

Earth Day Sunday 2024



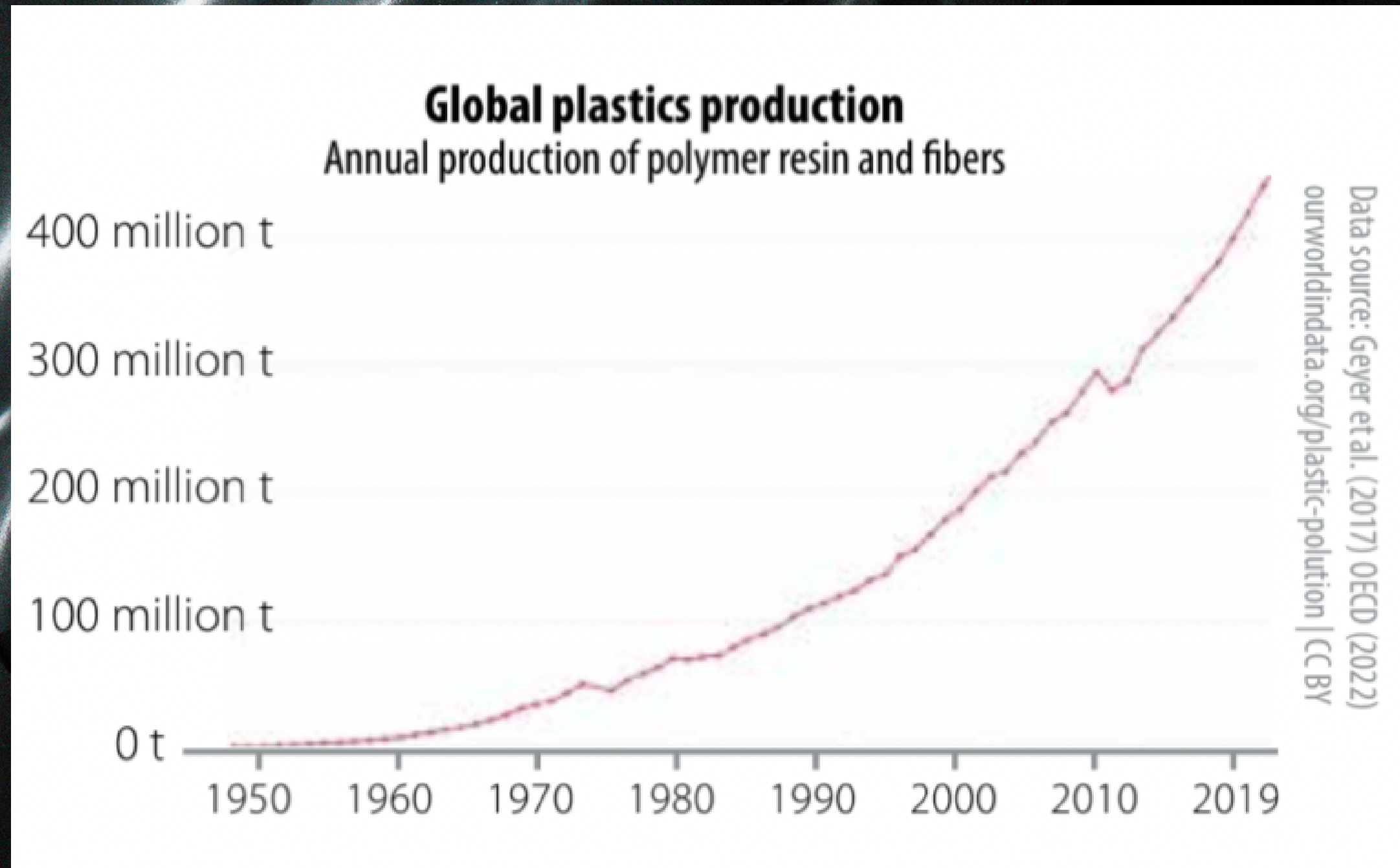
The theme this year is...

Plastic Jesus



But why should we care about plastics?

