

CARBON FAST

For Lent



*This is the fast that pleases me: to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke...
Then will your light shine like the dawn. (Isaiah 58: 6–8)*

KAIROS invites you to join us in a “Carbon Fast” for Lent, part of our *Re-Energize* campaign for energy justice. For the next forty days we journey with Jesus into the desert to confront our addiction to fossil fuels and to examine the impact it has on the earth, human rights and situations of conflict. We cannot do this alone. As the Spirit was with Jesus in the desert, we call on that same Spirit of God to be present with us in this Lenten season.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

Scripture reminds us that our Christian story is intimately connected to the well being of the earth and all of its inhabitants. In Genesis 1:31, God saw all that was made and said, “*It is very good!*” Later in the book of Joel injustice has its consequences in earthly catastrophe and an invitation to repentance by way of “*fasting, weeping and mourning*” (Joel 2:12–13). There is a moving summons in Joel when God says: “*Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn,*” a reference to the kind of authenticity that is required of a true fast. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus is driven into the desert by the Holy Spirit to face the temptations that would define the rest of his life and ministry. Upon his return he inaugurates his public life by going to the synagogue and reading from Isaiah: “*The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for God has anointed me. God has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind, new sight, to set the downtrodden free and to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.*” (Luke 4:16–19). This act identifies the doing of justice as a sign of God’s inbreaking sovereignty in the world. This is the reason why the voices from our brothers and sisters in the Global South who are suffering the ravages of climate change are important to our Lenten journey. Their experiences remind us that our actions have global implications.

SOUTHERN PARTNERS SPEAK

There are some voices in the Global North who deny that climate change is real and that it may even be of benefit to many of us. But for many in the Global South climate change is a reality they experience directly.

“In 2007, most parts of North Eastern Uganda especially Teso Region was flooded for the first time. Human shelter was washed away along with the crops that would have fed the families for the year. Women are more affected since they depend on agriculture for income and livelihoods.”—Constance Okollet, a farmer from Uganda. For more of this story and video depicting the Ugandan flooding click on: <http://tiny.cc/uganda994>

“Global warming is real. The rising sea level is observable evidence. We also observe continuous desertification with the desert encroaching into fertile region. The level of rainfall is also moving at an increasing level.”—Rebecca Adaka Morris, Bayelsa, Nigeria

“While climate change has meant a growth in a “green” market in the Global North, for some communities in the Global South, climate change is a matter of life and death.”—Godinez, Mario, Agricultura y Cambio Climatica, CEIBA Guatemala

This resource highlights voices from the Global South to remind us of the inequities wrought by climate change and to strengthen the link between our personal and global actions for climate justice. Our Lenten calendar offers a weekly theme and scripture focus, as well as suggestions for personal change and community advocacy.



Photo courtesy of Rachel Warden from KAIROS

This Lenten season, let us join our efforts together with others, like Naty Atz Sunuc from CEIBA, one of KAIROS’ partners in Guatemala who are fighting for change in their own contexts and looking for real solutions to climate change.

