

LOAF for Lent



Introduction

During Lent there is a long held, if not always faithfully observed, tradition of 'giving something up for Lent.' Sometimes this is undertaken as a sign of penitence, at others as a means of discipline to aid breaking of an unhealthy pattern or seek release from a dependency. This can involve elements of self-denial, prayer, and fasting. Often the 'giving something up' and self-denial can involve food. Following that tradition this Lent I want to encourage you to engage in discipline around the issue of food through an exploration of and engagement with the theme LOAF for Lent, as outlined below.

LOAF is inspired and promoted by the Green Christian movement (you can visit their website at <https://greenchristian.org.uk/>). In our dealings with food we are encouraged to think LOAF, that is:

Local

Organic

Animal Friendly

Fair trade

The challenge is to obtain and consume food sourced as locally as possible, grown and reared as sustainably and chemical-free as possible, paying due attention to animal welfare and biodiversity, and ensuring fair relationships between producers and consumers. The decisions we make about our food have far-reaching effects, influencing the way food is produced and animals are treated. LOAF can raise questions about overexploitation of soil and people, and industrial agriculture's dependence on oil for transport, fertilisers and packaging.

The intention is not only to be reflective but to be practical; hopefully throughout this Lent we will not simply *think* LOAF but *live* LOAF.

There is so much material on LOAF related matters that it is impractical to print it all. Throughout the guide there are links to examples of various films and reading material that can be found on the internet. Apologies to those who struggle with digital access. Hopefully you can find a digitally connected friend who may share access with you or facilitate printing of some of the materials.

Finally, whilst the focus throughout Lent will primarily be about our relationship to food, there is a clear link to environmentalism given that issues around food production, waste, and transport are a big contributor to greenhouse gases. Some of the material will reflect this reality.

Blessings

Rev Stephen Levett

Minister, Bromsgrove Methodist Church, Redditch

February 2020

Overview timetable for use in 2020:

Tues 25th February: Shrove Tuesday

1. Wed 25th February Ash Wednesday – Sat 29th February Initial reading and preparation
2. Sun 1st March – Sat 7th March Local week
3. Sun 8th March – Sat 14th March Organic week
4. Sun 15th March – Sat 21st March Animal Friendly week
5. Sun 22nd March – Sat 28th March Fair Trade week
6. Sun 29th March – Sat 4th April Left-Overs week
Review of how we have got on, plus as time allows
consideration of some wider climate change challenges.

Sun 5th April Palm Sunday and Holy Week

Regular elements each week :

- *Read and reflect*
- *Confess and Repent*
- *Act – be practical, explore ('Produce fruit in keeping with repentance!')*
- *Poetic Prayer of the week (Psalms Redux)*
- *Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation*
- *Bible readings*
- *Review and Celebrate – where possible meeting with others to share experiences.*

'Pioneers' to point the way

Planning ahead will be helpful. Ideally appoint some 'Pioneers'; people who have gone the way before us, can show us the way, and who do some homework in advance to discover how we can apply LOAF locally. Such pioneers could:

- Point people to where they can find/obtain the produce they seek.
- Possibly obtain some materials to be distributed on the Sunday at the start of the week for use in the week following.
- Present a brief contribution in services each week in Lent for the week ahead.
- Provide possible recipes.
- Host LOAF meals.
- Host/facilitate group meetings to explore the material (though it is intended to be able to be used individually).

Possible group activities:

- Meet as a group to explore the theme of the week, either in advance to discuss and prepare, or in retrospect to review. Ideally watch some film clips. There are plenty on Youtube – see examples in material.
- Meet for a loaf meal: Someone offer to host a meal, where possible using as many ingredients for that week's focus as possible.

LOAF FOR LENT – WEEKLY MATERIALS

Week 1 (short week): PREPARATION/WARM UP. Ash Wednesday 26th February – Saturday 29th February.
The days from Ash Wednesday to Saturday 29th February are intended as a period of preparation.

a. Reading materials

There are any number of resources that can be read in this period, or on which you can at least make a start with which you might persist in the following weeks.

