

Green Christmas

For God so loved the world that
he gave his only Son that
whoever believes in Him shall not
perish but shall have eternal life.

(John 3:16)



Opening the Presence

If there is one time of year when our world groans under the pressure, then it is Christmas. From wrapping paper to wish-lists, trees made of plastic to transporting millions of tons of gifts, fairy lights to food waste, Christmas is the time of extravagance. So much food we cannot possibly eat, so many presents we did not need, maybe even want, more than £1 billion spent in the UK alone on Christmas cards, at a cost of 200,000 trees. Of course in the good ole days at least the world got a couple of days off when the roads went quiet, but nowadays even Christmas day the motorways are full. We have not even mentioned the airmiles travelled and not just visiting relatives, but your average proper Christmas dinner is calculated to have travelled a total of 260,000 miles to your table, unless you are sourcing everything locally.

Surely it is time to forget white and even blue Christmases and start dreaming of a greener Christmas. As we celebrate the birth of the infant Jesus, let us remember Paul's words from Romans 8:22

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved."



Let us pray:

Loving God, you came to us, Emmanuel, with us, in the most humblest of ways: an upcycled feeding trough for a bed and a shed full of animals for a nursery. Help us to see and celebrate the humility of your birth, not with extravagance, but let us look to the interests of others in our world and the interests of creation. Help us to follow your example, not grasping for yourself, but giving of yourself. Help us to

make this Christmas more meaningful by having less, more special by making a difference and more spiritual by leaving alone the material. Help us in Jesus' name. Amen.



Get Active:

- ✿ If you have a plastic tree make it last a lifetime. If you are replacing it get a real live sustainable one.
- ✿ Only buy the food you will eat and look at where it has travelled from. Buy locally sourced food.
- ✿ If you have to send cards, send E-Cards or a WhatsApp message telling your friends that you bought a cow with the money you saved and you've left it in Africa.
- ✿ Buy recycled gifts, charity shop gifts, or UNICEF or other charity gifts.



FIND OUT MORE AT - arochoa.org.uk/our-activities/living-lightly-take-action/





KINDNESS TREE

Use the Star in your box as a template to make stars for every member of your church. On each star write a pledge for a random act of environmental kindness. Hang them on a Christmas tree or a tree outside to make your pledges.

These could be things such as :

- Plant trees.
- Conserve water by turning off water when not in use, fixing leaks and installing water-saving devices.
- Economize on car use. Do as many things as possible in one trip. Keep your car tuned up.
 - Walk, ride a bike, car pool, take the bus or other public transportation.
 - Compost food products to use in gardens.
 - Turn off lights, heaters and fans when not in use.



Reindeer food

What you need:

wild bird seed

oats

leaves

What you do:

Mix the oats and the seed.

Using a star or snowflake shaped cutter, cut shapes out from fallen leaves and then mix them into the seed. On Christmas eve, sprinkle it around for Santa's reindeer to have as a tasty snack.

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

Sustainable Christmas Tips



Every pound we spend at Christmas is a vote for the world we want to create.

Let's make our festivities friendlier for our planet.

We could start with presents ...

quality not quantity - ever received a gift you don't want and will never use?

gift an experience - reduce demand for physical resources and bring people together

think about materials - keep sustainability in mind

test you wrapping skills - avoid plastic ribbon and tape ... and glitter!

There's so much more we can think about, discuss and share together around food, decorations, party outfits, winter walks and nature.

Why not visit these websites for some great Eco Christmas ideas:

WWF <https://www.wwf.org.uk/>

Friends of the Earth <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/>

Greenpeace <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/>



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