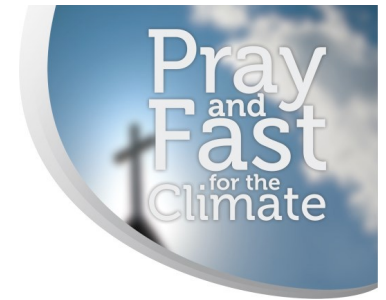


## Prayer points – May 2019



### Another Devastating Cyclone for Mozambique

Five weeks after Cyclone Idai devastated southern Mozambique, the even stronger, if smaller Cyclone Kenneth hit the northern part of the country. Kenneth's Category 4 winds and strong tidal surge posed a threat to coastal areas, and its precipitation posed a threat inland, where it was forecast to stall, dumping up to 80 cm of rain. Pray for all who have lost loved ones, homes or livelihoods to the storm and all who will be working for a long time to help with recovery.

Kenneth is one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones to hit mainland Africa and the furthest north to have reached hurricane-level intensity. Scientists say that the intensity of its rains and the impact of its storm surge are likely to have been increased by climate change, and the stalling that concentrates the rains may be part of a climate-related pattern. Mozambique's carbon footprint per person is tiny – about 1% of the US or 2.5% of the UK's by some calculations. Yet it is Mozambique's people who are suffering, and its government which has had to take out loans to fund recovery. Pray for climate action - and climate justice.

### Global Weirding

"Avoid the term 'global warming.'" wrote US columnist Tom Friedman in 2010. "I prefer the term 'global weirding,' because that is what actually happens as global temperatures rise and the climate changes."

The weirding has been on full display in recent months. In some places impacts are relatively mild, and the media still tend to portray unusual occurrences as isolated events without reference to climate change – as was frequently the case with the recent UK heatwave. Other devastating events are giving rise to urgent conversations around how we reduce emissions and adapt to changing weather patterns. Long-delayed rains in parts of southern Africa have led to yet another drought and increased food insecurity; patterns of intense drought in Australia have had a deep effect on farming and are now also affecting cities; unprecedented Arctic warming – Alaska broke its March average temperature record by a full 4 degrees Fahrenheit - threatens to melt permafrost and disrupt weather patterns around the world. Pray for all who are at the sharp end of 'global weirding'. And pray for all of us, that we can help people join the dots between the odd things going on around us, climate change, and what needs to be done to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

### A positive 'turning point' in the UK?

April has been an extraordinary month for UK climate action. The Extinction Rebellion protests in London, the growing movement of youth strikes for the climate, Greta Thunberg's visit to the UK and speech to Parliament, David Attenborough's widely viewed documentary 'Climate Change: The Facts' and statements by the Governor of the Bank of England and a range of politicians have helped to place the climate crisis – and the UK response to it - at the centre of national discussion.

"[This] feels like a real turning point in the history of how we defend our planet," said MP Caroline Lucas. "We are ... going to change the definition of what is politically possible so that it becomes what is the scientifically necessary." With the Committee on Climate Change about to give advice on the UK's long-term climate change targets, it's vital to have political will for serious change. Pray that April's events do indeed create it – and that politicians respond by pursuing strong climate-friendly policies.

### Mass Lobby of Parliament

On June 26<sup>th</sup> people in the UK will have a special opportunity to have influence as part of a planned 'The Time Is Now' lobby of Parliament. This event, organised by the Climate Coalition – an alliance of faith and secular groups, offers a chance for constructive conversation with MPs. Participants will be asking MPs to commit to supporting a net zero emissions target and a strong Environment Bill. Pray for the lobby organisers, for good participation; and that the event will help the UK care better for God's creation.

## Emperor Penguins

Changes in sea ice have caused the collapse of the Antarctic's second largest emperor penguin colony. Emperor penguins need stable sea ice in order to breed, and the early break-up of sea ice over the past three seasons has killed almost all the chicks before they fledged. Many of the adult penguins seem now to have migrated to another, more stable colony. The incident is a reminder of the delicate relationship between living beings and the wider ecosystems in which they live – and of how quickly dramatic losses can occur. Please give thanks for the scientists who are helping to see such changes and pray that we do more to protect the species with whom we share our common home.

## A New Thing

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.  
Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.  
The wild beasts will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches,  
for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert to give drink to my chosen people,  
the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.” (Isaiah 43:18-21)

## Greta Thunberg's Speech to Parliament – Extract

“Avoiding climate breakdown will require cathedral thinking. We must lay the foundation while we may not know exactly how to build the ceiling.

Sometimes we just simply have to find a way. The moment we decide to fulfil something, we can do anything. And I’m sure that the moment we start behaving as if we were in an emergency, we can avoid climate and ecological catastrophe. Humans are very adaptable: we can still fix this. But the opportunity to do so will not last for long. We must start today. We have no more excuses.

We children are not sacrificing our education and our childhood for you to tell us what you consider is politically possible in the society that you have created. We have not taken to the streets for you to take selfies with us, and tell us that you really admire what we do.

We children are doing this to wake the adults up. We children are doing this for you to put your differences aside and start acting as you would in a crisis. We children are doing this because we want our hopes and dreams back.” (Full speech)

## Central Banks Call for Changes in the Financial Sector

In a move that could have major impacts, a coalition of three dozen central banks and supervisors representing countries from five continents issued a “call for collective action ... [together with] recommendations ... to facilitate the role of the financial sector in achieving the objectives of the Paris agreement.” The first of these recommendations is crucial; it calls on central banks to integrate monitoring of climate-related financial risk into their work, and encourages financial firms “to take a long-term, strategic approach to the consideration of these risks, and to embed them into their business-as-usual governance and risk-management frameworks.” Why does this matter so much? As Gillian Tett writes in the Financial Times, “now that central banks have said the issue is linked to financial stability, no executive can ignore this without facing the risk of shareholder suits.” This will lead to strong pressure on the whole financial sector – not just ethical funds - to invest in ways that are more sustainable. There's a long way to go before the mechanisms for the necessary shift are all in place: pray that work on them can be done rapidly and effectively. And pray that these moves help to finance a genuine shift to a low-carbon economy.

## Sweden's No-Fly Movement

Swedish people are historically among the world's most frequent flyers – but recently there are signs of change. Last year, exceptional warmth and forest fires increased awareness of climate issues. A new government tax on aviation and several public movements, including a campaign to make 2019 a no-flying year and the growing influence of the concept of 'flying shame', have helped lead to seven months of year-on-year declines in aviation passenger numbers and a 21% rise in the number of people taking the train for business. People are even choosing to take the train for longer European journeys, leading the national rail company to say that it will reintroduce night services to European capitals. Give thanks for this indicator that individual choices can add up to noticeable differences ... and pray the no-fly movement inspires others.