

The new year brings a feeling of renewal and a fresh start. Many people use this time to set New Year's Resolutions to create good habits. The Wesley Green Team would like to challenge you to make a resolution to be a more mindful consumer in 2020.

Here are some suggestions of areas that you can make more ethical consumer choices:

- Reduce and Re-Use. Identify places in your life that you use disposable or single-use packaging and make a plan to reduce your consumption of single-use items. Is there a re-useable option for something you commonly dispose of, or a way you can re-purpose it? Here are some suggestions:
  - Straws: Use a stainless steel, silicone, or glass straw. Many come with a carrying case and cleaning brush; Take them to restaurants and bring them home to wash and re-use!
  - Garbage bags: Use re-useable garbage bags or wet bags for your household garbage cans, and when they are full dump all of the garbage into one plastic garbage bag to put in your collection bin.
  - Coffee cups: Invest in a 12, 16, or 20 oz re-useable travel mug and bring it with you to coffee shops.
- At the grocery store:
  - Bring re-useable grocery bags and produce bags. If you do need to use a plastic bag, re-use it and/or recycle it (several stores in the area offer bread and grocery bag recycling).
  - Be aware of how your food is packaged. Is there a different option that is wrapped with less wasteful packaging (for example, use a mesh produce bag rather than produce packed in plastic)?
- Clothing: Be mindful of where and how your clothing is made. Who made your clothes – does the brand disclose their production and supply chain? What type of dyes and materials were used and how are they disposed of? How long are you going to use it?
- Toiletries: make or purchase fabric alternatives to cotton rounds. Look into reusable silicone alternatives to cotton swabs.
- Check out the REI Opt to Act challenge for weekly challenges (*spoiler: they even have a way to reduce the amount of junk mail you get!*)
- For more in-depth information, examples, and resources about these suggestions, check out the Green Team's page on the Wesley website!

There are endless eco-friendly alternatives for our household items. But don't feel like you need to spend a lot of money to become more of a conscientious consumer. Before purchasing anything, look around your home to see what you can repurpose and reuse. You might be surprised what you already have!

Above all, please don't let these suggestions overwhelm you. One reason that New Year's Resolutions often fail is that people try to make big changes too quickly. Instead of trying to make all of these changes at once, commit to making slow, sustainable changes. Identify one area that you would like to make a more conscientious alternative and find a way to make that change work for you. Once it becomes a sustainable habit, identify another area to work on. This may look different for each person and each household.

The Lord has entrusted us with our beautiful Earth. Let's do all we can to be good stewards of it!