

# Prayers and readings for a 'Prayer Vigil for the Climate'



The readings that follow are designed to be read out in turn, each followed by a few moments for silent prayer and reflection. Times of open prayer or other inputs can be interwoven.

## General Prayer – suggested for use in services around the Prayer Vigil

Creator God, this earth is miraculous and beautiful. Forgive our confusion and inaction as we confront the challenges of climate change. In the light of your truth, seen so clearly in the life and teaching of Jesus, help us to re-examine ourselves and our lifestyle choices and see clearly the implications of how we live on all that sustains life on this earth. May we follow your leading in caring for every aspect of this precious world, which you made, and love.

Throughout history you have moved people to do amazing things for the sake of their neighbours. Inspire us now to work together, as your people, to change priorities in the way we live, so that we build a fair and safe world for all your creation; a world where your will is done as it is in heaven. Amen

### 1 The example of St Francis

We remember St Francis of Assisi, your faithful servant, who had such a love of your creation and all your creatures.

We give thanks for the example of Saint Francis. His gentleness, vows of poverty, obedience to God and his simple, deep love for all God's creatures led him to look to the heights of heavenly perfection and turned many hearts to follow God's will. Today we come here searching for peace and guidance in our troubled world. May his example and his love of all creation inspire us as we pray.

May our prayers today be a time of inspiration.

### 2 Our hopes for the Paris UN climate summit

The Paris summit needs to deliver a legally binding, long-term goal to end carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and all greenhouse gas emissions soon afterwards. In the short term the goal of making big cuts in global emissions by 2020 is key. There needs to be support for renewables and an end to fossil fuel subsidies. All these agreements will require a substantial review process to track progress and encourage further changes.

We pray that negotiators and diplomats will be united in their determination to resolve on-going issues and focus with determination on a fair and legally binding agreement to be agreed by the end of the summit.

### 3 Traditional Jewish prayer

How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands! The heavens declare your glory; the arch of sky displays your handiwork. In your love you have given us the power to behold the beauty of your world robed in all its splendour.

The sun and the stars, the valleys and hills, the rivers and lakes all disclose your presence. The roaring breakers of the seas tell of your awesome might; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air speak of your wondrous will.

In your goodness you have made us able to hear the music of the world. You are in our midst. A divine voice sings through all creation.

### 4 The example of Sweden

When countries are measured by environmental performance, Sweden scores particularly well. Following the OPEC oil embargo in 1973 it began taking steps to reduce its dependency on imported oil. Considerable progress has been made with highly effective insulation and shared heating systems for blocks of flats or streets. It produces biofuels from its extensive forest areas.

Sweden is now well on course to become the world's first oil free economy by 2020. It leads the way in pressing for reductions in global emissions. How can our country learn from Sweden's example? What barriers do we have in our country for improving fuel efficiency and reducing our dependence on fossil fuels?

Give thanks for the Green movement there, and for clear, innovative and decisive government policy, which is now providing such a positive example for others to follow.

## 5 Reading from Jeremiah 17: 7-8 (GNB)

"But I will bless those who put their trust in me. They are like trees growing near a stream and sending out roots to the water.

They are not afraid when hot weather comes, because their leaves stay green;

They have no worries when there is no rain, they keep on bearing fruit."

## 6 Research findings in Antarctica

Though average global temperatures have risen by 0.8 degrees since the industrial revolution, the warming has been much higher at the poles, where average temperatures have risen by 2 or 3 degrees C.

In Antarctica, scientists from Rutgers University have seen how global warming is altering the food chain. The distribution of plankton has changed. The numbers of Adelie penguins have dropped. High winds churn up deeper waters in the ocean, which releases CO<sub>2</sub>, and leads to more warming. The long established Wilkins ice shelf is shrinking with large sections falling into the ocean.

Pray that the research findings gathered by scientists who battled extreme weather and technical difficulties to examine changes in the ice sheets, will prove really worthwhile. Pray too that the findings of this research will be taken seriously and acted upon.

## 7 Reading from Psalm 63:1-5 (GNB)

"O God, you are my God, and I long for you. My whole being desires you; Like a dry, worn-out, and waterless land, my soul is thirsty for you.