The most basic information is the LOAF leaflet produced by Green Christians:

See leaflet: <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/leaflet/UseYourLoaf.pdf>

Options for further reading are listed below. If you can only read one thing to reflect upon, how about this:

“The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience”

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*

The Operation Noah ‘Ash Wednesday declaration’ of Feb 22nd 2012:

<http://operationnoah.org/resources/copies-ash-wednesday-declaration/>

The fuller follow up document of 2015 related to the Declaration:

<http://operationnoah.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Climate-and-Gospel-David-Atkinson-30-01-2015.pdf>

Hope in God’s Future: Christian Discipleship in the Context of Climate change.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/3201/higf-report-and-study-guide-0514.pdf>

On care for our common home, *Laudato Si*, by Pope Francis on the environment and human ecology

Laudato Si Short summaries: <https://focusoncampus.org/content/summary-of-laudato-si-pope-francis-encyclical-on-the-environment-bfaf7861-99b2-413b-a736-9d883805ebc5>

Laudato Si Full text: http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

A selection of books:

Sustainable Faith: A green gospel for the age of climate change by Nicola L. Bull (Author), Mark Mcallister (Contributor), Foreword by Steve Chalke (Contributor)

Christianity, Climate Change and Sustainable Living by Nick Spencer, Robert White

Is God Green? by Lionel Windsor

Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating by Norman Wirzba. A serious read, and quite expensive!

b. Confess and Repent

Where have I been wasteful with food? Unthinking? Uncaring of the impact my purchase and consumption patterns might have on the planet, my own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others?

‘Creation has been misused and we face threats to the balance of life, a growing ecological crisis and the effects of climate change. These are signs of our disordered relations with God, with one another and with creation, and we confess that they dishonour God’s gift of life.’

World Council of Churches, 10th Assembly, November 2013, para.2

c. Act – be practical, explore

Practical task:

Work out your spending on all food and drink (including eating at home and out) for a typical week or month.

During this period of Lent you are being invited to be studiously reflective in your purchase and consumption of food.

You don’t know yet, but such engagement might lead to you:

- Having to spend more if you want the same types and volume of food.
- Having to purchase less food if you want to stick to the same spending.
- Spending more time in order to obtain and prepare your food.

In light of this what is your pledge, in terms of engagement and denial, during this period of Lent?

Will you:

- Maintain the same budget? If so, are you prepared to eat less if that is the consequence of following the LOAF principals?
- Increase your food budget to fully participate? If so, might you need to decrease spend on some food items or other aspects of life to fully participate (thus cutting back or giving something up for lent...)?
- Give more time to sourcing and preparing your food? If so, what else might there be to which you have to give less time?
- Or explore a combination of all three?

d. Prayer of the week

Each week a different poem cum prayer produced by Carla A Grosch-Miller, based on and a reworking of a Psalm, will be offered as something with which to dwell for the seven days. They are taken from Carla’s book *Psalms Redux*, on the back of which is written ‘*Psalms redux* is not intended to supplant the Psalms that are the poetry of our faith; rather it is a resource for all who are seeking ways to refresh and enrich their vocabulary of prayer and worship.’ They are not specifically related to LOAF but hopefully will be helpful. **Users of the material are requested not to reproduce this material in any shape or form outside of the LOAF for Lent material, and not to publish it online**, permission having been granted only for use in this lent resource .

Carla’s book is available for purchase via her publishers at

<https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781848256392/psalms-redux>

Psalm 8 *REDUX*

O God,
how we have maligned and misinterpreted You –
placing ourselves above all creation,
commandeering the helm
that we might control and use
for our own comfort and convenience.

Forgive us.
And restore us to our senses,
that we might see and sense
and know and love
all that is
and all that can be.

May our reverence for You be manifest
in our reverence for all of life.
May our wakeful listening
penetrate the earth and reach
towards the heavens.
May our bold tenderness
overcome our ignorance
and enable wise action.

For this life is a wonder.
You have gifted us with all we need –
beauty and bounty,
word and wisdom,
courage and companionship.