History of Plastic



- First produced in 1907
- Produced on a global scale in the 1950s.
- Since then, annual plastic production has increased nearly 230-fold to 460 million tons in 2019.

Dangers of Plastic

Plastic pollution:

- Damages habitats
- Interrupts natural processes
- Reduces the ability of ecosystems to adapt to climate change
- Negatively affects millions of people's livelihoods
- Disrupts food production capabilities
- Harmful to social well-being.

An underwater scene with a blue tint. In the upper left, a blue surgical mask is visible. In the upper right, a clear plastic bottle is broken into several pieces. Numerous smaller pieces of clear plastic are scattered throughout the water, along with many small bubbles. The background is dark blue with some light filtering through.

Dangers of Plastic

Waterways are especially susceptible to pollution, which disrupts commercial and recreational fishing.

Ocean wildlife like birds, whales, fish and turtles can mistake plastic waste for prey, which can lead to infections, reduced ability to swim, internal injuries, and death.

270

million metric tons
Global plastic production*

275

million metric tons
Total plastic waste

Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean in 2010

The 192 countries with a coast bordering Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, Mediterranean and Black seas produced a total of 2.5 billion metric tons of solid waste. Of that, 275 million metric tons was plastic, and an estimated 8 million metric tons of mismanaged plastic waste entered the ocean in 2010.

99.5

million metric tons
Coastal plastic waste

31.9

million metric tons
Coastal mismanaged plastic waste

8

Million metric tons of plastic waste goes into the ocean

6,350-245,000 metric tons**

Estimated mass of plastic waste floating at the ocean surface

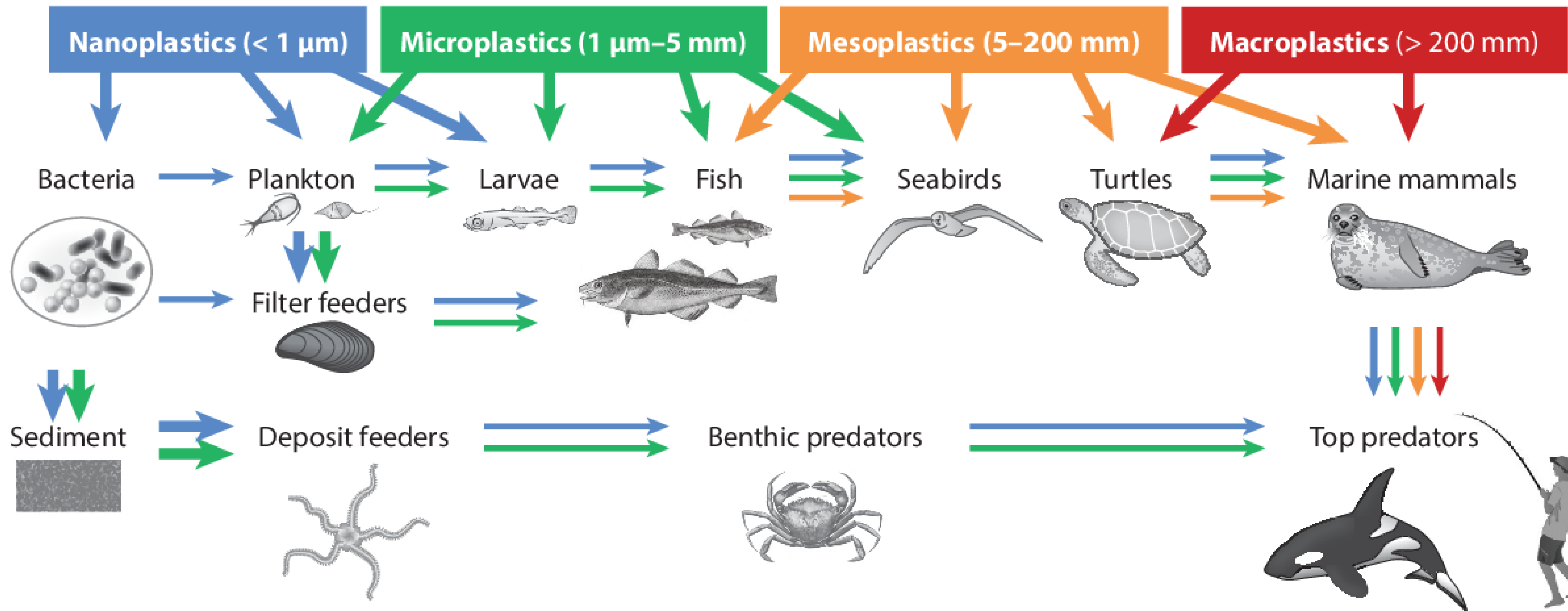
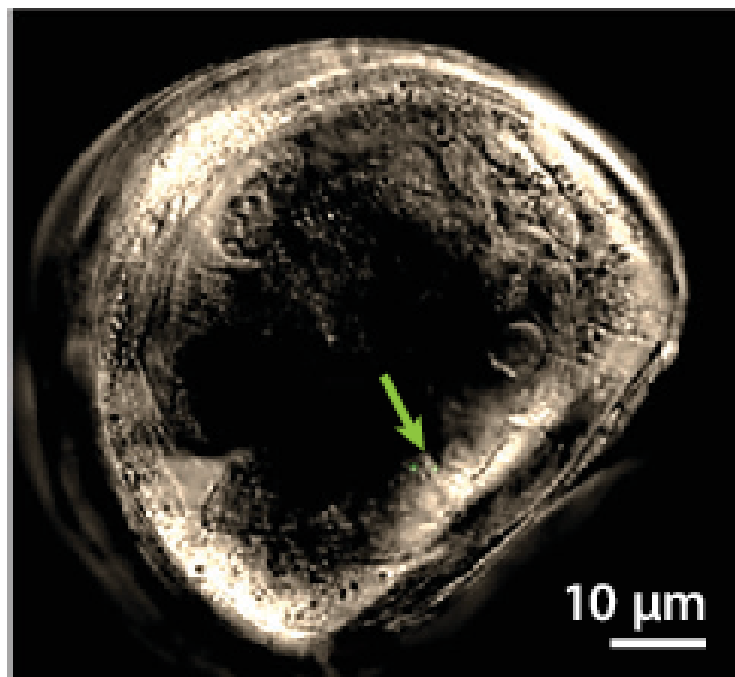
Generated by 2 billion people within 50 km (30 miles) of the coast

