

## Prayer points – August 2020



### Indigenous communities protecting the earth

The 9<sup>th</sup> of August is the [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#).

We give thanks for indigenous peoples' clear leadership in caring for creation and finding climate solutions: in Canada, where First Nations groups have protested [against pipelines](#) and [tar sands extraction](#); in the US where Native Americans have also protested – with [notable recent success - pipelines and extractive industries](#); in Latin America, where [indigenous communities are at the forefront of protecting the rainforest](#); in the [Philippines](#) and [India](#), where they have campaigned around the environmental impacts of mining, and in many other countries.

We pray that indigenous communities' work to protect their land from environmental degradation will be successful. We pray that indigenous voices calling for wider creation care and climate action will be properly heard and heeded. We pray for the safety of indigenous – and indeed all - environmental defenders who are taking on powerful vested interests and [facing danger because of it](#).

### Prayer

*Extract from [Prayer to the Four Directions](#), adapted and revised from the prayer used at the National Cathedral, DC in A Celebration of Native American Survival Service, 1992.*

Creator, you bent the earth like a bow until it was one, round, shining planet. At your word the land was drawn into mountains and deserts, forests and plains; the waters were gathered together into rivers, lakes and seas. Many times, when people crossed these seas from other lands, they broke the circle of your creation by their greed and violence and they shattered the lives of others. Creator, renew the circle of the earth and turn the hearts of all people to one another; that they and all the earth may live and be drawn toward you through the power of your Son, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit in the circle of the Trinity, forever One. Amen

### Circular Economy

Over the past four years, the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#)'s New Plastic Economy [initiative](#) has united more than 850 organisations, including businesses and governments, behind a common [vision](#) and targets of a circular economy for plastic. It has brought together key stakeholders to rethink and redesign the future of plastics, starting with packaging. The initiative's main goals are "to create a shared sense of direction and to spark a wave of action and innovation in order to set the world on an irreversible path towards a circular economy where plastics never become waste." Two examples of this innovation are:

- **Ooho** - edible and biodegradable packaging made from brown seaweed. It contains liquids safely without the need for single-use beverage bottles, cups, and condiment sachets. The water capsules were trialled at the 2019 London marathon, eliminating the need for more than 30,000 single-use plastic cups and bottles.
- **Apeel** is a plant-derived coating for fruit and vegetables that slows water loss and oxidation. It extends shelf-life without the need for plastic packaging, such as shrink wrap on fruit and vegetables. It's been trialled very successfully with cucumbers and avocados.

We give thanks for the scientists and innovators brought together by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and pray that these new ideas and many others will help us move towards a world with no single-use plastics.

### Methane seep

We have often prayed for intensified climate action to prevent the release of methane from [permafrost regions](#); one of the key [tipping points](#) scientists are concerned about. Scientists are also warning about potential methane seepage from stores under Antarctic ice, and [research on a recently discovered area of seepage](#) has intensified their concern. The newly discovered seepage isn't climate-related – but it shows how difficult widespread climate-related seepage would be to contain, as microbes that generally consume methane in the water haven't been numerous enough to do so. We pray this news will receive the attention it deserves and inspire action to limit warming and to mitigate the effects of any seepage that does occur.

## Young people seeking climate justice

Throughout the world, young people have been calling for – and inspiring – climate action and climate justice in our churches. Whether it's the [Global Catholic Climate Movement's Laudato Si' Generation](#), [CYNESA](#) or the Green Anglicans Youth network in southern Africa, young Christians are at the forefront of calls for change. Now in the UK, the Young Christian Climate Network is launching on Saturday 1 August. It's "an action-focused community of Christians aged 18-30, choosing to follow Jesus in the pursuit of climate justice". They have three aims: "to connect young Christians into an inclusive community engaged with climate justice, to take and facilitate collective action towards climate justice, motivated by faith, and to see themselves and their communities grow in passion and understanding, learning with humility and reflection". We pray that this new network will have a really encouraging launch and will support and inspire many UK Christians. We pray also for young Christians working for climate justice around the world – asking God to guide them all.

## Prayers requested

- We continue to pray for a 'green recovery' as countries [formulate and begin to implement their strategies](#) for mitigating the impacts of COVID19.
- The Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the US will [conduct an investigation](#) into the current administration's rollback of vehicle emissions standards. Pray for all involved with the investigation and for the EPA to be an effective protector of environmental standards.
- There is widespread [concern around a proposed development to produce and export gas from Mozambique](#) – which is being financed by seven countries: the US, UK, Japan, Italy, South Africa, the Netherlands and Vietnam. Pray that countries will fund renewables rather than fossil-fuel infrastructure.

## South and East Asian floods

Large areas of South and East Asia are struggling with [torrential monsoon rains](#) which have caused flooding, landslides and lightning strikes during July. Over [700 people have been killed in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal](#), while huge numbers have lost their homes and livelihoods. More than [one million people have been stranded in Bangladesh](#), and [8 million people affected in the India states of Assam and Bihar](#). In China, [33 rivers have reached record highs; 3.7 million people have been displaced, and there are fears for the country's dams](#), including the gigantic Three Gorges Dam, due to surging flood waters on the Yangtze River. We pray for all who are working to respond and for all those who have lost loved ones, livelihoods and homes. Such extreme weather events are predicted become ever more likely in a warming world. We pray and for action to protect those who are most vulnerable.

## Practical help for churches that want to act

Many countries, cities, businesses and groups are pledging to reduce emissions and setting net zero targets - for which we give thanks. But what does it actually take to reach the goal if you're a church? Different groups are working on these questions and have produced helpful resources. The Global Catholic Climate Movement's ['Eco Parish Guide'](#) sets out steps churches can take to reduce church emissions, inspire church members, and undertake advocacy, with examples drawn from around the world. The Church of England has produced a ['Practical Path to Net Zero for Church Buildings'](#) and excellent [webinars](#) showing the various steps for dioceses to move towards net zero, including: measuring their footprint, forming a team to take genuine climate action, creation a climate action plan, and providing a positive vision for a net zero church. We give thanks for the work being done to translate intentions into tangible reality – and pray that the resources will inspire and equip many within their core audiences ... and beyond.

## A prayer from Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*

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.

[www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk](http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk)