

Prayer points – October 2018



This week marks the end of the period known as Season of Creation, Creationtide or Time for Creation. We give thanks for the opportunities the time has given for Christians to join in prayer and action, for the ways it has reminded us of God's goodness, the earth's beauty and sorrow, and our need to live in harmony with the rest of the created order. We join in an [Anglican Alliance](#) prayer:

Loving Father

We give thanks for the abundance of your creation. We pray for forgiveness where our greedy and unjust actions have harmed the environment and our neighbours. Please give us strength to change our behavior and courage to challenge others. Give us a passion for justice to support those affected by climate change and protect us when we face these challenges ourselves. Help us to see clearly the way to restore right and just relationships with the environment and each other, for the good of all. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

A season of storms

The northern hemisphere tropical cyclone season has brought destructive storms to both the Atlantic and Pacific regions. Recovery has begun in communities affected by Hurricane Florence and Super Typhoon Mangkhut/Ompong. Preparation helped to reduce the death toll for these storms - but both still caused casualties and massive damage. In the USA forty four people died and [\\$40 billion](#) worth of damage were caused by Florence's winds and flooding. In the Philippines, dozens died, many in a [landslide that hit a mining community; over 10,000 homes were destroyed](#); and agricultural damage alone totaled [over 200 million pounds](#), including crops lost just before harvest. The storm also caused extensive damage in [Hong Kong](#) and [southern China](#). We pray for all who have suffered losses and all working on recovery, especially for people in poverty, who face new expenses and [higher prices](#) for essential foods. We pray for people in Japan, Taiwan and the Antilles preparing for or recovering from other storms. And, knowing that increased sea surface temperatures and ocean heat [can make strong storms more likely](#), we pray for action on climate.

Praying for COP24

The next UN climate talks take place from the 2nd to the 14th of December in Katowice, Poland. COP24 is an important meeting, as it needs to ratify the Paris 'rule book', which governs the way the Paris Agreement is implemented. The 'rulebook' [will](#) help countries determine their future emissions reductions and climate finance contributions. It will also include processes to hold countries accountable for fulfilling their Paris promises.

Key issues [include](#) how countries format their future climate pledges, how often those pledges are reviewed, how countries report on their progress; and how pledges of climate finance are decided and delivered. Preliminary meetings [have been going on all year](#) as has the [Talanoa Dialogue](#); the chairs of the different working groups [are now preparing](#) negotiating texts for the Poland talks. We ask God to give them wisdom for this vital work, and pray that the preparations they and others are making – and the sharing from the Talanoa Dialogue - will lead to genuine progress.

I Peter 4:10-11

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

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Harvest

Harvest can be a time of joy. But for many affected by this year's extreme weather events, low yields or lost harvests are bringing stress because of lost income and uncertainty about where much-needed food will come from. We rejoice with farmers who have had a good harvest and pray for those whose harvests have been or are precarious. And we pray for a generous sharing of the fruits of God's earth, so that all may have enough.

Talking about Climate

Good news! The BBC [has issued new guidance](#), indicating a clear position that “man-made climate change exists” and that “as climate change is accepted as happening, you do not need a ‘denier’ to balance the debate.” We give thanks for this change and pray that it will inspire more accurate reporting, better public understanding of climate science and increased action to care for our earth.

Lifting new developments up to God

Every month there are so many new developments – some positive like the [Global Climate Action Summit](#) in San Francisco or a [new agreement that guarantees environmental rights](#) ... and some less so, like efforts to [undermine climate science](#) or news of [rising emissions](#) in some contexts. We lift all these before God, asking a blessing on what is helpful and good, and for God to change hearts and practices where people are acting in ways that are harmful to the earth and each other.

Mixed forests better for carbon dioxide reduction

Meeting the Paris Agreement's long-term temperature goals [is going to require removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere](#), as well as reducing the amount we put in.

Planting large numbers of trees is one relatively low-tech way of accomplishing this. How the trees are planted matters, though: there needs to be due respect for human rights and the broader environment. It also [turns out that the nature of the planting](#) can affect its effectiveness as a way of storing carbon. As Carbon Brief noted in its weekly update of 22 August: “A new study ... based on research in southern China ... found that forests with a mix of tree species can store twice the carbon of a monoculture plantation. This could be because a diverse range of trees are better able to occupy different heights and spaces in a forest canopy...as well as attract a wide range of animals to help pollinate plants.” Pray that the results of this and other studies help people working to improve carbon storage also to help improve biodiversity.

Learning from Other Creatures (from 'The Community of Creation', a sermon by Richard Bauckham)

“By viewing ... other creatures as valuable only for our sake, only as resources, we have got to the self--defeating point of wasting, spoiling and exhausting the resources ... We need to recover the sense that other creatures have intrinsic value. It's just good that they exist.

And that's what the biblical Christian theme of all creation's praise of God can give us back. Of course, the other creatures don't praise God in the same ways that we do ... But they praise God by being what God made them to be – in all the endlessly diverse and particular ways they are... To take delight in the creatures or to wonder at them is to share, to some degree, God's delight in them, to begin to value them as God does, and to recognize them as fellow--creatures. I've taken to noticing trees in particular ... All the endlessly complex patterns of their branches, all those different shapes, but they all (or most of them) have that upward direction, they reach up to the skies as though they were lifting them up to God in heaven, praising God by the whole direction in which they grow ... We being human can choose not to praise God or we can do so only with our voices. The other creatures teach us to praise God not only with our lips but also with our lives. They teach us what our lives, like theirs, are really for: to live and to grow in the direction of God's glory. “

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