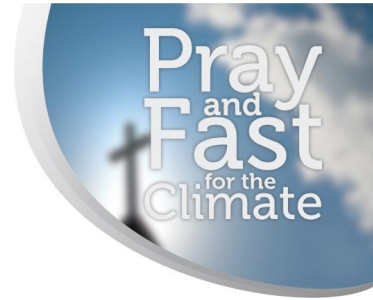


Prayer points – August 2019



Season of Creation – The Web of Life

September 1st will see the start of the 'Season of Creation' (also known as 'Time for Creation' or 'Creationtide'). We give thanks for the [array of resources](#), composed by Christians around the world, that will help us mark the season. We pray that people will use these resources to plan services and events that help congregations celebrate God's goodness, rejoice in creation's beauty and diversity, and recommit to living out our calling to care for the earth and each other.

This year's theme is 'The Web of Life - Biodiversity as God's blessing'. The main prayer includes these words: "During this Season of Creation, open our eyes to see the precious diversity that is all around us. Enlighten our minds to appreciate the delicate balance maintained by each creature. Inspire us to conserve the precious habitats that nurture this web of life" During August, as we prepare to mark the Season of Creation, let's take the time to appreciate the web of life where we are - and commit to taking at least one step to conserve our local habitats. If you have a particular prayer request relating to the web of life where you are, let us know, so that we can include it in our September materials.

Forests

The Bible often speaks of the blessings trees provide – shade from the sun, fruits and seeds for eating, a home for birds and insects. A recent [study](#) has also highlighted their carbon benefits, [suggesting that large-scale reforestation](#) could be 'among the most effective strategies' for reducing carbon in the atmosphere. While there are [differences of opinion](#) about [how much reforestation earth could sustain and how much carbon reforested trees could actually sequester](#), scientists have generally welcomed the reminder that planting large numbers of trees on previously forested land – and preserving our existing forests – will be an important part of countering climate change. They've also emphasised that [time is of the essence](#): the longer we wait, the harder it may be to find the proper conditions for trees to grow.

We give thanks for the gift of trees and forests. We pray for all who tend and care for those that currently exist, and for all who are working out how and where reforestation could best take place. And we pray for the preservation of forests under threat – and rapid moves to encourage appropriate tree-planting. We ask God, too, to show us what we can do. The Anglican Church of Burundi [planted over twelve million trees in a decade](#). Could churches worldwide take a lead in planting efforts?

Fire and ice

Last month was the [hottest June on record](#). The overall trend included several extreme events, including France's June heat wave, which scientists say [was made at least five times more likely](#) by global heating. July, too, has seen abnormal heat. In Europe, [temperature records have been broken](#) in many countries, including Germany, Belgium, and the [UK](#). [Paris](#) registered a record high of 42.6 Celsius (108.7 F).

Some of the most alarming temperatures – and impacts – are occurring in and around the Arctic. In June, surface temperatures on the Chukchi Sea near [Alaska were 5 degrees \(Celsius\) warmer](#) than the 1981-2010 average; the heat and storms are causing ice to [melt so rapidly](#) that the sea's ice cover is [drastically decreased](#), and areas of open water are edging ever closer to the North Pole. (Overall, Arctic sea ice has been at [record low volumes](#) since late June.) Such changes [affect local species](#) – some cannot find food or tolerate the increased warmth. They also create dangerous feedback loops, as the shift from ice to water means that less heat is reflected and more absorbed, increasing temperatures further. Land temperatures have also been exceptional: Alaska [has had above average temperatures every day since 25 April](#). This too creates dangerous feedback: it [dries out vegetation](#) and allows more thunderstorms to form, setting the scene for [devastating wildfires](#) which have covered many parts of the Arctic in smoke. The fires then have further effects that accelerate heating. We pray for the Arctic's plants and animals, many of which [are struggling](#) to adapt to this new world, and for the Arctic's people as they, too, struggle to adapt.

www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk

Climate Disasters

As the UN prepares for a major Climate Action Summit in September, a key [disaster risk reduction expert has stated](#) that climate disasters are now happening at the rate of one a week. Some, like major cyclones and droughts, make the news, at least when they first occur. Others – like the [frequent, intense droughts in Somalia](#) – are barely reported, though they devastate people's lives.

It's vital, the UN says, to focus on both climate mitigation – reducing emissions to slow the pace of climate change – and adaptation, particularly building infrastructure that helps people to be resilient when extreme weather and disasters strike. As preparations for the summit continue, pray that nations will strengthen their action plans to reduce emissions and will provide the funds to implement appropriately determined adaptation strategies for all communities.

Sailing to the Summit

Climate campaigner Greta Thunberg [will be sailing to the Climate Action Summit](#). The young activist doesn't fly, and a cruise ship across the Atlantic wasn't an option for her either, given their emissions. But the owners of a special zero-carbon boat, built for round-the-world racing, have offered to take her and her father. Clearly this isn't a solution that other people can emulate – yet. But her voyage is highlighting the need not to accept the status quo, to find alternatives, and to make use of technology to do things differently. Pray for safe travels and productive meetings. And pray that her trip will inspire increased efforts to create sustainable ways of travelling that are more broadly accessible.

Turning Plans into Action

The UK Government has clear, science-led carbon budgets, thanks to its groundbreaking Climate Change Act – but it's seriously off track on meeting them and faces 'embarrassment' unless it quickly brings policy and practice into line with its ambitions. That was [the message](#) of the Climate Change Committee's annual progress report, released this month. Last year the committee identified twenty-five must-do policy actions; only one has been delivered, and no progress at all has been made in ten areas. As the new Conservative cabinet takes up power, pray that it addresses these issues. Pray, too, for all working on the [Environment Bill](#), which will need to come to Parliament this Autumn.

In the US, despite unhelpful federal pronouncements and policies, some states are making strong enough plans that, with just a few more participating, they [could bring the country close to its Paris commitments](#). Most importantly, [California and New York have established](#) net zero targets and are moving to implement them. California has taken the particularly significant step of [working with auto makers to establish its own vehicle efficiency standards](#), opposing federal efforts to [weaken national standards](#). We pray that all in authority will come to acknowledge the need for climate action, and we give thanks for and pray for those already working on climate action at federal, state and local levels.

Reducing Coal Use

Reducing dependence on heavily polluting coal is vital to meeting the Paris targets. In the UK, coal's share of power generation has already fallen dramatically. This year, Germany has seen a very rapid shift, with coal output plunging by over a fifth. This [is a result](#) of both increased renewable generation and the [EU's revisions to carbon pricing](#). Its impact? German power sector emissions for January to June have fallen by 19% year-on-year. Give thanks for this; pray that it inspires other countries.

Isaiah 40: 28-29, 31

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength...

they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles;

they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.