Let me see you in the sanctuary; let me see how mighty and glorious you are. Your constant love is better than life itself, and so I will praise you.

I will give you thanks as long as I live; I will raise my hands to you in prayer. My soul will feast and be satisfied, and I will sing glad songs of praise to you."

## 8 "It always seems impossible until it's done"

"...World leaders must take the opportunity present by the UN Climate Change conference in Paris this December to develop a single global framework for action" say Desmond Tutu and Trevor Manuel in report in June 2015 for the World Economic Forum on 'Why tackling climate change is a moral and economic imperative.'

"The moral and economic imperatives to act on climate change could not be stronger. Although the road ahead will be difficult, with new and unexpected challenges arising along the way, we can find inspiration in Nelson Mandela's famous dictum: "*It always seems impossible until it's done.*" We face an unprecedented opportunity to achieve a more sustainable, prosperous, and socially just future. Creating that future must start now."

## 9 The prayer of St Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which to look with Christ's compassion on the world, yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good, and yours are his hands with which to bless us now.

## 10 Laudato Si'

In Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (means "Praised be") he notes that "St Francis, faithful to scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness."

Later he offers a profound challenge: "As so often occurs in periods of deep crisis which require bold decisions, we are tempted to think that what is happening is not entirely clear. Such evasiveness serves as a license to carrying on with our present lifestyles and models of production and consumption. This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen."

## 11 The Operation Noah Prayer

Creator God, how deep are your designs!  
You made a living earth, cloud, rain and wind,  
And charged us with their care.

We confess that the way we live today  
Is changing the climate, the seas and the balance of life,  
Dispossessing the poor and future generations.  
Build our lives into an Ark for all creation,  
And, as you promised Noah never to repeat the flood,  
So make us heralds of a new rainbow covenant:  
Choosing life for all that is at risk –  
For creation, neighbours near and far,  
Our children and ourselves. Amen.

## 12 A quote from Lord Stern

In July, Lord Stern, president of the British Academy, said the UK had a special responsibility to lead the fight against climate change. "The UK led the world with both the modern scientific revolution and the industrial revolution, and must lead again now on the creation of a safer, cleaner and more prosperous world"

## 13 Reading from Job 38, verses 4, 16 and 18 (NIV)

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand... Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? ... Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?"

## 14 Warming of oceans due to climate change

Oceans would continue to warm for centuries even if greenhouse gas emissions were frozen at today's levels, say US government scientists. The warming of the oceans due to climate change is now on-going. It ties in with record temperatures last year, making 2014 the hottest year on record.

Warming seas mean sea-level rises and increase the risks of severe storms. Globally 90% of the excess heat caused by the rise in greenhouse gases, is absorbed by the oceans.

## 15 Spirit of the living God

Spirit of the living God. Apart from you, we can do nothing. Transform your Church into the image of Jesus Christ. Release your power to bring healing to the sick, freedom to the oppressed and comfort to those who mourn.

Pour your love into our hearts and fill us with compassion to answer the call of the homeless and the hungry. And to enfold orphans, widows and the elderly in your care.

Give us wisdom and insight for the complex problems we face today. Help us to use the resources of the earth for the well-being of all. Holy Spirit, we need your comfort and guidance.

Transform our hearts.

*Global Day of Prayer, Transformations Ireland*

## 16 The value of birds

Every spring, migrating curlews fly over our home in Portugal. This year they were a month early. A recent major report says climate change is impacting birds in Europe. As average temperatures rise, a few species have increased, but three quarters of species have declined. Some, such as the Scottish crossbill, may be lost.

Do birds matter? They are a beautiful part of God's creation. Jesus said not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing. Practically they are a vital part of life-supporting ecosystems. In 1958 when sparrows were killed in China to stop them eating grain, locusts increased and there was a famine in which millions died.

- Thank God both for the beauty and practical value of birds. Reflect on the birds that you see around you.
- Pray that decisions to tackle climate change will take into account the needs of all of creation.

