



2019 Lenten Fast for Water



Why fast?

As a spiritual practice, fasting purifies us and sharpens our intentions. The feeling of hunger prompts a continued awareness of the need to become more conscientious in our actions and to whole-heartedly commit to the inward transformation we seek. Fasting also reminds us to keep in our hearts the plight of the poor and the imperative to care for the least of these.

Many of us grew up “giving something up” for Lent—candy, meat, or other pleasures—only to gleefully indulge in the forbidden item when the season passed. While going without something we enjoy gives us a taste of sacrifice, it may not bring about a deep inner change without intentionality or reflection on your part.

We hope that this year’s Fast is will help you go beyond “giving something up” and will help you maintain an ongoing awareness of how you use water (how you have taken it for granted, how others are going without) and make lasting changes in your everyday practices and mindset.

Why water?

Obviously, we don’t recommend a “water fast” during Lent (or any time of year). But just as past Carbon Fasts have offered ways to reduce your CO₂ emissions, this year’s Fast offers ideas about how to conserve and protect water.

Here in Michigan, we live surrounded by the Great Lakes. These inland seas hold over 20% of the world’s fresh surface water! To protect our aquifers, rivers and inland lakes is an awesome responsibility.

Who could have imagined that in our state, we can no longer take access to clean, affordable water for granted? Could you imagine going without water for just one day? There would be no bathing, cooking, having a glass of cool water on a hot day, no flushing the toilet. Whether it is lead and copper contamination of public water supplies, PFAS in aquifers, algae blooms, plastic pollution, privatization of water, unaffordable water, or the threat from Enbridge’s Line 5 crude oil pipeline, water needs to be valued as the sacred source of life that it is.

Water is Life!

How to use this calendar

This calendar suggests one activity for each day between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Some of these might be things you’re already doing. Some require a little preparation. Some may be challenging or even uncomfortable.



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If doing one activity each day seems overwhelming, you might instead choose one activity each week and repeat it each day. Or choose one action and do it for the whole season.

Since Christians are called to dwell in community—to share in one another’s burdens and joys, and to work together as members of one body— we encourage you to see if members of your family or faith community want to participate in the Fast with you.

As we take steps to do our part, we also recognize that personal lifestyle changes alone are not sufficient. Therefore, we hope this Fast helps you be a witness for the cry of the Earth *and* promote systemic change— as a member of your community and as a citizen.

In this time of repentance and rebirth, we hope above all that this calendar will be a tool for spurring action and reflection and help us right our relationship with the Earth—in this season and beyond.



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<p>ASH WEDNESDAY</p> <p>6 March</p>	<p>“Dust thou art...” Consider how linked you are to the earth and how you can be in loving relationship with all Creation. Preview the calendar and set your intentions.</p>
<p>Thursday</p> <p>7 March</p>	<p>Do you know what your “water footprint” is? You might be surprised! A “water footprint” is defined as the amount of fresh water utilized in the production of goods or services. Calculate your water footprint at waterfootprint.org/en/ .</p>
<p>Friday</p> <p>8 March</p>	<p>Does your congregation hold an annual Earth Care Sunday? Earth Day is just around the corner (April 22, the day after Easter). Now is a good time to start planning for a late-April or early May event. Stay tuned for Michigan IPL’s Earth Day Sermon contest and Earth Day celebration ideas!</p>
<p>Saturday</p> <p>9 March</p>	<p>If you’re new to the discussion about the world’s water crisis, catch-up in one weekend with these five documentaries: treehugger.com/clean-water/5-documentaries-you-must-see-to-understand-the-water-crisis.html .</p>
<p>Sunday</p> <p>10 March</p>	<p>In the Book of Jonah, Jonah is miraculously saved by being swallowed by a large fish. The story teaches us about our ability to repent and be forgiven by God. Project Jonah, a whale rescue group out of New Zealand, endeavors to create safer seas for marine mammals—learn ways you can contribute: facebook.com/projectjonah .</p>
<p>Monday</p> <p>11 March</p>	<p>Water Trivia:</p> <p>Q: How much water does the average American household use during a year? A: Over 100,000 gallons (indoors and outside)</p> <p>Q: How much water does an individual use daily? A: Over 100 gallons (all uses)</p>
<p>Tuesday</p> <p>12 March</p>	<p>Washing a single load of clothes could use 29 to 45 gallons of water in older washers. Consider upgrading to a high-efficiency washing machine which uses only 15 to 30 gallons per load OR washing fewer but larger loads.</p>
<p>Wednesday</p> <p>13 March 13</p>	<p>An EnergyStar-rated dishwasher uses 4 gallons of water per cycle, while a non-EnergyStar model manufactured after 1994 uses an average of 6 gallons per cycle. Look for rebates at energystar.gov/rebate-finder# .</p>



