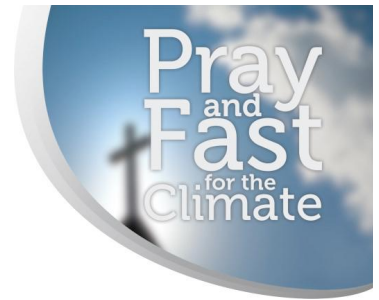


# Prayer points – November 2019



## Creator of our common home,

As we seek to respond to the crises facing our planet, we begin this month with a prayer encouraging us all to play our part in creation care:

*Creator of our common home,  
You fill the earth and sea and sky with life  
Forgive us our neglect of your creation  
The choking waste of our pollution  
The damage done by careless habits  
And our indifference to future generations.  
Help us to amend our lives  
To refuse more plastic if we can't reuse it  
To lift our voice for lasting change  
And to live well and gently on the earth  
To the glory of your Son, the Living Word  
Through whom you made this fragile world.  
Amen.*

Rt Revd Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford

## The next UN climate conference

The annual UN climate conference was due to be held this December in Santiago, Chile. However due to the recent protests, the Chilean government [has withdrawn from hosting this key event](#). Organisers are '[exploring other hosting options](#)'; the [Spanish government, with Chile's support, has offered Madrid as an alternative location](#). The change in plans represents a major upheaval for all those involved, so we pray for all the organisers and new hosts, asking that this key summit, which brings together negotiators and leaders from around 200 countries, will go ahead as smoothly as possible. We pray also for a just and peaceful resolution of the social, political and economic issues behind the Chilean protests.

## Prayers for the A Rocha Family

*"We are all Christians, involved professionally in nature conservation, motivated by our love for God and the things he loves. We work within and across many cultures and languages, trying to build community wherever we are with anyone and everyone working to protect our fragile planet, whatever their beliefs—or lack of them. This is an infinitely expandable family, one where all can find a welcome." Miranda Harris, [Family Trees](#)*

Christians around the world have been inspired by the work of A Rocha, the Christian environmental charity founded by Peter and Miranda Harris, which has national organisations in more than twenty countries. There has, therefore, been an outpouring of grief and prayer following a [tragic car accident](#) which claimed the lives of Miranda Harris; Chris Naylor, A Rocha's International Director; and Susanna, Chris's wife, and which left Peter Harris and the driver of their car hospitalised. We join in prayers for the Harris and Naylor families, for all the A Rocha family as they grieve, and for a full recovery for Peter Harris and the car's driver. And we pray a continued blessing on A Rocha's work to help Christians grow in faith and care for God's glorious creation.

## Our sacred duty

*"In 2019, following Jesus must include standing in solidarity with our neighbours around the world who are on the front line of the Climate Emergency. We must continue to speak out and act. It's our sacred duty to protect the planet, as well as our neighbours around the world who are on the front line of Climate Change. As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs — we live them out. One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours. Another is that we are charged by our creator with taking good care of his creation. The moral crisis of climate change is an opportunity to find purpose and joy, and to respond to our creator's charge."*

*Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, comments on visiting Hereford Diocese, which is working towards becoming an Eco Diocese.*

## Psalm 68:32-35 (NIV version)

Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord,  
to him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens,  
Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the heavens.  
You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.  
Praise be to God!

### *"Can even the costliest systems be future-proofed ...*

*...in an age of storms made more powerful by climate change?"* This is the question [raised by journalists](#) in Japan after a series of storms there, including the most serious typhoon in decades, caused massive flooding in areas which had been provided with strong defences. Japan, they note, has invested billions in flood prevention. But storms are now bringing what [one scientist called](#) "*rain of a strength we have never experienced*": October's Typhoon Hagabis, for example, [dumped almost a metre of rain in 24 hours](#) causing landslides and overwhelming levees. Dozens of people died, and losses [are estimated as billions of dollars](#).

Such events highlight the importance of adapting in ways that recognise that technology won't always be enough. They also highlight a point that developing countries and small island states have been raising for years: some climate impacts can't be prevented by adaptation. And they raise a question: some countries have the resources to help people rebuild. But can there be a way of compensating those countries that have smaller economies and are vulnerable to climate impacts for unavoidable 'loss and damage'?

We pray for all affected by the typhoons in Japan, especially those who grieve the loss of loved ones. We pray for people there and around the world working to help communities adapt and become resilient. And we pray for a just response to the questions raised by loss and damage in vulnerable communities and countries.

## Moving towards net zero

The evidence of climate disasters reminds us: we do not have time to waste in responding to climate change. Scientists have said this for years, and more recently, movements like the school climate strikes and Extinction Rebellion (XR), and programmes like 'Blue Planet' and David Attenborough's '[Climate Change-the Facts](#)', have also brought the message home. We give thanks that more and more people are recognising this truth and pray for it to be heard where it is still being drowned out by vested interests and apathy.

But as scientists, strikers, XR and others remind us, we need not only to talk honestly about the crisis, but to act. One of the most exciting things of recent months has been the move to set increasingly ambitious net zero targets. Two years ago, even the thought of a world where emissions were drastically reduced, and those remaining were offset, by 2050 seemed a reach. Nineteen countries [are now already on that path](#). But as it becomes clear that 2050 isn't fast enough, we're also seeing calls for far earlier commitments. In the UK, some local authorities have already responded by setting net zero goals for as early as 2030.

These early targets are important commitments to transformational change. Getting to net zero by 2030 means transforming, in ten years, the whole way we do things - heating, lighting, transport, food, waste. The discussions that are being held about how we do this - like [the recent Citizens Assembly in Oxford](#) - are helping people both to grapple with the scale of rapid change needed and to recognise that it is something we really can do if we work together. Recognising that we are already perilously late, we pray for all who commit themselves towards positive action towards zero carbon, for ever more rapid action in line with the urgency of the situation, and for wisdom in discerning the best ways forward to generate and multiply change.

## Cooperating with nature

Hedge laying for the first time this season, I found myself talking to a pleacher (that's what we call the stems that are partly cut through and laid over to form the hedge). I was reminded that I do it quite a lot, not because I imagine for a moment that the pleachers can hear me, but because it helps me to think about what I'm doing. So I may say something like "Where do you want to go?" because hedge-laying is very much a matter of co-operation with the living material we work with.

John Barnett