

Prayer points – June 2018



The Talanoa Dialogue

2018 marks a critical stage in the global climate negotiations process. By the end of this year, [governments will meet in Poland](#) to finalise the Paris Climate Agreement, agreed in Paris in December 2015.

In Paris rich and poor countries united to push through the agreement, but since then there have been significant disagreements over key technical details. The developed nations want all countries to share the same set of rules on how carbon emissions are measured, reported and verified. However many emerging economies are arguing for more flexibility. Developing countries are also frustrated with the lack of leadership from the developed world. Commitments to cut carbon are still woefully inadequate they say. The government of Fiji currently holds the presidency of the UN talks. They have introduced a process called the [Talanoa Dialogue](#) for 2018 to serve as an initial stocktaking exercise. Countries met recently in Bonn to answer three key questions: Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

The Dialogue asks countries to take stock of their collective efforts to reduce emissions and build greater resilience, in line with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement and to prepare updated or new NDCs by 2020. Its ultimate goal is to help countries achieve their ambitions in implementing and improving their NDCs. We give thanks for the vision and energy of the Fijian officials in implementing and hosting this dialogue and pray that the issues of conflict raised can be worked through and the initial energy generated by the Paris Agreement can be maintained.

Environment Sunday

Churches are marking this on 3 June 2018 - the closest Sunday to 5 June, World Environment Day. There is a lot of [helpful material available](#) for churches to use within their services and during their prayer time. There is a new resource for Sunday Schools called '[Oceans of Plastic](#)'. Elizabeth Perry has also produced for CCOW an excellent powerpoint series on the [diversity of creation](#), ideal for use in reflective worship or prayer, also available as videos from [the Anglican Alliance site](#).

Arctic sea ice

As temperatures at the North Pole approached the melting point this week and Arctic ice thins toward the vanishing point, [new research](#) suggests that the extraordinary records being set year after year are a sign of man-made climate change.

One new study, published recently in the journal [Weather and Climate Extremes](#), found that unusual heat in the Arctic during 2016 could not have happened without the increases in greenhouse gas emissions since the Industrial Revolution, which has set off a feedback loop of rising temperatures and dwindling sea ice.

"While sea ice melts due to Arctic warming, ice loss itself can cause additional warming near the surface and be responsible for most of the Arctic amplification (a phenomena used to characterize the strong Arctic warming compared to lower latitudes)," lead author Lantao Sun said. In the past, winter heat waves didn't have much of an impact on sea ice. Even though the temperature would rise higher than normal, it was still comfortably below freezing most of the time. Not anymore.

"The warming we're starting to see in winter is enough now to impact ice growth in the winter," she said. As temperatures spiked throughout the winter of 2016-2017, Stroeve found that the growth in ice thickness over the Arctic Ocean was reduced by 5 inches.

World Oceans Day

On June 8th we celebrate World Ocean's Day with the general theme of "Our Oceans, Our Future." There are [resources and information on their website](#) with various issues that we can pray about – not least the very topical issue of plastic pollution in our oceans.

Devastating rains in Kenya – are there links to climate change?

[Devastating seasonal rains in Kenya](#) earlier this month have displaced nearly 300,000 people and killed 158 people. Other east African countries have also been affected including Rwanda where heavy rains and landslides have caused hundreds of deaths, demolished thousands of homes and destroyed crops, and Somalia, where FAO reports that the floods are some of the worst the region has ever seen. Scientists with the World Weather Attribution ([WWA](#)) programme have begun analysing the unusually intense rainfall to determine whether climate change played a role.

The floods follow a serious drought bringing a double tragedy. Please pray for all those who have lost loved ones, their homes and livelihoods. Is the world becoming immune to these continual disasters affecting poor people in so many countries. We pray for a generous response – and for people to become clearer about the links between carbon emissions and the increasingly unstable climate we are experiencing.

Living flame of love – by Chris Polhill

‘Living flame of love’
so touch our hearts with your bright fire,
that we of tepid, even chilly faith,
may be alight with your passion,
and warm the globe with your love,
reflecting your care
for all of your creation. Amen

UK Soils under threat

A [new report from WWF](#) finds that UK soils are being destroyed at ten times the rate they are being created, costing £1.2 billion annually in England and Wales. The report claims that the agricultural sector - which generates £8 billion of UK GDP and employs almost half a million people - is at risk due to poor farming and land management practices. Up to one-third of farmers are not complying with water protection laws, compounded by a lack of enforcement by the Environment Agency, which currently only has the resources to visit just under 1% of UK farms each year. We pray for [increased awareness of the seriousness of this issue](#) and for more resources to be made available to prevent water pollution and soil erosion. Fertile and sustainable soils are the basis of our future food supplies.

Speak Up Week of action

The Climate Coalition’s have a [‘Speak Up Week’](#) of targeted action between 30 June-8th July, which encourages as many people as possible to talk to their MPs about climate change. Just one event in an MP’s constituency could have a huge impact. This year they are asking MPs to sign up to a joint letter to the Prime Minister, asking her to back a UK net zero emissions target by 2050 at the latest.

The Climate Coalition’s website has plenty of information and resources, including a community pack for those able to organize an event. We pray that this week will have a really powerful impact on MP’s around the UK.

Baked Alaska

Baked Alaska brings together a collection of colourful, inter-connecting stories of humanity living with the wild, unpredictable effects of climate change from the four corners of the earth. After a successful national tour by Riding Lights, *Baked Alaska* has been adapted for film and is available for FREE download on [their website](#).

Seven episodes draw together themes from the show to highlight the breadth of the issues that arise from climate change. Accompanying resources have been developed for schools and small group discussion and are also available free of charge.