

World Environment Day

5 June 2013



What is World Environment Day?

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations in 1972 to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment and encourage political attention and action. It is celebrated annually on 5 June. The United Nations has declared 2013 the *International Year of Quinoa*.

The theme for World Environment Day is **Think-Eat-Save** focusing on sustainable food production and consumption. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), every year 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted. This is equivalent to the same amount produced in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, 1 in every 7 people in the world go to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children under the age of 5 die daily from hunger. Given this enormous imbalance in lifestyles and the resultant devastating effects on the environment, this year's theme – **Think-Eat-Save** – encourages us to become more aware of the environmental impact of the food choices we make and empowers us to make informed decisions.

How Much Do You Consume?

How does your local area compare with others in terms of consumption? Search for **Consumption Atlas** or go to www.acfonline.org.au/sites/default/files/resource/index67.swf

Type in the **postcode** of your home or church and select the **eco-footprint indicator**. You will then be shown the ecological footprint of the average person in your suburb compared to state and national averages. You can also view a pie chart of the sources of that impact. Have a look at the impact of food. The ecological footprint of an individual, organisation, product or region is the bio-productive area (land and sea) required to sustainably maintain current consumption. It is measured in global hectares and expressed as the number of planet Earths needed to support a certain activity, which makes it a good tool for communicating environmental impact.

(Source: www.ecologicalfootprint.com)



Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Leader:

As we gather to celebrate this World Environment Day, we do so in acknowledgement of the traditional owners of this land who dwell here and cared for it of old.

In 1972 the United Nations Conference on Environment began on 5 June and every year since then this date has been marked as a day intended to stimulate awareness and action regarding environmental issues. The theme for World Environment Day in 2013 is **Food Waste, Sustainable Consumption and Production**. We have gathered recognising our place within this amazingly diverse and bountiful planet and in reflection upon how we live as members of our planet's ecosystem. We ponder how we use, or abuse, the resources and produce of the world and the impact our actions may have upon those with whom we share this planet. And, we consider, how do we respond as followers of Jesus, who calls us to paths of justice and compassion?

Call to Worship

Reader 1:

When the disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowds away to find food for themselves, Jesus said: "You feed them."

All: We are called to seek the welfare of all creatures and a just and sustainable future for our planet.

Reader 2:

When the disciples could see no further than what they possessed, Jesus led them to discover God's faithfulness and the possibilities of what could be shared.

All: We are called to seek the welfare of all creatures and a just and sustainable future for our planet.

Reader 3:

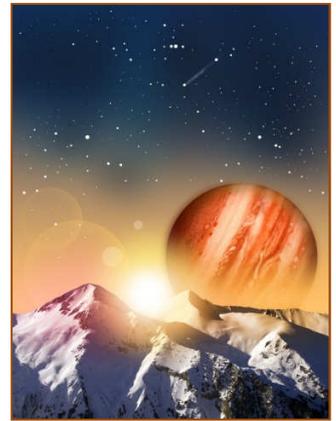
In a society obsessed with safeguarding our personal desires yet groaning under the weight of our waste, in a world where millions face starvation while millions of tons of food is thrown out each day, the story of the feeding of the crowd calls us to look beyond ourselves and recognize the responsibility we bear towards all creatures and the responsibility we bear to live conscientiously and sustainably as members of Earth's community.

All: We are called to seek the welfare of all creatures and a just and sustainable future for our planet.

Prayer

Leader: To you, God, who sang the universe into being
And cradles all creation within yourself;
God who became flesh, born as one of us
Offering yourself for creation's redemption;
God who pours life and vision within our souls
And who is present in and through all creation;

**All: To you O God
Be all praise and glory
Throughout Earth
And in this place where we are gathered.**



As the following is said, symbols of life and produce could be brought forward – e.g. plants, fresh fruit and vegetables.

Leader:

We come in thanksgiving and gladness for this beautiful planet with its amazing diversity of character and the myriad forms of life which together form Earth's ecosystem.

Our spirits are enriched through the wonder of the natural world which surrounds us, our bodies are sustained and sheltered, and modern life enabled through the abundance of produce and resources drawn from the earth, sea and sky.

**All: To you O God
Be all praise and glory
Throughout Earth
And in this place where we are gathered.**



As the following is said, symbols of excess and waste could be brought forward – e.g. discarded food, wrapping and half eaten food.

Leader:

We come in lament and confession that in our greed and self-obsession we consume beyond our need. And while many around the world hunger and thirst we throw away almost as much food as we eat. We give little thought to the impact our wasteful practices have upon the planet, the other creatures who share it with us and the generations to come. Forgive us our wasteful practices.

Guide us to paths of living and consuming which are attentive to the needs of all living creatures and nurturing towards the planet.

We give thanks for your Son Jesus who speaks to us of your grace and forgiveness and calls us to freedom from that which binds and destroys and to live life abundantly and compassionately.

**All: To you O God
 Be all praise and glory
 Throughout Earth
 And in this place where we are gathered.**



Prayers of Intercession

As you did with the disciples in ages past –

Lead us O God from indifference to compassion, from waste to sustainability.

So many in our world needlessly starve, while vast amounts of food are diverted across the globe to feed the gluttonous hunger of rich nations, with much of this food then thrown away. Change our hearts and practices so that food is produced and distributed according to need; that food is shared justly so that all are fed.

As you did with the disciples in ages past -

Lead us O God from indifference to compassion, from waste to sustainability.

Change our hearts and practices; that our farming and transport of food become sustainable and undertaken with a concern for the impact upon our planet, for the soil, waterways, air and all creatures that inhabit Earth.

As you did with the disciples in ages past -

Lead us O God from indifference to compassion, from waste to sustainability.

Prayers could be offered here for issues of current and local concern.

We come as your people, O God, with these our concerns, our prayers, and our yearnings for the renewal of creation and a just and sustainable future for our planet. Renew us in faith with the gift of your Spirit that we may be witness to your transforming love.

As you did with the disciples in ages past –

Lead us O God from indifference to compassion, from waste to sustainability.

Blessing

**All: May the one who called all things into being
 And who holds the universe and each one of us in nurturing embrace,
 Grant us the wisdom of Earth
 And the humility of the smallest creatures.**

**May Christ, Servant/shepherd who fed the crowd
when others said let them care for themselves,
Lead us into the paths of compassion and generosity.**

**May the Spirit, gentle breath of life and restless, disturbing wind
Fill our mouths with praise and inspire us to love.
May God bless us now and evermore. Amen.**

