

Prayer points – June 2020



Looking forward

The UN, UK and Italy [have announced](#) that the UN climate talks which were to have taken place in Glasgow this November have been rescheduled for 1-12 November of 2021. "This date," [British officials said](#) "would present the lowest risk of further postponement and the best chance of delivering an inclusive and ambitious COP [Conference of Parties]." While [some commentators are concerned](#) that the long delay will lead to a loss of momentum, many [have pointed out](#) the [potential benefits](#) of a longer time for diplomacy before the next meeting. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done to encourage countries to increase their emissions reduction commitments. Climate finance will also be a major question at the meetings – and that, too, will take time to negotiate. We pray for all who are preparing the talks and all who will take part. We ask God to give them wisdom and a commitment to climate action for the common good.

A Prayer for Our Earth (Laudato Si)

Five years ago Pope Francis published Laudato Si – a plea for all people to take to heart concerns about God's beautiful world and the impact of climate change. Catholics marked this occasion this year with retreats and webinars. A range of speakers, including former UN climate change head Cristiana Figueres and Filipino negotiator and activist Yeb Sano, [spoke](#). We give thanks for the way Laudato Si has awakened many to 'the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'. And we join in praying this prayer, taken from it:

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Amen

Record-breaking heatwave

The Arctic is experiencing [a record-breaking heatwave this Spring](#). At the end of May [temperatures above the Arctic circle reached almost 27 degrees centigrade \(80 degrees Fahrenheit\)](#), some temperatures were [more than 30 degrees Centigrade above the average](#)

The Arctic has been warming twice as fast as the rest of the world but these temperatures are quite shocking. The changes they cause are also worrying, as they can accelerate global warming and further intensify its impacts. This is already visible in the Arctic: sea ice is [melting at an unprecedented rate](#). [There are also serious concerns about increased forest fires](#); and about the stability of Arctic permafrost and formerly [frozen lakes](#), which release greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon when they thaw.

The impacts are also serious for the rest of the world: the disintegration of ice sheets and loss of permafrost are [potential tipping points](#), which could cause large-scale impacts on earth's systems. Please pray that we all will recognise the seriousness of these unprecedented temperatures rises, take action and bring pressure on our leaders to act on climate change.

Global institutions divest from fossil fuels

On 18 May, to mark the 5th anniversary of Laudato Si, 42 faith institutions from 14 countries, including 21 from the UK, announced their divestment from fossil fuels. This is the largest-ever joint announcement of divestment from fossil fuels from faith institutions. It provides a powerful message underlining the need for a just economic recovery post Covid-19.

The divestment was coordinated by Operation Noah. Their [new report shows](#) the reason for their work on divestment: none of the major oil companies, Operation Noah states, are compliant with the Paris agreement targets. The group is arranging a webinar for people to learn more about the report and hear insights from speakers in various Christian denominations sharing their reflections on divestment.

The Amazon

[Deforestation in the Brazilian part of the Amazon](#) rainforest has increased during the pandemic – in the first four months of 2020, [the rate was up 55%](#) from last year. Pray that those responsible for governing in Brazil will be moved to protect this precious resource and the people living in it. Pray for safety for those in the region already working to protect the forest and its indigenous communities.

New 360 carbon calculator launched

A new, web-based church carbon footprint calculator, [360 carbon](#), is now available to help congregations measure their carbon footprint. It covers a range of different activities such as heating, travel, food, and waste and operates via a very simple and straightforward process. The calculator was commissioned by A Rocha, UK and the Church of England, and has been developed by Climate Stewards. It is entirely free to use and is designed to work for all church denominations. We pray that it will help many churches to understand the impact of their activities on the environment, and to make choices that protect and restore creation.

Europe's Green Recovery Plan

During May, the EU put forward two critical plans – its new [biodiversity strategy](#) and a climate-friendly recovery plan. The [well-received biodiversity strategy calls](#) for significant increases in protected areas, binding [targets for the restoration of ecosystems](#), more organic farming, and wide reductions in pesticide use. The recovery plan is specifically designed to ensure that spending [will 'do no harm' to the bloc's climate and biodiversity goals](#). Its focus on rebuilding better emphasises projects such as green transport, energy-efficient homes, environmentally friendly agriculture, and increases in renewable energy. There's a 'just transition fund' too. We give thanks for this commitment to sustainable recovery and pray that it is effective.

Praying for Relief and Recovery

In May, Cyclone Amphan [struck north-eastern India and Bangladesh](#). In India alone, 500,000 villagers [were estimated](#) to have lost their housing, and 2 million farmers to have been affected; in Bangladesh more than 200,000 houses [were estimated to have been damaged or destroyed](#). Pray for all who have been, and will be affected, and for all working on relief and recovery.

Please pray, too, for all affected by major flooding in East Africa, which for people in some areas has come at the same time as COVID-19 and devastating [swarms of locusts](#). In addition to the loss of lives and livelihoods, there are grave concerns about people's [ability to access food](#) now and in coming months. Pray for people working to provide humanitarian relief, contain the locusts, and ensure food supplies.

For Thanksgiving

* As we look forward to next year's climate talks, give thanks for [Rwanda's submission of a national climate plan](#) that includes significant cuts in emissions compared to a business-as-usual scenario. Pray that this may inspire further action from other countries.

* In the UK, the recent sun has boosted solar power production: at one point in April, [solar farms were providing almost 30% of the power in the grid](#)! Renewables have been playing an increased role in US power generation, too: [last year they overtook coal](#). We give thanks for the growth in renewable energy and continue to pray for a just transition from fossil fuels.