## 17 Impact on corals

As in the atmosphere, ocean temperatures are also gradually increasing because of global warming. Because of the vast size of the oceans they are very slow to warm, but will also be very slow to cool. Even if carbon emissions were to reduce sharply, atmospheric temperatures will continue to rise because of the warming 'captured in the oceans.

Coral reefs provide a wonderfully varied ecosystem for fish and all kinds of marine creatures, enabling hundreds of coral species to thrive. The reefs also protect coastlines. However coral species are very sensitive to warming temperatures. Bleaching (due to the loss of the algae that live in them) occurs if coral is affected by warmer temperatures. Unless cooler temperatures return rapidly the coral dies. It takes over 30 years for coral to recover from serious bleaching.

We pray for marine scientists around the world as they raise awareness of the threat to corals and other marine life. And we pray for Government leaders around the world with responsibilities for coastlines, to respond to the urgent need for action to protect marine life. Countless warning signs are being ignored about the ecological well-being of our oceans.

## 18 Reading from Jeremiah 17:10 (GNB)

"I, the Lord, search human minds and test human hearts. I treat each one according to the way he lives, according to what he does."

## 19 The impact of cyclones

The number of typhoons or cyclones reaching Category 4 or 5 in the Northern hemisphere during 2015 is likely to be a record, exceeding those in 2004. El Nino is likely to be linked to the number of hurricanes developing in the Pacific. This year Cyclone Pam swept through the South Pacific islands in March and Typhoon Soudelor caused much damage and loss of life in China during August.

Though no one such event can be said to be a direct result of global warming, scientists warn that rising sea temperatures are likely to increase the severity of tropical cyclones, both in terms of wind speed and rainfall. Warmer air holds more water that may fall as rain, bringing heavier rainfall with the strong winds.

- Pray for the victims of these damaging storms, still struggling to rebuild shattered lives.
- Pray for political leaders in all countries likely to experience such hazards, that they may put much greater emphasis on disaster preparation, particularly for the most vulnerable people.

## 20 Prayer from UN Environmental Sabbath Programme

*We join with the earth and with each other*

To bring new life to the land, to restore the waters, to refresh the air.

*We join with the earth and with each other*

To renew the forests, to care for the plants, to protect the creatures.

*We join with the earth and with each other*

To celebrate the seas, to rejoice in the sunlight, to sing the song of the stars.

*We join with the earth and with each other*

To recreate the human community, to promote justice and peace, to remember our children.

*We join with the earth and with each other*

We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery: for the healing of the earth and renewal of all life.

## 21 Pilgrimage prayer

Dear Lord, you called your disciples to follow in your way:  
You are the Way, the Truth and Life.  
And so we come, seeking to follow in your footsteps.

Creator of the earth, as we journey  
Help us to walk lightly, treasuring the world you have given us,  
And cherishing each other.

And grant, we pray, that our walk  
May be part of your plan to care for creation.  
Seeking climate justice and the coming of your Kingdom  
On earth as it is in heaven.

*Christian Concern for One World/Pray&Fast*

## 22 A prayer of praise from St Francis

You are holy, Lord, the only God, and Your deeds are wonderful. You are strong. You are great. You are the Most High. You are Almighty.

You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth. You are Three and One, Lord God, all good. You are good, all good, supreme good, Lord God, living and true.

You are love. You are wisdom. You are humility. You are endurance. You are rest. You are peace. You are joy and gladness. You are justice and moderation.

You are all our riches, and You suffice for us. You are beauty. You are gentleness. You are our protector. You are our guardian and defender. You are our courage.

You are our haven and our hope. You are our faith, our great consolation. You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Saviour.  
Amen.

## 23 Changes in the Antarctic ice

NASA scientists report dramatic changes to the massive Larsen B Ice Shelf, making it likely that this will disintegrate before 2020. Satellite images were used to highlight the changes over recent decades. The shelf has existed for over 10,000 years but is now developing huge cracks. Its disintegration will contribute to rising global sea levels and indicates how rapidly ice sheets in the Antarctica can thin.

We pray that the findings of this research will be taken very seriously and will provide valuable evidence of the speed of warming taking place at the poles.