Mitigation options:

Reduce plastic in waste stream

Improve solid waste management infrastructure

Increase capture



Every week, we eat roughly a credit card worth of microplastics. This is a human health crisis.

How We Eat, Drink and Breathe Microplastics

Average number of microplastic particles found per gram/liter/m³ of selected consumables



Estimated annual microplastic particles consumed per person*
Between **78,000** and **211,000**

Graph from [Statista](#).

Every week, we eat roughly a credit card worth of microplastics.

The chemicals found in microplastics cause significant health problems, which are felt disproportionately by people of color and low-income communities.

This is a human health crisis.

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Cancer Alley

- Industrial corridor along the lower Mississippi
- Over 200 high-polluting industrial facilities
- Disproportionately impacting Black communities.
- Severe health consequences for residents
 - Cancer, organ malfunction, impaired sensory organs (eyes, skin), birth defects, etc.



Recycling

- Plastics take 20-500 years to decompose,
- Under 14% of plastic packaging is recycled.
- Difficult to recycle different plastics together since they melt differently
- Expensive



Who do you think
is the world's
single largest
producer of
single-use plastic
waste??

For students

Free

Scholarly

Ways

Paper

Plastic

Electronic

About 232,000,000 results (0.50 seconds)

Sponsored



corporate.exxonmobil.com

<https://corporate.exxonmobil.com> > advanced > recycling

ExxonMobil - Plastic Recycling Solutions

Explore Our Innovative Processes That Turn Plastic Waste Into High-Quality Materials. Find Out How ExxonMobil Is Leading The Charge In Plastic Waste...



State of the Planet

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu> > 2020/03/13 > fix-re...

Recycling in the U.S. Is Broken. How Do We Fix It?

