

# Sustaining Earth, Our Island Home

## FAQ's

### 1. Does it matter what type of device I use?

No. The carbon tracker is mobile-friendly, though you still get to it through the internet (a true mobile app will be available in a few months.) Doesn't matter what kind of phone you use, as long as you can access the internet. Laptops and tablets are also fine, of course.

### 2. Can we start using the app now?

Yes. Go to [sustainislandhome.org](http://sustainislandhome.org). Enjoy the photos, messages and prayers, and then scroll down to see the current participation by various churches in the Diocese of California, and the total (at the top) of all we are doing together. Then select Get Started in the upper right corner.

Select your city of residence and your congregation. Your baseline carbon footprint will be based on data from your city of residence but your actions, reducing that carbon footprint, will be credited to your church.

After you choose these parameters, you'll be taken to the site of your city (or county, in some cases) where you will establish an account (My Profile), and answer some questions about your lifestyle habits (My Energy Profile), which will allow the app to define your carbon footprint. Then you will select Actions to reduce that footprint. You can communicate with fellow church members or neighbors about your actions, or ask questions. The app will show, under My Dashboard, where you started (My Baseline) what actions you've planned or completed (My Plan) and how much you've saved (My Progress).

### 3. What if I don't want to be in a competition to be the greenest person at Trinity?

No need to. Everyone does what they can, and progresses at a rate that's comfortable for them. If you feel like sharing a completed action, or something you learned, that's great! If you want to ask a question, that's great too. But these are totally optional, and your data are completely private, only shared in the aggregate (anonymously), and never sold.

### 4. I don't have the financial resources to do this. OR

### 5. I don't have the time to do this. OR

### 6. I have already done a lot and there's not much else I can do.

You'll be surprised. There are over 70 different actions you can take, and they are ranked from Easy to Challenging. For each action, the upfront cost, the carbon reduction, and annual dollar savings are shown. You can filter by level of difficulty (Easy actions tend to cost little or nothing), by impact, or by category (based on where your My Baseline report shows your carbon "spending" is). And all the changes you wish to make will probably happen over a 3-5 year period, so no need to budget for them all at once. The important thing is to make a plan and get started!

**Time:** It takes about an hour to fill out your energy profile in detail, read about actions, and select several to put in your Plan. There are some shortcuts so it's possible to complete your profile in a few minutes.

**If you've done a lot already:** You are compared to other houses in your city in the My Progress section, so if you are really green already you get credit! But there are always a few more things you can do.

### 7. I hit a snag. What now?

For now, the Trinity rep to the program is Nancy Grove. Please feel free to email me at [nbgrove102@gmail.com](mailto:nbgrove102@gmail.com). I can answer most questions, and if I can't the developer is working closely with us. It's highly likely you'll have an answer within 24 hours.

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## FAQ's 2

### 1. How do I get an online PG&E account and download my energy use?

Find a paper bill. It will have your account number in the upper right corner. Go to [pge.com](http://pge.com). Sign up for an account, providing a user name and password. The site will open to the home screen, where you will select "Solar & Energy Details roughly in the middle of the screen. Push the green button to download your gas and electricity use to a spreadsheet using the CSV format.

### 2. How do I opt up to 100% green energy?

If you live in San Mateo County, go to [peninsulacleanenergy.com](http://peninsulacleanenergy.com). This is the County entity that purchases energy for all County residents, unless you've "opted out" and chosen to remain with PG&E (PG&E provides distribution and billing services to everyone.) At the top of the first screen you see, select "Choose 100% Renewable Energy." For a penny per kilowatt-hour more, you can know that you are purchasing electricity created from renewable, carbon-free sources. This upgrade costs the average PCE residential customer \$4.23 a month more than the basic PCE rate, and only \$2.50 a month more than the basic PG&E rate. Fill out the easy online form and you are all set!

If you live elsewhere, go to the site of your electricity provider. If you have problems, reach out to Nancy Grove ([nbgrove102@gmail.com](mailto:nbgrove102@gmail.com)) or the contact within your Sustain Island Home account.

### 3. How do I buy carbon offsets for air travel?

If, like most of us, you travel by plane several times a year, carbon offsets are an inexpensive, easy way to make a big difference in your carbon footprint. Carbon offsets are a market mechanism, not all that different from cap and trade, where creators of greenhouse gasses like air travelers pay organizations, usually non-profits, to undertake activities that reduce greenhouse gasses, such as scrubbing coal plant emissions, reforestation projects, methane capture, etc. Carbon offsets got a bad name in some quarters in the early years of their use because there were occasional scams, and poor oversight. Now there are several national and global certifying agencies that ensure offset projects are legitimate (such as ensuring that they would not have happened without the offset revenue, a principle known as "additionality"). Look for certification by such entities as VGS, VCS, CDM, or green-e. Delta and United Airlines offer carbon offset purchases within their websites, making it easy to purchase offsets when you buy your ticket. United: <https://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/company/globalcitizenship/environment/carbon-offset-program.aspx>

Delta: [https://www.delta.com/en\\_US/about-delta/corporate-responsibility/carbon-emissions-calculator](https://www.delta.com/en_US/about-delta/corporate-responsibility/carbon-emissions-calculator)

And a good overview article for those who'd like to understand how offsets work, why they can do so much good so inexpensively, and how they are certified to ensure they do what they claim:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/sep/16/carbon-offset-projects-carbon-emissions>

For more information on standards: <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/offsetstandards.html>

### 4. The only way we'll impact climate change is through major government policy changes and reducing industrial pollution. It's a waste of time to undertake "feel good" efforts like this.

Here's what that assessment misses. 1) The direct impact: The EPA has estimated that if every household in the U.S. took five actions (use 100% green electricity; buy an EV, bike, walk, or use public transit; electrify the home; reduce or offset 100% of air travel, and stop eating red meat) it would wipe out 40% of US emissions. 2) The indirect impact: The Episcopal Church has official standing in both the UNFCCC and We Are Still In (an organization of cities, states, corporations, tribes, and faith organizations, working toward meeting the US Paris Agreement commitments) as well as a lobbying arm in Washington, D.C. Greening your own home in community with what will be millions of other Episcopalians is an effective advocacy tool.