## 24 Reducing carbon emissions

The current UN process does not assign countries targets, but relies on a voluntary approach, by which countries put forward their own voluntary emission reduction targets – their 'Intended National Determined Contributions'. In theory all these contributions will add up to the emissions reductions that the science requires to keep global warming within 'safe' levels.

However since many are not yet significant enough, there is concern that the process agreed in Paris could result in too little, too late. We pray for that all involved will work to ensure that emissions reductions are fairly distributed and significant enough to meet the goal of keeping warming well below 2 degrees

## 25 A poem by Chris Polhill

Forgive us Lord for our thoughtless wasting  
For heat blasting in open doorways - for lights burning in empty rooms, for homes basking in T-shirt warmth  
forgive our thoughtless wasting.

For leaving windows draughty, for lagging left undone, for lofts un-insulated  
forgive our thoughtless wasting.

For cars that guzzle petrol - for driving little journeys, for cheaper fares on planes  
forgive our thoughtless wasting.

God grant us clear thinking, right action, and a gentle life-style. Amen

## 26 Real people

George Monbiot comments in his book, Heat:  
"Writers write about what will happen to 'anonymous people' in this or that country. My daughter was born while I was writing this book. This baby, this strange little creature, now sixteen days old and curled up on my lap like a bean waiting to sprout, changes everything.

I am no longer writing about what might happen to 'people' in this country in thirty years' time. I am writing about her. As she trembles on the threshold of life, the evidence of her mortality is undeniable. It seems far more real than mine. A world in which unrestrained climate change threatens the conditions which make human life possible, is the world into which she will grow. Global warming is no longer about abstract victims. Among them might be my child, Or yours. Or you. Or even me".

## 27 Traditional Gaelic blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you,  
Of water flowing, rising and falling,  
Sometimes advancing, sometimes receding.  
May the stream of your life flow unimpeded!  
Deep peace of the running wave to you!

Deep peace of the flowing air to you,  
Which fans your face on a sultry day,  
The air which you breathe deeply, rhythmically,  
Which imparts to you energy, consciousness, life.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you!

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,  
Who, herself unmoving, harbours the movements  
And facilitates the life of the ten thousand creatures.  
While resting contented, stable, tranquil.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you!

Deep peace of the shining stars to you,  
Which stay invisible till darkness falls  
And discloses their pure and shining presence  
Beaming down in compassion on our turning world.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you!

## 28 Meat production

Meat production requires far more land and water than grain or beans, to produce the same amount of protein. Cattle and other livestock produce significant amounts of the 'greenhouse gas' methane. In addition, much of the on-going destruction of the Amazon rainforest is caused by land being cleared for cattle ranching.

We could all try to eat less meat in our diets. Bishop Richard Chartres of London gave up eating meat several four years ago, largely because he realized the damaging environmental impact of intensively reared livestock. Rather than preach to others, he prefers to examine his own lifestyle choices. He comments; "A life of fasting and feasting ought to be fun". Could we all fast from meat on one or more days a week?

## 29 Reading from Isaiah 58:6-7 (GNB)

"The kind of fasting I want is this: remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear and do not refuse to help your own relatives."



### 30 A prayer by Saint Francis

Most high, all-powerful, all-good Lord, all praise is yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings. To you alone, most high, do they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

Praised be you my Lord with all your creatures, especially Sir brother sun, who is the day through whom you give us light! And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour! Of you most high, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through sister moon and the stars, In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through brothers wind and air, And fair and stormy, all weather's moods, by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through sister water. So useful, humble, precious and pure.

*Global day of prayer*

### 31 Pressures on pastoralists

As many as 250 million people in Africa may not have enough water to meet their basic needs by 2020 because of climate change. "The day-to-day impacts of climate change, such as higher temperatures and erratic rainfall, are increasing many people's vulnerability to hazards," said Charles Ehrhart, climate change coordinator for CARE International.

Ehrhart says that by 2020, climatic changes would have contributed to water stress, land degradation, lower crop yields and increased risk of wild fires, resulting in a 50 percent decline in agricultural productivity for pastoralists in sub-Saharan Africa. The consequences, he added, would be severe food and water shortages, with affected populations coming under significant pressure to migrate.