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Thursday 14 March	A full bathtub requires about 40 to 70 gallons of water, while taking a 5-minute shower uses 10 to 25 gallons. Think of baths as an occasional treat and stick to showers.
Friday 15 March	If no water is reused and/or re-circulated, it may take as much as 35-45 gallons of water to produce 1 pound of paper. Save trees and water by stopping un-wanted junk mail at DMAChoice.org .
Saturday 16 March	Visit mi-wea.org/watershed_groups.php to see if there's a watershed group in your area. If so, consider joining the email list to keep informed of ways to participate in your local watershed.
Sunday 17 March	Access to water is a human right. Protecting water is also a human responsibility. Explore the emerging concept of "watershed discipleship." Read or review any of a number of articles on the topic: watersheddiscipleship.org/articles .
Monday 18 March	For Palm Sunday, consider ordering sustainably grown palms: EcoPalms.org . Sustainable palm gathering protects valuable natural forests, which in turn maintain water quality and prevent soil erosion.
Tuesday 19 March	Install a WaterSense-labeled shower head to save water and energy (often while improving water pressure) or learn more at epa.gov/watersense/showerheads .
Wednesday 20 March	Learn about the water-related challenges— such as water availability and quality, flooding, and droughts—climate change is predicted to have on Michigan agriculture: glisa.umich.edu/climate/agriculture .
Thursday 21 March	Conventionally grown coffee causes deforestation—removing trees that stabilize soil, reduce soil erosion, and prevent fertilizer and manure runoff that can lead to river and stream pollution. Choose shade-grown, organic coffee as a more sustainable option.



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<p>WORLD WATER DAY</p> <p>22</p> <p>March</p>	<p>This year’s focus of the United Nation’s World Water Day is to bring awareness to issues of access to clean water facing marginalized groups such as women, children and refugees. Visit worldwaterday.org and learn what can be done.</p>
<p>Saturday</p> <p>23</p> <p>March</p>	<p>Take a peek at the book reviews for “What the Eyes Don’t See” by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician who brought national attention to the Flint water crisis or watch the PBS documentary: pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/poisoned-water . Challenge yourself to learn more about the ongoing tragedy in Flint!</p>
<p>Sunday</p> <p>24</p> <p>March</p>	<p>Contemplate how rising sea levels, related to climate change, affect the least of these. Learn why this is happening and what we can do to stem the tide: nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/sea-level-rise/ .</p>
<p>Monday</p> <p>25</p> <p>March</p>	<p>The IHM Sisters of Monroe consider the Global Water Crisis to be an issue of relevance and concern. Find hope in the online resources listed on their website: ihmsisters.org/living-justly/peace-and-justice/current-issues/global-water-crisis/ .</p>
<p>Tuesday</p> <p>26</p> <p>March</p>	<p>Name that author: “Access to safe, drinkable water is a basic and universal human right.” Answer: Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si’</i> .</p>
<p>Wednesday</p> <p>27</p> <p>March</p>	<p>The Water is a Human Right Declaration affirms that access to clean, potable water is a human right. Consider signing on yourself or ask a clergy member from your congregation sign-on: https://tinyurl.com/y3ef57h4</p>
<p>Thursday</p> <p>28</p> <p>March</p>	<p>Toilet flushing can account for over 30% of overall household water consumption. Older toilets may use an average of 3.5 gallons per flush. Consider a high efficiency or dual flush model - which use a maximum of 1.3 gallons per flush - when making a replacement. You can also adopt the “if it’s yellow, let it mellow” rule. Water savings tips: http://www.home-water-works.org/indoor-use/toilets</p>
<p>Friday</p> <p>29</p> <p>March</p>	<p>Inviting friends over for dinner? Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch guides provide at-a-glance info on which fish is relatively abundant (okay to eat) and which species are overfished (need to avoid): Oceana.org/living-blue/sustainable-seafood-guide .</p>