Mar 13, 2020 — Most of what you put into the **recycling** bin doesn't actually get **recycled**. Here's why — and how we can do better.



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (.gov)

<https://www.epa.gov> > recycle > recycling-basics-and-b...

Recycling Basics and Benefits | US EPA

Nov 27, 2023 — **Recycling** can benefit your community, the economy, and the environment. Products should only be **recycled** if they cannot be reduced or reused.

[How Do I Recycle Common](#) · [Waste Management Hierarchy](#) · [National Overview](#)



The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com> > 2023/11/29 > opinion > rec...

Opinion | The Complicated Truth About Recycling

Nov 29, 2023 — We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our **articles**. Here are some tips. And here's our email: letters@nytimes.com. Follow ...

Who do you think is the world's single largest producer of single-use plastic waste??


The image shows a search engine results page for the query 'recycling'. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'All', 'Images', 'News', 'Perspectives', 'Videos', and 'More', along with a 'Tools' link. Below these are filter buttons for 'For students', 'Free', 'Scholarly', 'Way', 'Paper', 'Plastic', and 'Electronic'. The search results show 'About 232,000 results (0.50 seconds)'. The first result is a sponsored link from 'corporate.exxonmobil.com' titled 'ExxonMobil - Plastic Recycling Solutions'. The second result is from 'State of the Planet' titled 'Recycling in the U.S. Is Broken. Here's How We Fix It?'. The third result is from the 'U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (.gov)' titled 'Recycling Basics and Benefits | US EPA'. The fourth result is from 'The New York Times' titled 'Opinion | The Complicated Truth About Recycling'. A red circle highlights the sponsored ExxonMobil result and the State of the Planet result.

All Images News Perspectives Videos : More Tools

For students Free Scholarly Way Paper Plastic Electronic


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<https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/advanced/recycling>


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 The New York Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/29/opinion/rec...>

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A worker in an orange safety suit and helmet stands in a recycling facility, looking at a large pile of plastic waste. The background shows industrial machinery and a large pile of plastic debris.

The Fraud of Plastic Recycling

How Big Oil and the plastics industry deceived the public for decades and caused the plastic waste crisis

<https://climateintegrity.org/plastics-fraud>

Bottom Line:

Polluters knew decades ago that plastic recycling was “virtually hopeless.”

**What does all this mean
for the church?**



Thinking Theologically about Plastic:



**Thinking
Theologically
about
Plastic:
SIN**



**Thinking
Theologically
about
Plastic:
IDOLOTRY**



“idolatry always reduces to worship of something ‘made with hands,’
something confined within the terms of human work and human
comprehension.”

Wendell Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation”



**Thinking
Theologically
about
Plastic:
LIMITS**



“... for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:11-13, NRSV



Prayer & Worship Resources



Sermon Starters



The New Golden Calf?

Exodus 32: 1-6

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. **He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf, and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"** When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." They rose early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being, and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to revel.



We Shall Not Want?



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters (verses 1-2)

Pushing Our Limits

Genesis 11:3-4

They said to each other, "Come, let us make oven-fired bricks." They used brick for stone and asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let us make a name for ourselves..."



Prayer and Worship Resources



Call to Worship¹³

We who too often lose our way gather today to say, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for (God) founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.” And yet those same waters are polluted by the plastics we have made and discarded. We pause to ask ourselves again what it would be like to see creation liberated and experiencing freedom and glory.

Along with all creation we wait for the glory of God to be revealed and we commit to playing our part, as the children of God. May we find liberation from our plastic addiction and healing for our land and water. Amen.

Call and Response

Scripture tells us that “creation waits with eager longing for the children of God to be revealed.”

Creation is waiting for us.

To open our eyes to the devastation in our world.

Creation is waiting for us.

To put the needs of the most vulnerable above the greed of the powerful.

Creation is waiting for us.

To move from doing what is easy to doing what is necessary and right.

Creation is waiting for us.

To prioritize the needs of community over the convenience of self.

Creation is waiting for us.

To remove the pollution from our seas, land, air, bodies and hearts.