"Prolonged droughts bring great pressure on households to move, particularly from rural to urban areas," he said. "In the Horn of Africa alone, there are more than 20 million pastoralists currently living a lifestyle that is centred on the search for increasingly scarce pasture and water. People will find it increasingly hard to cope."

Pray that support for pastoralists will enable them to develop early-warning mechanisms, improve veterinary services and lobby their governments to provide support for pastoralists and their particular needs

### 32 Reading from Mark 4:39-41 (GNB)

"Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, "Be quiet!" and he said to the waves, "Be still!" The wind died down and there was a great calm. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you frightened? Have you still no faith?"

But they were terribly afraid and said to one another, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

### 33 The value of trees

"The best friend of earth and of man is the tree. When we use the tree respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources on earth." said Frank Lloyd Wright.

Pray for governments around the world to do more to encourage the protection of existing forest reserves, and the establishment of new areas of woodland particularly on marginal land. Give thanks for the work of the Forest Stewardship Council in promoting the responsible management of the world's forests and establishing regulations to prevent the illegal exploitation of timber reserves.

Reflect on what we can do as individuals – in only using FSC certified products in our homes and gardens, in directly caring and planting trees in our neighbourhood or in supporting such work elsewhere.

### 34 The be-attitudes - by John Polhill

Blessed are those who use low energy light bulbs for theirs is the light of God's wisdom.

Blessed are those who travel by train for their lives are on God's track.

Blessed are those who chose a car with low fuel consumption for they are in God's fast lane.

Blessed are those who insulate their homes for theirs is the warmth of God's love.

Blessed are you when you put yourselves out to use energy from renewable sources, for you have kindled the flame of the future.

### 35 Entering a new period of extinction

A study by three universities in the US, states that humankind has created a "toxic mix" of habitat loss, deforestation pollution and climate change. Since 1900 more than 400 vertebrates have disappeared – a loss that would normally take up to 10,000 years, the scientists say. Species loss has speeded up over a 100 times. Scientists say that it's the biggest loss of species since the mass extinction of dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

Professor Paul Ehrlich of Stanford University comments: "the research shows without any significant doubt that we are now entering the sixth great mass extinction event. We are sawing off the limb that we are sitting on."

We know that each creature is precious to God as creator. We pray for humility in our attitudes towards how we use the resources of this world – and we long for a massive response to the findings of this research to lessen the on-going loss of species.

### 36 Be still, and listen to the day – by Chris Polhill

Be still, and listen to the day,  
touch the breeze with the quiet in your soul.  
Let the turning turbulence of the hurly burly rushing  
and the busy dizzy people, never waste a second, pass you by.  
God bless you with the quiet whisper, which in all the day 's doing  
keeps a calm silent centre in your being.

### 37 Christians working together

The Environmental Issues Network (EIN) of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland brings together representatives of all the major denominations and Christian environmental organisations. They work to coordinate activities and opportunities to ensure maximum effectiveness and also work in partnership with the UK's Climate Coalition.

Pray that Christians will speak out with one strong, united voice to express their concern over what is happening to God's precious world

Pray that Christian organisations will have the resources and motivation to provide challenging ideas that will catch the public imagination. Pray too for effective cooperation and partnership between all denominations and organisations in responding to this huge issue.

### 38 Building a circular economy

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation was launched in 2010 by the famous yachtswoman. It champions the 'circular economy,' a concept that challenges our existing global linear economy.

At present we take raw materials, make products and then dispose of them, perhaps trying to recycle a small portion of what we've used. In a finite world this is just not good enough. A circular economy by contrast, designs products and services to be reused – just as nature reuses materials in its cyclical processes. For example, personal cars are idle much of the time and made to be replaced by new models. What if we simply paid for access to vehicles, allowing fewer cars to be used more efficiently, and companies designed the vehicles to be updated rather than replaced?

Over 100 companies have signed up in support of the Foundation. We pray for its continued impact and success and in particular for the opportunities this way of thinking brings to young people – inspiring them to use their creativity and knowledge.