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Saturday 30 March	Spring is in the air! Going on a hike or on a day trip? Consider bringing your own water bottle. Watch a documentary about the role of the bottled water industry and its effects on our health, climate change, pollution, and our reliance on oil. Trailer: youtube.com/watch?v=72MCumz5lq4
Sunday 31 March	Be mindful today, as you consume water, of how precious fresh water is to sustaining human life. Take one action that helps to create a future in which access to clean water is available for current and future generations.
Monday 1 April	Does your city offer any rebates or incentives for water conservation measures? Visit waterrebates.com/Michigan to find out.
Tuesday 2 April	As you dream of spring, consider low maintenance perennials and grasses to reduce the need for watering. What can you do to cut down the size of your thirsty lawn?
Wednesday 3 April	Protect our waterways by safely disposing prescription drugs. Drug take-back programs are best, but earth911.com suggests additional methods that are more environmentally sound than flushing them or tossing them into the trash.
Thursday 4 April	Hopefully by now it's warming up! Look for ways to conserve water before heading to the nearest car wash, which may use up to 120 gallons of water per wash. Learn about how to wash your vehicle using less water: wikihow.com/Wash-Your-Car-Using-Less-Water
Friday 5 April	Minimize your purchasing of new items, keeping in mind the "water footprint" required to produce new goods and services. What can you borrow from a neighbor, share with a family member, or buy second hand?
Saturday 6 April	Donate to your congregation's Green Ministry or an organization that promotes Creation Care... maybe Michigan IPL!



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<p>Sunday</p> <p>7</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Crossing of the Red Sea is part of the biblical narrative of the Exodus, the escape of the Israelites, led by Moses. Learn about the water-related environmental challenges facing the mid-East today: ecopeace.org/.</p>
<p>Monday</p> <p>8</p> <p>April</p>	<p>If your church is undergoing a significant renovation, consider building according to the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED rating system, and taking into consideration measures that address the water efficiency of your building: usgbc.org/guide/bdc#we_overview</p>
<p>Tuesday</p> <p>9</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Water and energy conservation sometimes go hand in hand. Water heating usually accounts for 18% of a home’s energy bills, and chances are your water is hotter than you need. Try turning your water heater down to ~120°. If your water heater doesn’t show degrees, adjust the dial so that your shower is the right temp when the water is running at its hottest.</p>
<p>Wednesday</p> <p>10</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Identify your MI legislators and learn about their environmental voting track records: https://michiganlcv.org/at-the-capitol/legislative-scorecard/.</p>
<p>Thursday</p> <p>11</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Implementing individual water conservation practices is important, but getting involved in advocacy broadens your impact. Join our advocacy work: MichiganIPL.org/Advocacy.</p>
<p>Friday</p> <p>12</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Consider the amount of water required to produce the food that nourishes us. It takes nearly 2,000 gallons of water to produce 1 lb of beef and 500 gallons to produce 1 lb of poultry. The average daily water consumption of a meat-eating person is 1,300 gallons of water per day, compared with the average for a vegetarian diet is 650 gallons. Consider being a “reducitarian” (i.e. reducing meat consumption) for a week, a day, or a meal.</p>
<p>Saturday</p> <p>13</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Movie night: Watch “I Do Mind Dying,” a documentary about the Detroit water shut-offs: detroitmindsdying.org</p>
<p>PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>14</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Consider and pray about your consumption habits. What would Jesus do when it comes to water conservation, etc.? Set at least one concrete goal for shrinking your personal or congregational water footprint. Write it down.</p>



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<p>Monday</p> <p>15</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Large roofs and parking lots = lots of stormwater run-off (and often high drainage fees). Explore how your house of worship could add rain barrels, a rain garden, or other green infrastructure to mitigate this.</p>
<p>Tuesday</p> <p>16</p> <p>April</p>	<p>“Imagine a Day without Water” is Oct. 23, 2019. Learn about the ways your congregation can participate in raising awareness about the importance of access to clean water by commemorating this day: imagineadaywithoutwater.org</p>
<p>Wednesday</p> <p>17</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Determining whether to use paper plates at your next church function or running a dishwasher load that consumes water and electricity is a difficult task. Learn about the factors to take into consideration: livestrong.com/article/226810-environmental-effect-of-paper-plates/</p>
<p>HOLY THURSDAY</p> <p>18</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Handwashing with soap prevents many common and life-threatening infections, and yet access to clean water is not available to people in many parts of the world. Make a conscious effort to be aware of all the times today that you wash your hands, and marvel at the miracle that it is!</p>
<p>GOOD FRIDAY</p> <p>19</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Sacred Grounds, a program of the National Wildlife Federation provides an avenue for addressing an urban community’s water challenges with nature-based solutions. Learn about the ways your faith community can participate: nwf.org/sacredgrounds</p>
<p>HOLY SATURDAY</p> <p>20</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Plant a tree. Trees reduce storm water run-off, absorb CO₂, and if planted on the south or west sides of your building, provide cooling shade in the summer.</p>
<p>EASTER</p> <p>21</p> <p>April</p>	<p>How did your Lenten Fast for Water fast go? What new behaviors did you begin or inspire in your congregation? Please share with Michigan IPL and inspire others!</p>
<p>EARTH DAY</p> <p>22</p> <p>April</p>	<p>Bonus: April 22nd is Earth Day! Did your water footprint shrink? Recalculate here: waterfootprint.org/en/.</p>