significant changes depending on the resources and choices we have available to us. Dealing with climate change is the most urgent need; but we need to reduce our consumption of everything, to prevent more damage to the environment.

How to achieve large emissions reduction

1. Reduce, or better, stop flying. Never take domestic flights; in Europe use the train.
2. Give up the car: don't just change to an electric car because the carbon emissions in its manufacture are high. Walk, cycle or use public transport.
3. Improve your house's insulation, especially in the roof; double-glaze the windows – a cheap method is to tape clear polythene sheeting over each window in winter; install a more efficient boiler or, better, a heat pump.
4. Do your washing with cold water or at 30 degrees C; stop using a tumble drier.
5. Give up eating red meat and, if you can, other meats: a vegan diet (no dairy products) has the smallest carbon footprint,

followed by a vegetarian or pescatarian one (in which eating fish is allowed).

Making smaller reductions

There are many ways to make small reductions in your carbon footprint; you need to think about your lifestyle and saving small amounts of energy – which, over time, will add up to something useful. Some ideas:

1. In winter turn your thermostat down to 20 degrees C or less (unless you are very elderly) and wear extra clothes.
In summer, learn which windows and curtains to keep shut in hot weather, and which doors and windows to keep open, so that fans or air conditioning are not needed.
2. Reduce food waste by planning meals in advance, and by not throwing away food just because it has reached its use-by date – always check whether an item really has gone off.
3. Stop before opening your fridge or freezer and ask yourself what else you could put in or get out at the same time: the less you open the door, the less energy the appliance uses.
4. Above all, use and buy no more than you really need of anything – water, detergent, cooking oil or fat, paper, clothes and shoes, etc.

Whether you reduce your carbon emissions by small or large amounts, tell people about it – not to sing your own praises, but to encourage them to do the same, knowing that others are doing it and it will make a difference. It is easy to give and find such support in our church community, but this conversation is most important with neighbours away from the church.

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