May we enjoy and employ these gifts
as befits those made in Your image.
May all that we make
mirror Your light and Your love.
May Your Being be known and sung
throughout the world
with joy and thanksgiving.

Carla A. Grosch-Miller, *Psalms Redux*, Canterbury Press 2017 © Carla A. Grosch-Miller, 2014, 2017. Used by permission of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd.

e. *Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation*

In the account of Jesus' wilderness experience, we read that the Devil came with various temptations, which Jesus found a way to rebuff through drawing on scripture. Following in the spirit of the wilderness account each week questions intended to sow seeds of doubt will be presented. What Biblical, theological, humanitarian or other reposts can you give to the questions to overcome the temptation or rebuff the suggestion?

Temptation: 'Environmentalism: Isn't it a dangerous distraction from the real business of discipleship? Personal holiness and transformation (sanctification); relationships (love your neighbour...); evangelism (saving souls): these are the things that count. Surely all this focus on food and concern for the planet distracts from the real mission of the church?'

f. Bible readings

Genesis Chapters 1 and 2

Might these opening chapters of the Bible contain the primary calling of humanity, to have a stewardship and co-creative role, under God, with a proper concern to nurture the rest of creation? Is a better understanding of the emphasis on subduing that of dominion rather than domination?

g. Review and Celebrate

What new or renewed insight have you gained from your reading and reflection in these days of preparation?

What actions are you feeling challenged to take?

What are you excited about as you embark on LOAF for Lent?

Week 2: LOCAL WEEK. Sunday 1st March – Saturday 7th March

a. Read and reflect

What does it mean to Shop Local?

Local purchasing is a preference to **buy locally** produced goods and services over those produced farther away. It is very often abbreviated as a positive goal, "**buy local**", that parallels the phrase "think globally, act **locally**", common in green politics.

Why shop local? How does shopping local fit with concern for the environment?

One reason is it reduces environmental impact. Transportation is a big reason why. Because **local** businesses make more **local** purchases, less transportation is required. In turn, this contributes less to pollution, traffic congestion, habitat loss and resource depletion. There is some subtlety here; for example bananas may travel a long way to get to us but they are hardy and long lasting so can travel by slow boat, which is a low carbon emitting means of transport. But buying fresh raspberries grown out of season so flown in from Kenya is high carbon emitting. To find out more about this whole area try the book 'How bad are bananas: The Carbon Footprint of Everything' by Mike Berners-Lee.

Need more reasons? See <https://smallbusiness.co.uk/fifteen-reasons-choose-local-company-2542429/>

Film clip (There are many to choose from if you search on Youtube.com):

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=the+case+for+buying+local+food

b. Confess and Repent

Might I need to confess that it never or rarely enters my thinking, when I'm obtaining food, as to where it has come from?

Is my primary concern to obtain as much as possible for as little as possible, with little or no concern for what impact that might have on those possible local people struggling to compete with cheap mass producers from elsewhere?

Am I willing to think that there *might* be something somehow wrong about this attitude?

Are we prepared to repent, and produce fruit in keeping with repentance?

c. Act – be practical, explore (produce fruit in keeping with repentance!)

Shop local! Try to source and buy at least one staple diet item that has been produced locally.

There does not appear to be a standardised logo for indicating locally produced food, but you might like to look out for the following:



Note: What is the little red tractor mark all about? See <https://www.redtractor.org.uk/choose-site>

Campaign idea: Investigate a particular significant food outlet, find out what local food they sell, and engage with them regarding using more local suppliers.

d. *Prayer of the week*

Psalm 96 *REDUX*

I open my mouth –
Praise takes flight
like a bird on the wing,
soaring, gliding,
fearless, free.

This new day,
this glorious revelation
of sky and cloud, earth and green,
this gift,
this wondrous gift.

Earth and heaven have cradled this song.
Sunlight and starlight have bathed it;
loam and rock, peat and marsh
structure footfall;
ocean and river, stream and pool
crescendo and trickle,
here, a stop;
breath sheltered by mountains.

