



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

New Year's Resolutions

As we celebrate the coming of Our Lord and look forward to a new year of His creation, you may be considering some New Year's resolutions. Perhaps one might be to be a better environmental steward. Here are three suggestions.

Plastic pollution is still an issue. Millions of metric tons of plastic waste fill our landfills and pollute our oceans. Items we use for a few minutes take hundreds of years to decompose. (*Environmental Action*, December 14, 2020).

“The truth is, recycling alone won't solve the plastic pollution problem because:

- Recycling programs are often ineffective. In the last few decades, less than 10 percent of plastic produced in the U.S. has ever been recycled.
- Recycled plastic isn't very valuable. It's actually easier to make new plastic out of oil, rather than creating new plastic material with used plastic trash.
- Plastic recycling is a way for the oil industry to make more plastic....” (Laura Sullivan, *How Big Oil Misled the Public Into Believing Plastic Would Be Recycled*, NPR, September 11, 2020)

“The simplest and best way to solve the plastic problem is to just create less plastic.... Next time you're throwing plastic into a recycling bin, don't get discouraged. We should still keep recycling plastic -- but you can also help protect the planet by reducing the amount of plastic that you buy, signing petitions that ask corporations to use less plastic, and advocating for legislation to restrict single-use plastics.” (*Environmental Action*, December 14, 2020)

Nine states have signed on to single-use plastic bans, and Philadelphia's ban is set to take effect in January 2021. Those are laudable group efforts that your own individual efforts can amplify.

Another suggestion which just requires your signature is to support the rejoining of the international **Paris Agreement on climate** which is celebrating its 5th anniversary. Along with 189 other countries, we can have a notable impact if we step up and collaborate. Governors of 25 U.S. states have already been working together in recent years to cut carbon pollution. Let's make their efforts even more powerful by working to cut planet-warming pollution worldwide. [Rejoin the Paris Agreement](#)

Third, “the **Arctic Refuge** is still in danger of being opened to drilling. Drilling in the refuge would irreparably harm these wildlife habitats, destroy this special place, and contribute to the climate crisis. Banks have stepped up to do the right thing by refusing to fund Arctic drilling -- but fossil-fuel-backed *supporters* claim that this business decision ‘discriminates’ against fossil fuel companies. The truth is, oil companies aren't at risk -- but our public lands, wildlife and our climate are.... Make sure you submit a public comment **before January 4**. (*Environmental Action*, December 12, 2020)

<https://www.nrdc.org/protect-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge>

Wishing you a peaceful and hopeful new year!