Creation is waiting for us.

In all these things and more, creation waits for us to assume our roles as its servants and protectors.

With God’s help, we will answer creation’s call. Amen.

Prayers of the People¹⁴

If you’re using this in a congregation, the refrain could be said by everyone, while the other lines could be read by individuals.

Creator God

Thank you for the many good gifts you have given us — so much beauty and abundance in creation all around us.

The earth is yours, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.

And yet we hear creation groaning and we have heavy hearts because we know so much of creation’s pain is due to our actions. Forgive us for polluting the environment through our selfish deeds, without considering the impacts on people and creation.

The earth is yours, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.

Help us fulfill Jesus’ call to love our neighbors and take action to look out for one another. We remember the people on the frontline of plastic pollution. We pray to you, Lord, that you protect them from the diseases and flooding that come with plastic pollution and that they may find comfort in you.

The earth is yours, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.

We pray that world leaders would act on plastic pollution, coming together to agree on an ambitious and binding plastics treaty.

“Doxastikon” from the Orthodox Vespers for the Environment

Almighty God, who created all things with wisdom and who watches over and guides them by your all-powerful hand, grant well-being that all creation may prosper and remain unharmed by hostile elements; for you, Master, commanded that the works of your hands should remain unshaken until the ends of the age; for you spoke and they came into being and they receive from you mercy for the turning away of all harm, and for the salvation of the human race which glorifies your name which is praised above all.