A dawn chorus prelude is drawn
from the stillness of dewfall.
The lengthening rays of sun summon
croaking, yelping, mewling, rutting life.
Warmth coaxes seedlings from soil;
leaves stretch and bow towards source;
field and fruits suckle and ripen.

And me. I am ripening too.
Holy hands cup beauty;
wonder opens Way.
This song, my life, an offering
made gratefully, made hopefully, made joyfully.

Earthed in heaven, the heart sings its way Home.

e. *Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation*

Temptation/searching question:

‘Shopping local is all very well and good, but what about the impact on overseas markets that depend upon our trade to survive and prosper? If you all simply shop local, won’t others simply not live?’

‘Shopping local is just a con. Don’t the farmers who sell overpriced goods at the local farmers market then sell most of what they produce (using foreign made farming machinery!) in the global market for whatever they can get with little regard for what impact it might have elsewhere?!’

A film questioning the idea of shopping local

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNXMAu5XA1Q>

f. *Bible readings*

Luke 10:25-37

Could the command to ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ underpin a Christian basis for shopping locally. To be sure in the parable the story is about a man beaten and left for dead, with the fellow traveller kindly binding his wounds, carrying him to safety and paying for his treatment. But could love of neighbour extend beyond mercy and charity to being prepared to support local traders, even if at a little extra cost to ourselves, in order to support people in their creativity, employment and income generation?

g. *Review and Celebrate*

On day seven of the week, look back on the week:

What did you do differently in your intended observance of LOAF for Lent?

What did it cost you in terms of time, money, reduced amount of food?

Where was it hard?

Where did you fail?

What did you discover about yourself?

What did you learn about LOAF?

What were the blessings?

What might you continue with going forward? How, if at all, will shopping local become a practical, ongoing, sustainable part of your food consumption and discipleship?

Week 3 FAIR TRADE WEEK Sunday 8th March – Saturday 14th March

a. Read and reflect

What is fair trade?

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. The term “Fair Trade” describes an economic exchange in which laborers receive a fair living wage.

Why buy fair trade?

Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives.

Taken from <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/what-is-fairtrade>

An affirming film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT6TQsxID0Y>

Is fair trade an issue unrelated to climate change? Not necessarily! See

[http://fairtradewales.com/wp-content/uploads/Fair Trade and climate change bilingual.pdf](http://fairtradewales.com/wp-content/uploads/Fair_Trade_and_climate_change_bilingual.pdf)

b. Confess and Repent

Almighty God, we grieve that in Your world
despite all the riches You have given us so freely,
selfishness and greed so often rule our decisions
in trade as in so many other areas of our lives.
Forgive us our acceptance of unjust structures of trade
and help us to
Do justice, love kindness & walk humbly with you

Almighty God, lover of justice and kindness,
You command all your children to love their neighbours
and tell us that love must be shown in deeds and not just words.
We thank you for Fair Trade – for the opportunity it gives us
to declare our intention to live out love and justice
in our daily life.
May we continue steadfast in our support for all that makes trade fairer,
seeking to
Do justice, love kindness & walk humbly with you.
Amen

Taken from prayers on the subject of Fairtrade found at <https://www.ccow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Fair-Trade-Prayers-from-CCOW.pdf>

c. Act – be practical, explore

Fair Trade: It’s about Coffee and bananas, isn’t it? Well actually there are far more Fairly traded items on the market. How much fair trade can you buy in a week?

Look out for the Fairtrade mark on goods:



Sign up to the Café Direct fair trade hand-picked monthly coffee scheme. £7.95 a month.

<https://handpicked.cafedirect.co.uk/>

P.S. If you are interested in subscribing be sure to let Rev Steve Levett refer you so he can get a free packet of coffee if you sign up! (email revlev66@gmail.com)

Visit www.traidcraftshop.co.uk for a range of Fairtrade products that can be purchased online.

d. Prayer of the week

Psalm 104 *REDUX*

Praise God, oh my soul.
The wonder of all creation calls forth praise.
The marvel of the heavens,
stars flung into space by night,
cotton candy clouds on a canvas of blue by day,
source of light and life, rain and snow,
wind whipping, cleansing
making music among the trees.

