

GREEN - Winter

PRAYER:

1. In daily personal prayer spend contemplative time outdoors or looking out a window praying with and for the EARTH.
2. Allow current issues, like climate change, mountaintop removal, Keystone XL Pipeline to be a spur to prayer.
3. When you are leader of corporate prayer include EARTH in spoken intentions/petitions; or design a weekly prayer for EARTHs needs.
4. Choose a location and time of day that can accommodate you or your group and which has immediate access to the outdoors (weather permitting).
5. If your gathering space is indoors, plan to include EARTH elements in the setting—especially, EARTH, Air, Fire and Water
6. In your ministry--within parish, school, family or volunteer activities raise up EARTH concerns when you are gathered for prayer.

MEALS:

1. As you say grace before meals (and after) include thanking not only God but the EARTH and all who till and care for her for the food you have.
2. Use a cloth napkin and remember why you do so. Be grateful for the trees saved by not using disposables.
3. Choose locally-grown - in-season foods whenever possible—shopping at Farmers' Markets, or buying through a CSA or buying club.
4. Cook at least one meal “from scratch” each week, taking the time to be creative, learn new recipes, expand your taste buds and support your health.
 - a. Try to eliminate processed foods
 - b. Use leftovers
 - c. Ask for locally produced food
5. Don't forget to use those items you canned in the fall
6. If you eat meals prepared by others—whether a food-service, in-house cafeteria, or even a local restaurant (NOT fast food) ask kitchen staff/manager to utilize fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables whenever possible. Be sure to compliment them when they do—and eat heartily!
7. Read labels—note country of origin, number of long-syllable chemical ingredients, whether it contains GMO ingredients (or proclaims that it **doesn't** since the US doesn't demand fair labeling), as well as looking for Organic items.
8. Don't buy products with excess packaging (eg. wrapped “single-serving” items) or use single use paper and plastic ware, etc. Avoid Styrofoam always. If you must use disposables, take the time to locate recycled and compostable products—then do it!
9. Never use hot, running water to defrost frozen foods. Plan ahead and place frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or use the microwave oven
10. Rinse vegetables and fruits in a sink or a pan filled with water instead of under running water.

ENERGY USE:

1. Set thermostat to a lower temperature during the day
2. Add moisture to the air using a humidifier (humid air feels warmer than dry air)
3. Wear more layers inside to keep the heat down
4. Be sure home insulation, seals around doors & windows, etc. are secure and well-functioning
5. Seal windows with plastic film found at a hardware store
6. Do an energy audit at the turn of the seasons. Check with your power company for tips and resources to get started
7. Get a programmable thermostat and set it so that heat is regulated for when you and your family are there and adjusted for when you are at work or in bed. When out of your home for a prolonged time—out of town or vacation—adjust your thermostat.
8. Always turn out lights when leaving a room—unless someone else is there.
 - a. Use compact fluorescent or the new LED lights
 - b. When replacing fixtures, look for “Energy Star” items which are rated to use less power. “Cheap” items are usually no bargain.
9. Shut doors to unoccupied rooms
10. Use drapes/blinds on windows to let in the sun in winter; also use to insulate windows in winter
11. When using electronic devices power off to conserve batteries when not in use; if items are plugged in, use a power strip or shut off completely when not in use—avoid “stand-by” mode that continues to use electricity.

WATER:

1. Water is an essential ingredient in most manufacturing operations. Especially for those 1 billion of us in the high-consumption class, *cutting down on our purchases of material things*--from clothes and shoes to paper and appliances--conserves and protects water supplies as effectively as installing a low-flush toilet does
2. Each time you use water remember what a sacred gift it is—and how millions throughout the world have no access to clean water. Be grateful and careful.
3. Instead of running water from the tap until it is cold enough to drink, keep a jug of water in your refrigerator
4. Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
5. Instead of buying bottled water, buy a metal or plastic water bottle, fill it from the tap and keep it in the refrigerator to use for outings.
6. Save water that you run—eg. While waiting for it to warm up—in a bucket and water plants or use for something else later
7. Insulate hot water pipes where possible to avoid long delays (and wasted water) while waiting for the water to “run hot.”
8. Install a low-flow faucet aerator, which can cut water use in half
9. Winterize outdoor spigots when temperatures dip below freezing to prevent pipes from leaking or bursting

10. Look for products bearing the EPA WaterSense Label for items that been certified to save 20% or more without sacrificing performance
11. Report (or fix if you can) broken pipes, open hydrants and errant sprinklers to the property owner or your water provider
12. Know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save water and prevent damage to your home

PERSONAL PRACTICES:

1. Make sure that your doors and windows have good seals on them
 - a. Make sure you have seamless caulking (around the edges) and good weather stripping (where the two pieces overlap each other).
 - b. Apply new silicon caulking around the window edges and replace any worn or flattened weather stripping on your windows
2. Winterize your bike for commutes and errands.
 - a. Use wide tires, wear layers and protect your hands and feet
 - b. Identify roads that will give you enough room to ride with snow on the sides
3. Use non-toxic deicers on your driveway and other areas or throw plain sand down on your driveway for the traction that you need.
4. Replace your old light bulbs with fluorescent ones that will last longer and are more energy efficient.
5. Keep your bird feeders full and have suet cubes and corn cobs available for the local critters
6. Prepare your car for winter:
 - a. Take it in for service that includes checking all fluid levels, replacing worn wipers, etc.
 - b. Put extra weighted items in your trunk or back of your car for added traction in snow
 - c. Carry bags of clay cat litter, sand or pieces of carpeting in your trunk to put under your tires for added traction if stuck in snow or on ice
 - d. Include food (granola bars, chocolate, trail mix, etc.) a blanket/sleeping bag, gloves/mittens, hat & scarf, flashlight with extra batteries in the event of emergencies
 - e. Keep a bottle of windshield washer fluid in your trunk
7. Be sure to have your charged cell phone with you when you are out and about
8. Dress for the weather, layers of clothing are good

HONORING EARTH:

1. Become an EARTH advocate by encouraging others to honor, celebrate and care for EARTH
2. Journal some experiences you've had with God's good EARTH
3. Try to spend some time outdoors on a regular basis to see and soak in the beauty of nature

ACTIVITIES:

1. Try activities for the family like snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, tobogganing and sledding.
2. With another person or persons try fishing through the ice on a frozen lake whose ice is at least 5” thick
3. With another person or persons go ice skating on a frozen lake whose ice is at least 5” thick or go to a local ice rink
4. Build a snow man/woman or create a snow sculpture
5. Go on a photo walk - take pictures of tracks in the snow, ice/snow on the trees
6. Shovel the walk of an elderly or disabled neighbor
7. Check on elderly or disabled neighbors. Perhaps, shop or prepare a meal for them
8. Drive around town to view the Christmas lights
9. Finish your outings with hot chocolate and cookies
10. Maybe start a new hobby or continue one you already have(e.g. knitting, crocheting, scrapbooking, quilting, fly tying, wood carving, whittling, etc.)

The above suggestions can be adjusted to your particular circumstances and needs. You probably have many other practices that you already do. Discuss with your local living group/family other ideas that you could do to raise awareness. Make changes in a step-at-a-time fashion—adding a new focus or practice each month. Be patient and persevering—the Planet is worth it. We are all in it for the long haul.