Plastic Jesus Song and Lyrics



Share

PLASTIC JESUS

BY: ALYSSA CREASY, JOHN CREASY, RANDY FLOWERS, KEN MEDEMA,
ANDRA MORAN, BRYAN SI... BEVERLY VANDER MOLEN



Watch on  YouTube




Creation is Waiting For Us Song and Lyrics



Share

Creation Is Waiting For Us



Watch on  YouTube



Fall In Love With The Earth

LYRIC VIDEO



Share

fall in love



Earth

Watch on  YouTube

Actions

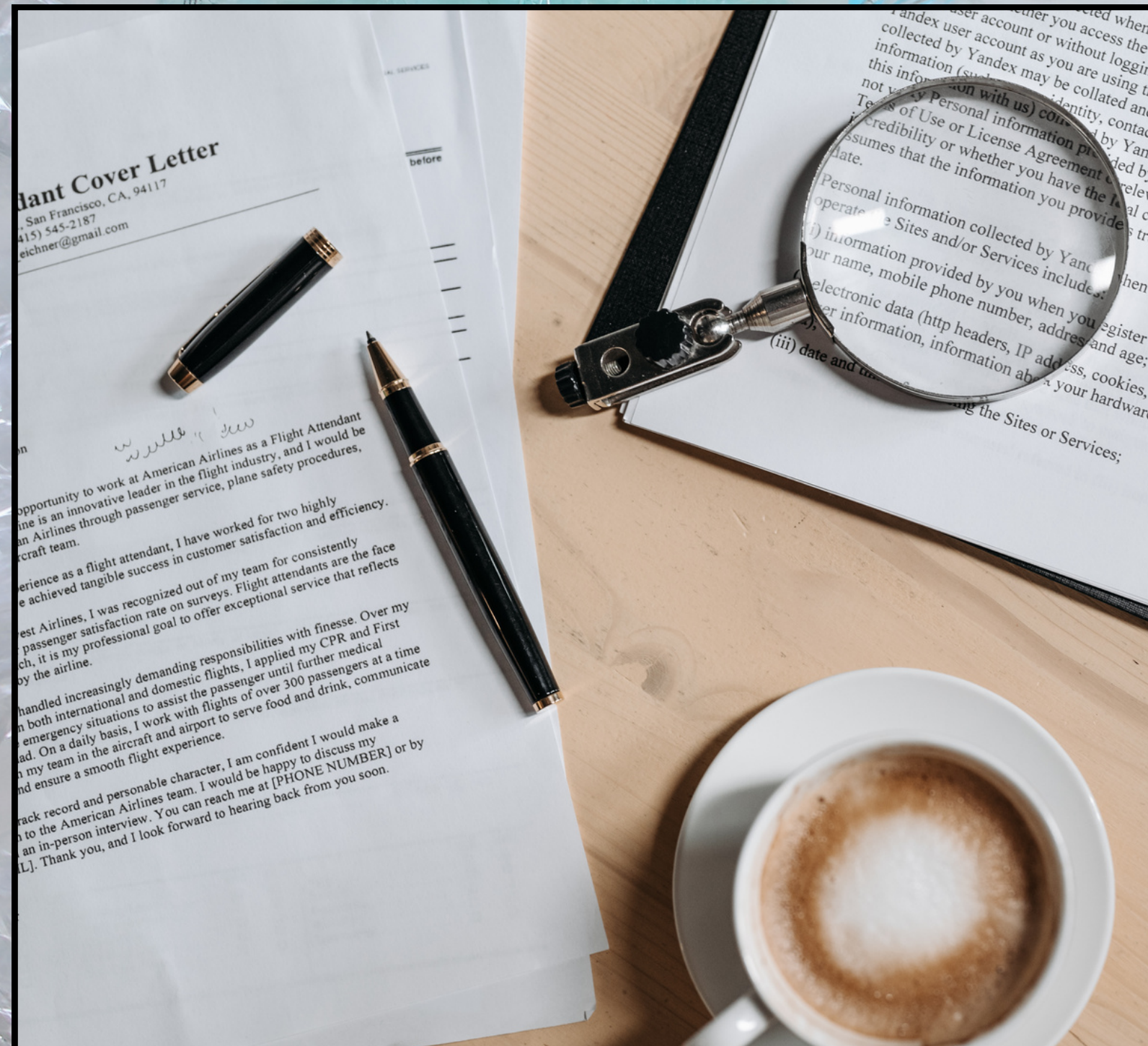




**What steps can
YOU/WE take to
reduce plastic
waste?**



Personal Actions



1. Try doing a plastic-free Lenten season
2. Reduce shellfish consumption
3. Educate yourself on your personal plastic use

Community Actions



1. Reduce the amount of single-use plastics used for community meals
2. Do a community cleanup in your neighborhoods or public spaces
3. Donate to support communities impacted by pollution
4. Advocate for your denomination or communion to completely divest from fossil fuel and petroleum companies.

International Advocacy

Advocate for the U.S. government to sign onto the U.N. Environment Assembly resolution to end plastic pollution and create the world's first global plastic pollution treaty by 2024.

This agreement would address the full life cycle of plastic, from its production to its disposal and have significant implications for the economies of major plastic-producing countries.

National Advocacy

Write a letter to your
congresspeople to
support the REDUCE
Act

Sample Letter to Congress

Dear [Member of Congress],

As a Christian, I deeply care about protecting God's creation. Part of that caring for the Earth is to reduce the amount of plastic that we have released on the planet.

I urge you to stand in favor of the Rewarding Efforts to Decrease Unrecycled Contaminants in Ecosystems (REDUCE) Act (H.R. 5564/S. 2844). Plastics have found their way into every corner of the planet and have an impact on the health of humans, land, plants, water and animals.

The REDUCE Act would put a fee on virgin plastic resin used for single-use products. By doing so, it will help shift our economy away from virgin plastics and toward recycled content and alternatives such as reuse and refill systems, thereby reducing plastic pollution, protecting human health and the environment and promoting the transition toward a more circular economy.

The REDUCE Act is a crucial first step to slowing, and then stopping, the unsustainable flow of plastic waste into nature and our communities by leveraging the power of the market to incentivize commitments to use less virgin plastic. I strongly support this bill and encourage you to do so as well.

Sincerely,

[Signed Your Name]

REDUCE Act

Policy Name: Rewarding Efforts to Decrease Unrecycled Contaminants in Ecosystems (REDUCE) Act



REDUCE Act



- Impose a tax on new plastic being manufactured
- Create a fund that would use the money from the plastic tax to fund plastic waste reduction activities
- Exempt certain products and small businesses.

From our CJM team,

Thank you!