The solidity and strength of the earth,
majesty of mountains,
verdance of valleys,
dancing deserts and singing streams,
inviting renewal and re-creation
day by day, year by year.

All are at home in creation,
from the microbe and the mite
to the elephant and the blue whale.
Trees shelter birds,
seas sustain fish,
every animal has a dwelling place.
Streams tumble down hillsides
and springs bubble up from below;
grasses emerge from soil and fruit from trees.
Watered and fed, we flourish.

The rhythm of days and seasons
orders our work and our rest,
cradling our creativity.
Yet still we struggle.

Made in Your image,
we fashion a world in freedom –
for good and for ill.
Our generosity pails;
our compassion fails.
In the midst of earth's beauty and bounty,
not all have enough to eat,
not all live in safety and security.

We look to You for life
and for the goodness in our souls.
Renew us to wonder.
Lift our eyes to marvel again
at all that You have made.
Whisper our name *Beloved* –
that we might remember
who we are
and to whom we belong.
Raise us to what we can be,
a source of blessing to all the earth,
friends of creation and bearers of hope.
Then You may rejoice in us,
as we rejoice in You.

I will sing of Your goodness all my days.
I will seek to magnify You in my being
as long as I shall live.
At the end, I shall abandon myself
entirely into Your kind hands,
and my praise shall be complete.

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e. *Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation*

'Go on, have yourself a nice little cup of fair trade coffee from time to time. So long as you have done that, you will be able to say you have done your bit for the poor and then can carry on regardless with the rest of your life without giving them a second thought.'

A questioning film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui5ruDbppy0>

f. *Bible readings*

Micah 6:6–8, Isaiah 58, Leviticus 25:14, Proverbs 11:1

The prophets often called on God's people to pursue justice and to avoid cheating one another. Whilst the normal global trading system may not be intended to deliberately cheat the poor and be unjust (discuss?!), it may be favourable to richer countries who can take advantage of the market mechanism with its tendency to drive prices down to the detriment of producer/sellers. This is arguably an injustice, and therefore might a market adjusting approach like Fairtrade thus be an effort to work towards a more just approach to trade?

g. Review and Celebrate

On day seven of the week, look back on the week.

What did you do differently in your intended observance of LOAF for Lent?

What did it cost you in terms of time, money, reduced amount of food?

Where was it hard?

Where did you fail?

What did you discover about yourself?

What did you learn about LOAF?

What were the blessings?

What might you continue with going forward? How, if at all, will buying Fairtrade become a practical, ongoing, sustainable part of your food consumption and discipleship?

Week 4: ORGANIC WEEK Sunday 15th March – Saturday 21st March

a. Read and reflect

What is organic?

The Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) states that:

'Organic food is the product of a farming system which avoids the use of man-made fertilisers, pesticides; growth regulators and livestock feed additives. Irradiation and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or products produced from or by GMOs are generally prohibited by organic legislation.

Organic agriculture is a systems approach to production that is working towards environmentally, socially and economically sustainable production. Instead, the agricultural systems rely on crop rotation, animal and plant manures, some hand weeding and biological pest control'.

**Taken from DEFRA - Crown Copyright

What buy and eat organic? How does shopping organic fit with concern for the environment?

5 reasons to try organic:

1. Better for nature: organic farming works with the environment as it uses fewer pesticides. It's a way of farming that protects and encourages wildlife while looking after the health of the soil.
2. Better for the planet: organic farms use fewer pesticides and support up to 50% more wildlife.
3. Better for animal welfare: organic means free-range. Organic standards insist that animals are given plenty of space and fresh air to thrive and grow more naturally.
4. Know what's in your food: when it comes to organic, you know exactly what's in your food. GM crops and ingredients are banned in organic farming.
5. It's tasty: organic farmers rely on developing a healthy, fertile soil to grow a mixture of crops that are bursting with flavour – so foods taste great!