### 39 Lord of energy – a prayer by John Polhill

Lord of energy, teach us to pray ...  
Our Creator - source of all power,  
we want to align ourselves like iron filings to your magnet.  
We want to be drawn to your intent;  
to live in a society that responds to your beckoning,  
to feel the surge of your life-giving energy.

Grant us wisdom in our use of physical energy.  
Help us to live by the standards we choose,  
not those of others:  
to focus our desire on you,  
not the fake comforts of modern living,  
to be satisfied by a sense of your love,  
not our own power or status.

Because we know that your way is the only true way,  
that everything we love and are is a gift from you,  
and that to know you as our Creator  
is to glimpse eternity.

### 40 The life cycle of 'stuff'

David Mackay dedicates his book; *'Sustainable energy – without the hot air'*, - to those who will not have the benefit of two billion years' accumulated energy reserves.

In it he writes; "One of the main sinks of energy in the 'developed' world is the creation of stuff. In its natural life cycle, stuff passes through three stages. First a new born stuff is displayed in shiny packaging on a shelf in a shop. At this stage, stuff is called 'goods'. As soon as the stuff is taken home and sheds its packaging, it undergoes a transformation from 'goods' to its second form, 'clutter'. The clutter lives with its owner for a period of months or years. During this period, the clutter is largely ignored by its owner, who is off at the shops buying more goods. Eventually by a miracle of modern alchemy, the clutter is transformed into its final form, rubbish. To the untrained eye it can be difficult to distinguish this rubbish from the highly desirable 'goods' that it used to be. Nevertheless, at this stage the discerning owner pays the dustman to transport the stuff away.

### 41 A quote from Bill McKibben

Bill McKibben, the American environmentalist and founder of 350.org writes: "I've mostly given up being either optimistic or pessimistic. Our odds of success are not incredibly good, but I wake up every day saying "What can I do to change the odds a little? And it's not impossible, the task that we have ahead. We're not going to stop global warming, but slowing it to the point that we can cope with it remains within the realms of possibility.

"Fun" is not quite the right word, but there is something deeply satisfying about trying. It's the biggest challenge that humans have ever got to take part in. It's exciting to be part of that. To be doing something that crucial is a great honour."

### 42 A reading from Psalm 19:1-4 (GNB)

"How clearly the sky reveals God's glory!  
How plainly it shows what he has done!  
Each day announces it to the following day;  
each night repeats it to the next.  
No speech or words are used, no sound is heard; yet their message goes out to all the world and is heard to the ends of the earth."

### 43 A prayer by Eleanor Todd for Operation Noah

Jesus Christ, tempted to turn stones to bread in the wilderness;  
Teach us that when we change time for our convenience;  
    night to day in our living,  
    patience to speed in our journeying,  
    winter to summer in our eating,  
we change God's calendar which brings  
    the hatchling to the caterpillar,  
    the bee to the nectar,  
    the rains to the farmer;  
to the one which brings you to the cross.

Give us grace in our simplest actions to choose the life which breathes in the beautiful complexity of creation, to conquer death, and to fit us to be Easter people.  
Amen

#### 44 Reading from 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

"If my people, who are called by my name,  
Will humble themselves, pray and seek my face  
And turn from their wicked ways,  
Then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin  
And heal their land".

#### 45 Changes in the ozone layer

The ozone layer in the stratosphere surrounds the earth and helps to reduce the amount of harmful ultra violet radiation from the sun reaching the earth's surface. UV exposure increases the risk of skin cancer among other health impacts.. Scientists established that the use of chlorofluorocarbons (more commonly known as CFCs) were largely responsible for a growing hole in the ozone layer observed over polar regions, which caused considerable concern worldwide in the 1980s. CFCs were used widely in aerosols and as coolants in fridges and freezers.

The Montreal Protocol is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of a number of substances believed to be responsible for ozone depletion. The treaty was adopted widely and was implemented in 1989. Most countries have honoured their international agreements, and the ozone layer is now expected to recover by 2050. This treaty is seen as an example of exceptional international co-operation, giving some hope that similar cooperation may take place over climate change.

Pray that similar international cooperation can take place in Paris this year.

#### 46 Reading from Colossians 1: 15-20 (NIV)

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross".

