

# Climate, Food, and Faith



*Then G-d said, "Here! Throughout the whole earth I am giving you as food every seed-bearing plant and every tree with seed-bearing fruit.*

— Genesis 1.29

*Let people then consider their food. How We pour down rain in abundance. and meticulously split the earth open 'for sprouts', causing grain to grow in it.*

— Surah Abasa: 24-27

## What You Need to Know

Food is an important part of how we express our faith in our daily lives, many worship services, and some religious holidays. What foods we choose to eat also impacts the climate.

- 1. More fruits and vegetables in our diets are better for our health and our climate.** Higher proportions of plant-based foods are healthier for us. Agriculture, including meat and dairy production, is one of the top sources of harmful pollution in the US.
- 2. Local food is fresher, more nutritious,** and travels shorter distances which equates to lower pollution and healthier, more prosperous communities.
- 3. Reducing food waste is practical, and also reduces pollution.** Less waste = less wasted dollars and less food and packaging sent to landfills = less methane, among the most potent sources of climate pollution.
- 4. Avoiding prepackaged foods is safer.** Plastics are made from fossil fuels and do not degrade. They can end up in our waterways and show up in our bodies as microplastics. Packaged food can also contain chemicals harmful to us.
- 5. Food grown without pesticides keeps our soil, waterways, and bodies healthy** and helps our crops to maintain vital nutrients.
- 6. Climate change is increasing food prices and food insecurity.** Stabilizing our climate will make food more affordable and accessible, especially for people experiencing poverty. When we lower climate pollution we restore crop yields, the ability to farm, and the nutritional value of crops.
- 7. Choosing foods thoughtfully and eating prayerfully connects us to the Divine, to each other, and to all creation.** What and how we eat is an act of faith.

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*Eating is an agricultural act.*

— Wendell Berry

*What are People For?*

*Agriculture is formed upon the understanding that it is sinful for people to misuse or destroy what they did not make. The creation is a unique, irreplaceable gift, therefore to be used with humility, strength, and skill.*

— Wendell Berry

*The Unsettling of America*

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## What You Need to Do

We can all eat more thoughtfully in a way that aligns with our faith and benefits our health and creation. Focus on including more delicious and nutritious fruits and vegetables. Share your healthy habits with neighbors, congregation members, and policymakers.

- 1. Eat the rainbow — more fruits and vegetables.** Fill half your plate with colorful fruits and vegetables, locally grown and organic when possible. It's good for you and good for our climate.
- 2. Prioritize plant-based proteins.** Choose beans, lentils, seeds, nuts, plant-based proteins or sustainably grown fish, chicken, eggs, and turkey when possible. These are excellent sources of nutrition with lower climate impacts.
- 3. Eliminate food waste.** It saves money, diverts food from landfill, and reduces methane pollution. Eat what you buy, freeze your leftovers, and compost food scraps to improve the soil of your garden or yard.
- 4. Eat locally and seasonally whenever possible.** Not only is this more delicious, but it's often more interesting, less expensive, and reduces pollution versus food that travels farther to your plate.
- 5. Start a community garden** with your congregation. Involve children, youth, and people in your neighborhood in planting, growing, and harvesting. Use the food in congregational activities, donate to congregants in need, local food pantries, and food programs.
- 6. Vote with your dollar** by buying foods grown from sustainable and regenerative farming practices, like organic foods, when possible. Also, try to avoid fast food and prepackaged foods, which are not healthy for you or creation.
- 7. Vote for candidates and policies** that support sustainable agriculture, food equity, and food access. Talk to your neighbors and community about these actions and opportunities.