Taken from www.wakeuptoorganic.co.uk

Film clip (There are many to choose from on Youtube.com):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lvQgcG5q_s

b. Confess and Repent

Creator God, we confess that all too often we have ignored and denied your Lordship of the land entrusted to us by assuming the right to do with as we please,
by taking more from it than we have returned to it ,
by taking for granted its productivity,
by denying justice to many who have laboured on the land,
by wanting food for less than it costs to produce.

We confess that material values, rather than kingdom realities, have often determined our relationship to the land.

Lord of the church ,have mercy on us.

grant us peace with you, with each other, and enable us to touch the earth lightly.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Adapted from a prayer found at www.reformedworship.org

c. Act – be practical, explore

Buy Organic! Source and buy some organically grown food!

Look out for the soil association symbol which indicates produce has been raised to agreed organic standards.



d. Prayer of the week

Psalm 37 *REDUX*

This is the promise:
awakened and patient love
leads to abundant life.

Envy not the prosperity
of the greedy and self-centred.
Self-satisfaction is shallow.
Moth and rust consume treasure.
The heart shrinks as wealth grows;
'enough' eludes.
Grief comes to the rich and the poor,
but joy escapes the grasp
of those who put their trust in riches.

Turn instead towards the Source.
Place your trust in the Eternal.
Persevere in doing right;
delight in dependence on friends.
Give generously.
Share gratefully.
Rest in the evening
with ease.

The years pass.
One seldom sees the fruits of one's labours;
seeds sown produce a harvest uncounted
by the hand of the sower.
Give thanks for the sowing
Without thought for the harvest.

In times of sorrow,
accept consolation.
Peace is not far off.
In times of travail,
wait patiently.
Strength for the day will come.

In times of struggle,
wrestle whole-heartedly.
Prayer is heard.

Listen.
Those who turn their hearts towards the Holy
are not disappointed.
Contentment is theirs.
In simplicity is wisdom and peace.

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e. Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation

‘Sure, organic food is OK for those who can afford it. You know organic is far less productive than all that farming done with the help of pesticides, right? But what the heck – when there is loss of crops and production due to blight and pests, and the prices go up due to a shortage you will always be able to afford it. As for everyone else, that is their problem!? I suppose you are happy for them to struggle and starve? And as for those pests, I guess they have a right to life like everyone else...’

A questioning film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y5bGpWNYKc>

f. Bible readings

Leviticus 25:1-23

Does this passage provide a basis for kindness and gentleness towards, and even a Sabbath for the land, with a recognition that such treatment will ultimately lead to sufficient fruitfulness? Might this encourage a support of organic methods?

g. Review and Celebrate

On day seven of the week, look back on the week.
What did you do differently in your intended observance of LOAF for Lent?
What did it cost you in terms of time, money, reduced amount of food?
Where was it hard?
Where did you fail?
What did you discover about yourself?
What did you learn about LOAF?
What were the blessings?

What might you continue with going forward? How, if at all, will buying organic become a practical, ongoing, sustainable part of your food consumption and discipleship?

Week 5: ANIMAL FRIENDLY WEEK. Sunday 22nd March – Saturday 28th March

a. Read and reflect

What is animal friendly?

Being animal friendly is about being as kind towards animals as possible. Let the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals explain (visit <https://www.aswa.org.uk/campaigns/farm-animal-welfare/> to find out more.):

‘At ASWA we care deeply about the welfare of farm animals. We believe that animals are sentient beings and that while they continue to be farmed for meat, eggs or dairy they should always have access to fresh air and water and be able to exercise freely and exhibit natural behaviour. Pigs should be able to wallow in mud, chickens should be able to dust bathe and cattle should have access to grazing.’

Why strive to be animal friendly? How does shopping animal friendly fit with concern for the environment?

An affirming film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y5o13V5mOA>

What could be more animal friendly than not eating them at all?!

A balanced film on Vegetarianism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNx0q3Mb9fl>

b. Confess and Repent

If I eat meat, have I taken hold of an animal and slaughtered it, in preparation for eating? Have I ever been to an abattoir and seen animals put down in order to become food for my plate? Can I even comfortably watch a film of such activity? If not, why not? Does it that I am so comfortably removed from the process and loss of animal life that brings such food to my plate?