| SCRIPTURE OR READING | SUNDAY | MONDAY |
|---|---|---|
| <p>WEEK 1: ELECTRICITY</p> <p>This is the fast that pleases me: to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke... Then will your light shine like the dawn. (Isaiah 58: 6-8)</p> | <p>Fasting has a long history in many religious traditions including Christianity. There are many exhortations to fast and accounts of fasting in the Bible. In the Old Testament perhaps the best known is Isaiah 58:6-12. In Matthew 9:14-15; Mark 2:18-20, and Luke 5:33-39 Jesus exhorts his followers to fast after he has left them. Acts 13:2-3 and 14:23 describe fasting in the Early Church as well. Fasting is not just a literal abstaining from food but also a time of prayerful reflection and a gesture of commitment to God's justice. Participating in a "Carbon Fast" means that we will try to reduce our use of fossil fuels, the leading cause of climate change.</p> | |
| <p>WEEK 2: HEAT</p> <p>Then the LORD will create...a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain. (Isaiah 4:5-6)</p> | <p>Do an energy audit of your home or participate in an energy audit of your church. For help go to http://tiny.cc/homehelp171.</p> | <p>Turn your thermostat down 1 degree. Make a habit to put on a sweater instead of turning the heat up.</p> |
| <p>WEEK 3: TRAVEL</p> <p>This I believe, I shall see the goodness of God in the land of the living. Put your hope in God, be strong, let your heart be bold, put your hope in God. (Psalm 27:13-14)</p> | <p>Calculate your carbon footprint for all travel last year and resolve to reduce it by at least 20% this year. Go to http://tiny.cc/calculate568</p> | <p>If you have two cars, discuss becoming a one-car family. Resolve not to travel in a car for one day or one full week, whatever is a challenge for you.</p> |
| <p>WEEK 4: WASTE</p> <p>Why spend money on what is not bread, your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me, listen, and your soul will live. (Isaiah 55:2-3)</p> | <p>Resolve not to buy the "next best thing" in electronics for two years.</p> | <p>Recycle or donate your old computer to schools or community centres, instead of throwing them away.</p> |
| <p>WEEK 5: SHOPPING</p> <p>There was a man with two sons...[The Father] divided his property between them. The younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country and he began to be in need. (Luke 15: 11-14)</p> | <p>Inventory your living room with your family. Separate the things that you need, from the luxuries that you have accumulated. Refrain from unnecessary shopping for the rest of the Lenten season.</p> | <p>Inventory your closets. Are there items that you wish you had not purchased? Why? What can you do differently?</p> |
| <p>WEEK 6: WATER</p> <p>Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ...I will make with you an everlasting covenant. (Isaiah 55:1, 3)</p> | <p>Cease or limit your use and participation in the use of power craft on lakes and rivers such as skidoos, motorboats, snowmobiles, motorboats, and ATVs.</p> | <p>Purchase a reusable water bottle for use on the road. Advocate the use of tap water in church, school and municipal programs.</p> |
| <p>WEEK 7: FOOD</p> <p>He took a cup and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves... Then he took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it them... He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:15-19)</p> | <p>Learn about nutritional equivalencies in local food compared to exotic foods. Check out the website: www.100mileradius.ca for ideas to re-orient your eating habits.</p> | <p>Promise to abstain from eating any meat at least twice a week for one year.</p> |

| TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | ASH WEDNESDAY Commit to shutting all lights when leaving any room. | Determine to completely shut off all electronics at source when not in use. | Dry clothes on outside line or on laundry racks. | ADVOCACY ACTION Meet with Municipal Representatives and ask what plans are in place to reduce the area's use of energy. Join a committee that oversees energy use in your area. |
| Weather-strip your doors and windows. | Observe heat use at school or work and make a suggestion for increased energy efficiency. | Reduce the idling time of your vehicle to a minimum or speak of your concern to someone who is idling excessively. | Consider installing a ceiling fan for better heat circulation and more efficient cooling. | ADVOCACY ACTION Write a letter to the Prime Minister asking him to redirect subsidies to fossil fuel industries to programs promoting energy conservation and development of renewable forms of energy. |
| Consider your next planned plane travel. Is there an alternative? Could you avoid plane travel for one full year? | Seek out and use alternative commuting arrangements—car share, public transit, biking, walking. | When replacing your vehicle, commit to purchasing a hybrid or the most energy-efficient car possible. | Arrange for KAIROS to give an ecological justice themed workshop in your community | ADVOCACY ACTION Contact your MP to talk about climate change and demand an increase in legislative and monetary support for public transportation. |
| View the ten-minute video "The Story of Stuff" at www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-stuff/ with your family and decide how you can buy less stuff. | Pledge always to bring your own shopping bags rather than using plastic. | Stop buying bottled water. Take a pledge to drink free, safe, public tap water whenever possible at www.backthetap.ca | Darn or mend a piece of clothing instead of throwing it out. | ADVOCACY ACTION Initiate a petition to send to your local grocery store to lobby against excess packaging; if your area does not have a waste division program for organics, contact your local councillor. |
| If you have children in your life, inventory their toys with them. How many do they actually use? Discuss, at an appropriate level, the negative effects of over-consumption. | Inventory your cleaning products. Resolve to use simple, non-toxic, alternatives for one month and note the results. | Inventory your disposable products—plastics bags, batteries, lighters, storage containers, and cleaning supplies. Find ways to replace three disposable products with more sustainable options | Inventory the amount of time you spend with loved ones. Decide to spend at least two days a month this year enjoying activities that will bring you closer together. | ADVOCACY ACTION Support an organization, such as the Maquila Solidarity Network that works for fair labour practices in source countries. Go to: en.maquilasolidarity.org |
| Never dispose of toxic waste such as leftover paint, medications into the water systems. Bring to local collection depots. | Reduce the time that you let the water run while brushing your teeth or washing hands. | Pledge to sweep outdoor areas instead of using a hose or blower from now on. | Experiment by reducing your shower to half the usual time. | ADVOCACY ACTION Meet with your MP to discuss your concern about the privatization of water. Ask for a review of Canada's National Water Policy to ensure safe and sustainable access to drinking water for all Canadians. |
| Visit an organic farm in your area with your family during the Easter Season. Also, visit a factory farm. Talk about the experience as a family. | Refrain from eating out for one week a month. | Determine to increase the percentage of your grocery order that is grown within 100 miles of your home. | Help arrange/organize a 100-mile dinner at your church as part of a Easter Season Event. | ADVOCACY ACTION Ask your MP to introduce legislation to label the carbon footprint on all grocery items so citizens may make better choices. |

EASTER SUNDAY—HE IS RISEN!

Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road... (Luke 24:32)

Daily Action—Resolve to make this Lenten journey an ongoing reality in your life.

Advocacy Action—Check the KAIROS website regularly for action campaigns www.kairoscanada.org.

A Call from the South: Keep Oil in the Ground



Yasuní National Park, with its vast Amazon rainforest, is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world. It is also home to

Indigenous groups, including the Huaorani people, in whose territory are extensive oil deposits. Ivonne Yanez from Acción Ecológica says, “Developing this oil will cause pollution, deforestation, water contamination, damage to fragile ecosystems and the destruction of the Indigenous way of life. Violence



shouldn't be imagined only as a man with a gun, but also attacks on vulnerable communities who see their culture and their agricultural way of life destroyed by the impact of oil extraction.” In 2007 her organization proposed to the Ecuadorian government that the oil in Yasuni National Park remain undeveloped as a contribution to saving the forest and confronting climate change by preventing new carbon emissions.

President Rafael Correa brought the proposal to “Keep Oil in the Ground” to the UN and asked the international community to compensate Ecuador for this global service. Some countries have expressed interest in this but more countries are needed to support the proposal. While the campaign continues, Ivonne finds hope in the solidarity that she feels with Canadians as she brings us her message of solidarity.

For more understanding of the connections between the use of fossil fuels and climate change please view:

“Connecting the Drops” a video on the KAIROS Ecumenical Delegation to the Tar Sands in 2009 at www.vimeo.com/8846615 or order some of our other resources at www.kairoscanada.org/resources

For Acción Ecológica go to: www.accionecologica.org (Spanish only)

For Environmental Rights Action go to: www.eration.org

For Oilwatch International go to: www.oilwatch.org/

For Climate Action Network Canada go to: www.climateactionnetwork.ca

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KAIROS:
**Canadian Ecumenical
Justice Initiatives**
310 Dupont Street, Suite 200
Toronto ON M5R 1V9
416-463-5312
1-877-403-8933
www.kairoscanada.org