

Carbon footprint reduction 'Eco-Checklist'

St Luke's Church, St Albans

We know that the amount of energy and resources we use affects the amount of CO₂ released into the atmosphere – our so called “carbon footprint”. Unfortunately, the higher our carbon footprint, the greater the impact on climate change. And climate change will damage God's creation, with a huge impact on food supply and living conditions in some of the poorest areas of the world, including parts of Africa and the Indian subcontinent.

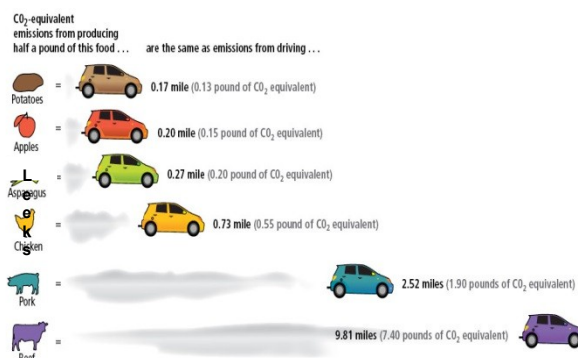
So anything we can do to reduce our carbon footprint is a very practical way in which we can help our neighbours in Christ.

Our homes

- Try turning down the thermostat on the central heating and wearing an extra jumper instead. Turning it down by 1 degree could cut your usage by up to 10 per cent.
- If we do most clothes washing on a 30° wash – it hugely reduces energy consumption – and colours won't fade so fast.
- Try to avoid using the tumble dryer – it is better to dry clothes outside, or on a clothes rack indoors if the weather is not suitable.
- Make sure that windows and doors have good draught excluders, and that good loft/wall insulation is in place.
- Swapping our old fashioned light bulbs for modern LED versions. A 60W bulb can be replaced with a 9W LED. Change the ones you use most often first (kitchen/lounge etc).
- If you have an older gas boiler (eg more than 15 years old), then change it for a modern condensing version rated A+ or better. Although the new one is costly, you will get substantial savings in energy bills and a big reduction in carbon footprint.

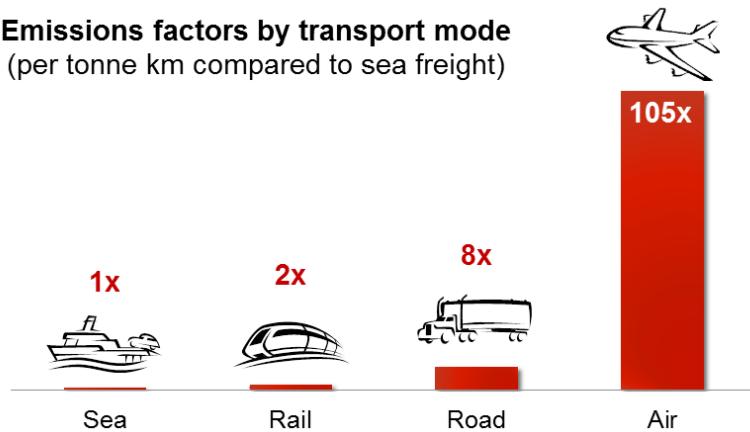
Eating

- Changing our eating habits can have a big impact on our carbon footprint - check out www.greeneatz.com
- In particular, red meat such as beef and lamb has a very high carbon footprint. The best option is to move to a largely vegetarian diet, but substituting red meat with chicken or fish will also help a lot.
- Food waste is a big contributor to climate change. That is because it decomposes to produce methane gas, which has an even bigger climate change impact than CO₂.



- Try to avoid buying too much (eg let's be wary of supermarket "buy one, get one free" offers if we end up throwing the 'free one' away). Instead, use leftovers for the next meal. If there is waste food, put vegetable matter on your home compost heap, and put other waste in the Council food waste caddy (avoids food going to landfill, thus reducing methane gas production).

Emissions factors by transport mode
(per tonne km compared to sea freight)



- Try to avoid airfreighted foods. You can spot these because they are sold in smaller packs, are low weight, more expensive – and the label says the country of origin is far away. Examples include asparagus (from Peru), and fresh cranberries (from USA).

Travel

- Reduce the amount of car use – travel by bike (great for your health) or by train/bus.
- Air travel has a particularly high carbon footprint. Avoid air travel where possible, and use carbon offsetting (see www.climatestewards.org) where air travel is unavoidable. If air travel is required, then get the maximum value out of a single flight – eg stay for longer.
- Travel probably has the biggest impact on our carbon footprint. A single flight can wipe out the CO2 benefits of moving from a normal diet to a vegan diet for a whole year.

Shopping

- When companies make new things, it uses energy in lots of ways, and contributes to our carbon footprint.
- Making things last longer, and mending/repairing the products we already have is better.
- Shopping at charity shops is a great way to reduce carbon footprint – and to give to good causes at the same time.

Reuse and recycling

- If we can make sure things are re-used, or get a second life, is much better than throwing them away.
- Register for Freecycle at <https://groups.freecycle.org/group/StAlbansfreecycle> It then takes less than a minute to tell others of the things you no longer need. And anyone who wants them will email you and will collect from your house. It's easy – and very rewarding to think that someone else is benefitting from something you don't want.
- Always put as much of your waste as you can in your recycling containers. It is a great way of ensuring that the resources are not lost. It also has a big impact on your carbon footprint – for example it is much better to make new aluminium products from recycled cans. rather than extracting new aluminium from the world's dwindling supplies of bauxite. *

- Some items (eg metals, rigid plastics, wood, printer cartridges etc) can only be recycled at the council recycling centre. Store these until you have a sizeable load before taking them to the centre.

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