If I am ultimately comfortable with eating meat, do I have any concern about the care taken of an animal whilst it lives? Perhaps I need to search my conscience, admit a lack of compassion, become a little more concerned for those creatures that ultimately lose their lives that I might eat?

c. Act – be practical, explore

Try reducing your consumption of meat, sourcing your meat from a local producer where you know they take animal welfare standards seriously, or give up meat altogether and have a vegetarian week.

Look out for labels designed to indicate animals have been raised and treated with agreed welfare standards in mind:



NOTE: There is growing evidence that given the amount of land and feed taken to raise livestock for meat consumption, then reducing our consumption of meat will be key to meeting climate change reduction targets. In particular giving up red meat will be particularly helpful, due to the problem of windy cows and all that methane they produce! See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/46903864>

d. Prayer of the week

Psalm 80A *REDUX*

Hear us!
You who are said to hear the cries of the people.
You who hold all time and all matter in Your hands.
You who knelt in the dust to make and to mould us.
Hear and heed, Come, save us!

Bring us to our senses.
Kindle the flame of love within us
that we may live.

Abandoned and lost,
we struggle and strive to no avail.
Puppets with strings cut,
our dance is limp and aimless.
Tears pool around bent ankles.

Bring us to our senses.
Kindle the flame of hope within us
that we may live.

We remember:
it was You who made us,
who formed and fed us,
who liberated and led us.
There was a time
when laughter filled our days
and contentment blessed our nights.
Hand in hand,
We laboured together
in sun and rain.
Joy and gratitude
spilled from our lips.
Purpose and peace
make light work.
All was well.

Turn Your face towards us,
God of our mothers and our fathers,
God of our grandchildren,

God of all that walks, swims or flies
upon the earth.

Bring us to our senses.
Kindle the flame of faith within us
that we may live.

Carla A. Grosch-Miller, *Psalms Redux*, Canterbury Press 2017 © Carla A. Grosch-Miller, 2014, 2017. Used by permission of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd.

e. *Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation*

“It is written ‘Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.’ (Genesis 9vv2-3) Does not God teach that you are to eat meat? And what could be better on a Saturday morning than a lovely bacon sandwich?!”

f. *Bible readings*

God has a compassionate and caring attitude towards animals, so perhaps so should we?

Genesis 1: Good saw that all be had made was good, including animal life. We should likewise value them and not just use them for our own ends.

Exodus 23:12 Sabbath rest for animals as well as humans.

Genesis 9:9-10 God made covenant with animals as well as humans.

Psalms 145:9 God compassionate towards all he has made.

Isaiah 11:6-9 The vision of the new creation includes new behaviours between animal and animal, and animal and human.

Daniel 1:8-16 Daniel’s vegetarian diet worked out well for him?!

g. *Review and Celebrate*

On day seven of the week, look back on the week.

What did you do differently in your intended observance of LOAF for Lent?

What did it cost you in terms of time, money, reduced amount of food?

Where was it hard?

Where did you fail?

What did you discover about yourself?

What did you learn about LOAF?

What were the blessings?

What might you continue with going forward? How, if at all, will buying animal friendly become a practical, ongoing, sustainable part of your food consumption and discipleship?

Week 6: LEFT OVERS AND REVIEW WEEK Sunday 29th March – Saturday 4th April

a. Read and reflect

Food production, transportation and other industry related activities are responsible for around 20-30% of Green House Gas emissions. Therefore engagement with LOAF can play a part in decreasing CO² and other emissions which are contributing to so much climate change. For this last week you are encouraged to try one or both of two things:

Firstly, Review your engagement with LOAF. As we draw near to the end of Lent, how might LOAF become embedded as a sustainable pattern of your life.

In passing, a question or two to consider:

Is LOAF etc. a nice little thing for the middle classes to engage/indulge in, but not really practical for the hard-pressed lower income family or pensioner struggling to make ends meet?

Whilst LOAF may be a good thing to do, is it a God thing to do? Have we discovered a sufficiently robust Biblical and theological basis to underpin and persuade us that adopting the principles of LOAF and indeed concern for wider climate change issues is a compelling aspect of Christian discipleship?

