

Prayer points – February 2020



We know what to do ... and now is the time

World-renowned broadcaster Sir David Attenborough is launching a year of special coverage on the subject of climate change.

Explaining why, he [warns](#): "We have been putting things off for year after year ... As I speak, south east Australia is on fire. Why? Because the temperatures of the Earth are increasing ... We have to realise that this is not playing games. This is not just having nice little debates and arguments and then coming away with a compromise. This is an urgent problem that has to be solved and, what is more, we know how to do it. That's the paradoxical thing, that we're refusing to take steps that we know have to be taken. And every year that passes makes those steps more and more difficult to achieve."

In November the UN Climate summit, COP26, will take place in Glasgow. We give thanks for the news that many countries are increasing the ambition of their climate commitments in preparation for the summit ... but we are aware that more is still needed. We pray for all world leaders and governments to plan for and to start making the cuts to emissions that are so urgently needed so that this will indeed be a year of change. And we give thanks for the voice of Attenborough and other respected and influential people who have the power to change opinions ... and are using it.

Impacts of Australian bushfires

The [scale and intensity](#) of the recent Australian bushfires have caused concerns all around the world. Around 100,000 square kilometres have burned since the middle of 2019. In addition to the tragic loss of life and property, over a billion animals are estimated to have been killed so far - and these figures do not include insects and other invertebrates.

Although bushfires are a regular feature during Australia's dry season, the scale of this year is exceptional. Recovery of wildlife from such dramatic losses and burned out ecosystems may prove very challenging. These fires could, for example, drive [more than 700](#) insect species to extinction.

We pray that as people begin to rebuild their communities, attention may be given to help ecosystems recover too. And we pray for the bigger conversations at government level – for a turn towards genuine climate action and for work to help to further protect ecosystems against future fires.

Floods and Locusts

While much of Southern Africa has been suffering from drought, since July 2019, parts of East Africa and Southern Africa have seen severe flooding, with [almost 3.5 million people affected in East Africa alone](#). The exceptional East African rains, which are [linked to the same Indian Ocean phenomenon intensifying Australia's drought](#), have caused hundreds of deaths, damaged homes and infrastructure, and devastated agriculture in some areas. They have also provided ideal conditions for desert locusts to breed, [leading to one of the largest upsurges of desert locusts in decades](#). The consequences of this combination of events are potentially very severe. Nearly 25.5 million people in East Africa were already food insecure, and food [is becoming more expensive](#) and [less accessible](#) because of the multiple disasters. The rains are now spreading south: [Mozambique](#) and [Zambia](#) have been affected in recent weeks, and [Madagascar](#) has had floods relating to tropical disturbances, putting yet more people at risk. We pray for all who are working to recover from drought, floods and the devastation caused by locusts ... for adequate food supplies for all people ... and that the locust outbreak can be contained.

We pray for ...

Former Bank of England head Mark Carney, [as he undertakes new roles](#) as UN special envoy and advisor to the UK government on climate finance. We pray that he will be wise and courageous, and his work effective.

Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV)

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

New draft UN agreement for Nature

Experts [have released](#) a long-awaited [draft of an agreement to protect nature](#), which has as its aim that between now and 2030 governments and people around the world will “take urgent action across society to put biodiversity on a path to recovery for the benefit of planet and people” and that by 2050, humans will be “living in harmony with nature.”

It’s a plan with key targets, such as establishing large-scale protected areas, reducing pollution, and creating urban green spaces – and it’s much needed. Scientists warn that humans are driving the [sixth mass extinction event](#) in Earth’s history, cautioning there is a short time to act. [Elizabeth Maruma Mrema](#), the acting executive secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, has called on the negotiators to be ambitious, [saying](#): “We are failing our children and the youth ... the ocean they are seeing is full of plastic, the forest they are told to be seeing becomes bare land, the consumption patterns are leading to more pollution.” Mrema says: “If governments do not agree to take sufficient action, the risks will be major...we’ll have given up as an international community to save the planet.”

Lord, your creation is breathtakingly intricate, interwoven and wonderful. We admit our failings as a human race in ensuring proper care of this planet. We thank you for ordinary people who are playing their part in conservation, and pray for all who are charged with influence to ensure this agreement on nature exceeds expectations this year. We pray for wisdom, patience and energy for Mrema as she steers a way forward.

Signs of progress in the Business World

Microsoft has [put forward plans](#) to go ‘carbon negative’ by 2030, and to remove the equivalent of all its historic emissions by 2050. Its plans involve engaging not only with its direct emissions but also with emissions generated within its supply chain. These are [by far the most ambitious plans from a major global company](#).

Black Rock is the world’s largest asset manager with almost \$7 trillion under investment – so it’s significant that its Chief Executive [warned, in his most recent annual letter, that](#) “the evidence on climate risk is compelling investors to reassess core assumptions about modern finance.” The company announced changes to its own policies, including [exiting investments](#) in companies with more than 25% of their revenue from thermal coal, an [increase in funds that screen out fossil fuels](#), a commitment to push companies to disclose climate risks, and a way of evaluating investments that takes environmental performance into account.

Give thanks for progress and pray that the companies are able to follow through on their commitments and to address any loopholes that emerge. We pray, too, that others follow their lead.

Wise words from a climate leader

“The global economy is a huge, complex system. As I learnt during my stewardship of the Paris agreement, if you do not control the complex landscape of a challenge (and you rarely do), the most powerful thing you can do is to change how you behave in that landscape, using yourself as a catalyst for overall change.”
Christiana Figueres, “Paris taught me how to do what is necessary to combat climate change,” [Nature](#)

Our actions now

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with us.

Let there be love on earth, and let it begin in our hearts.

Let there be miracles on earth, and let them begin with our faith.

Let there be a future for humankind, and may it begin with our actions now.

[Green Christian Prayer Diary](#), Prayer for 19 January 2020