Secondly, recognising that we need to engage in more than LOAF related issues if we are to personally sufficiently respond to the crisis of climate change, spend some time considering way other steps you might take to address your carbon footprint.

See the Green Christian leaflet on the seven Rs: <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/leaflet/seven-R-s.pdf>

b. Confess and Repent

Almighty God — creator, shaper and sustainer of all life, And loving Father. We confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts; We have been careless with the creation you so lovingly crafted, And deaf to its song of praise. We have taken to satisfy our selfish desires, rather than our need And been indifferent to the consequences As your world's song of praise has been silenced. Because of our greed and carelessness, the world is hurting, and many of your most vulnerable children are suffering as a result. Please forgive our indifference.

Prayer of absolution

Almighty God — creator, shaper and sustainer of all life, And loving Father. Thank you for the forgiveness won for us by your Son — the redeemer of all creation. We receive your grace to us, and your love for us as we are. Change us now into what you would have us be — Move us to love and care for your world And make us ready to work for the good of all creation Through the love and power of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Found at <http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written-prayers-prayers-in-response-to-climate-change.pdf>

c. Act – be practical, explore

When it comes to fighting climate change ultimately taking a few small little steps will not be enough. It may be good but we need to be aware that good can be the enemy of the best. We can't be satisfied with giving up plastic bags and straws! It might be that we need to:

- Give up flying
- Give up beef/red meat
- Buy and Electric car
- Change all our light bulbs to LED's (note: a recent study showed the use of efficient LEDs having greater impact in reducing CO² than renewable energy?!)

Not convinced? OK, but for ideas of steps you might take see

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/19/how-to-reduce-carbon-footprint>

d. Prayer of the week

Psalm 128 *REDUX*

Joyful are those who abide in God,
whose ears are tuned to the song of the faithful,
whose eyes behold glimpses of holiness
in the everyday and the extraordinary.

Grateful are those who know themselves
beloved and blessed,
who offer a hand to those in need,
whose gentleness brings calm.

Those gathered around the table of love
will never go hungry.
Happiness will flavour their days;
at night they rest content.
Their kindness feeds the flourishing of others,
as the cup overflowing
slakes the thirst of many.

May the Holy ever bless you in your home.
May your family thrive
and your friendships grow strong.
May we see the reign of justice and joy
in our land and beyond.
May generations to come know peace
And live in praise.

e. *Wrestle/do battle/resist temptation*

‘Climate change? Don’t worry about it! Most of the worst impact of climate change won’t become apparent until around the year 2100 when you are long gone, and will mainly impact people in poorer far off places like Bangladesh. It’s not really your problem then, is it?’

f. *Bible readings*

Romans 8:19-25, Revelation 21:1-5

Christians live in hope of the coming of the new creation. This might lead to thinking that therefore there is no need to worry about saving the planet, since eventually God will provide a new one anyway?! However, just as belief in resurrection is not taken as an excuse to live fast, neglect the body and die young because we believe that resurrection awaits; could it be that belief in the new creation that is coming is not an excuse simply to wait for it, but to work for and co-operate in its coming, trusting in hope that it really will come.

g. *Review and Celebrate*

On day seven of the week, look back on the week.

What did you do differently in your intended observance of LOAF for Lent regarding wider environmental issues?

What did it cost you in terms of time, money, reduced amount of food?

Where was it hard?

Where did you fail?

What did you discover about yourself?

What did you learn?

What were the blessings?

What might you continue with going forward? How, if at all, will actions intended to reduce waste, decrease pollution or reduce climate change become a practical, ongoing, sustainable part of your food consumption and discipleship?

End note

If you have got this far thanks for persisting with the material! You have had the perhaps dubious privilege of being amongst the first people to use LOAF for Lent. I’m hopeful that it might prove useful to others in future years. However, I’m sure it can be improved so if you have any helpful and useful suggestions of additions, corrections or adjustments I am happy to hear about them.

Steve Levett
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February 2020