Dave Bookless comments in his book *'Planetwise'*; "This passage blows apart any idea of a cosy, comfortable pocket-size Jesus. Instead Jesus is:

The source of creation  
The sustainer of creation  
The saviour of creation".

#### 47 A prayer for peace

O God, who called all life into being  
The earth, sea and sky are yours  
Your presence is all around us  
Every atom is full of your energy  
Your Spirit enlivens all who walk the earth  
With her we yearn for justice to be done  
For creation to be freed from bondage  
For the hungry to be fed  
For captives to be released  
For your Kingdom of Peace to come on Earth  
*R Croft and J Laynesmith*

#### 48 Passing on the blame

George Monbiot writes at the end of his book, *Heat*: "The defining feature of governmental negotiations are that someone else is always to blame. The governments of the rich nations complain that there is no point in cutting their own emissions if emissions are to continue to grow in China and India. The governments of China and India complain that limiting their pollution is a waste of time if the richer countries – whose output of carbon emissions per head is still far greater than theirs – are not prepared to make the necessary reductions. And governments that express a commitment to stopping climate change have found their efforts frustrated but partly because they want them to be frustrated. If they had the misfortune to succeed, our lives would have to change!

"Governments will pursue this course of inaction – irrespective of the human impacts – while it remains politically less costly than the alternative. The task of climate change campaigners is to make it as expensive as possible. We need to take action, supporting the various organisations already campaigning".

#### 49 The wisdom of Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa is said to have commented; "Not all of us can do great things, but we can all do simple things with great love."

Lord, break our hearts for the needs of others, and help us stand together- show us what we have to offer. Break our hearts for communities in our own country affected by recession, debt and hopelessness- for our friends, neighbours, and those we do not know personally.

Lord, we pray too for those in the majority world experiencing poverty and lack of food, those without education, healthcare and vulnerable to disaster and exploitation. Fill us with compassion and a sense of solidarity as one people.

Prepare our hearts to love, our hands to serve, and our mouths to speak against injustice- simple acts, with great love.

#### 50 Reading from Isaiah 66:1-2 (GNB)

"The Lord says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house, then, could you build for me, what kind of place for me to live in? I myself created the whole universe! I am pleased with those who are humble and repentant, who fear me and obey me."

#### 51 A moral decision

"The age of carbon is over and transition to a greener economy is inevitable" says Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, one of the world's most influential climate scientists and an adviser to the German government and Pope Francis.

He challenged scientists and world leaders during a major science conference in Paris, July 2015 saying: "In the end it is a moral decision. Do you want to be part of the generation that screwed up the planet for the next 1,000 years? I don't think we should make that decision."

We pray for all in positions of influence – that they will help people understand the moral dimension to climate choices.

## 52 A campaign against ourselves

George Monbiot writes at the end of his book, *Heat*: “Given that climate change is the greatest danger the world now faces, those who are campaigning to reduce the impact of climate change cannot do it by ourselves. We are astonishingly few. It appears to be easier to persuade people to protest against all kind of relatively trivial issues, than to confront a threat to our existence.

There is an obvious reason for this; in other cases something is being done to us. In this case we are doing it to ourselves. In fighting climate change, we must fight, not only the oil companies, the airlines and the governments of the rich world; we must also fight ourselves. It is a campaign not for abundance but for austerity. It is a campaign not for more freedom but for less. It is a campaign not just against other people, but also against ourselves”.

## 53 Walk lightly – by Linda Jones

Each leaf, each petal, each grain, each person, sings your praises, Creator God.

Each creature on the earth, all the mountains and great seas, show your glory, Spirit of love.

And yet, the hand of greed has patented and plundered your splendour,

has taken and not shared your gift, has lived as owner of the earth, not guest.

And so, the ice is cracked, the rivers dry, the valleys flooded and the snow caps melt.

God our Father, show us how to step gently, how to live simply, how to walk lightly with respect and love for all that you have made.  
Amen

*Linda Jones, CAFOD*

## 54 Anglican Communion called to urgent action on climate change

In April twenty Anglican bishops released a statement entitled ‘The World is our Host’, which calls Churches to urgent prayer and action for climate justice and “sets a new agenda on climate change for the 85 million-strong Anglican Communion.” It encourages all Anglicans to join in prayer and fasting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month.

The bishops come from six continents and each of their dioceses is affected by climate change and environmental degradation. Their statement notes the scientific and theological imperatives for action and urges the Church to “find its collective moral voice.”

We give thanks for the leadership of Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of South Africa who established this initiative and pray that the statement will inspire churches around the Communion to undertake prayer and action for climate justice.

## 55 Reading from Isaiah 40:31 (GNB)

“Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak”.

## 56 Pledges for Paris

All countries are asked to submit their ‘Intended Nationally Determined Contributions for the Paris climate talks. These explain what steps countries intend to take post 2020 to tackle climate change.

Each country determines its own submission: some, such as Ethiopia’s, have been ambitious; other, including the EUs, are ‘medium’ and others, such as those submitted by Australia, Canada and Japan are viewed as ‘weak’. The UN will create a synthesis report from all the pledges submitted.

The report will estimate how well the combined pledges keep us on track for an agreement that limits climate change to below 2 degrees centigrade. We pray that the strongest submissions will inspire other countries, including those which have already submitted their plans, to increase their own commitments.

## 57 Reading from Psalm 96:11-13 (GNB)

“Be glad, earth and sky!  
Roar, sea, and every creature in you;  
be glad, fields, and everything in you!  
The trees of the wood will shout for joy  
when the Lord comes to rule the earth.  
He will rule the peoples of the world  
with justice and fairness.”

## 58 An extract from Planetwise

Dave Bookless in his book *Planetwise* comments:  
“Perhaps the single most effective step I have taken in terms of avoiding waste is to try to pray every time I put something in the bin. As I do so, I thank God for the natural resources that have created the item and reflect on whether I have been a good steward. Often my prayers end up as guilty confessions, as I have to admit my careless wastefulness again. Did I need to buy this? Did I need the item with all this packaging? Sometimes my anguish is not personal so much as frustration with a culture that dictates I can’t buy things that aren’t covered in polystyrene and plastic, and I simple say sorry to God for what we as the human race have done in taking his world for granted.”

“Seeing waste as a spiritual issue has caused me to go back to the start of the process; buying things in the first place. Now, before I buy something, I always try to ask whether I really need it”.

## 59 The responsibility of rich countries

Archbishop Desmond Tutu comments:  
“The richest countries of the world, as represented by the G8, have a responsibility to help the poorest. This is not just charity, but a moral obligation. The world’s wealthiest countries have emitted more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. Resultant floods, droughts and other climate change impacts continue to fall disproportionately on the world’s poorest people and countries, many of which are in Africa.

Rich countries must therefore help poorer countries in two ways. They must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions so that the effects of climate change suffered by Africa’s poor do not get worse. They also have an obligation to help poor countries adapt to the negative impacts of climate change, which cannot be avoided.”



## 60 Prayer at a supermarket checkout - Chris Polhill

God my friend and creator  
The person in front of me has bought a bag of bags of crisps  
and put them into a carrier bag. Does it matter?  
Was this part of the Great Plan? Did the generous  
outpouring of your love in the moment the Universe began  
include the bag of bag of bags?

Did your Wrath get used up in the Old Testament?

When the contents of that perfect, shiny-lined bag have  
been eaten, and that bag is deep in land-fill, is it any better  
or worse than the fossil fuel from which it came? And, if it is  
50 million years since the death of the plant that became the  
fossil fuel, will another 50 million years make good out of the  
crisp bag?

You're not going to tell me are you?  
... Because the plant, the oil, the bag, the 50 million years,  
and the moment at the checkout, are all your gifts to me.  
I pray for the grace to know that, and to wonder at my use of  
your gifts.

## 61 A reading from John 1:1-5 (GNB)

"In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was  
with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning  
the Word was with God. Through him God made all things;  
not one thing in all creation was made without him. The  
Word was the source of life and this life brought light to  
humanity. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness  
has never put it out."

## 62 A prayer - we are sorry

God we are sorry for the way we use your gifts to us so  
carelessly.

We are sorry that our actions are spoiling the precious  
balance between the earth and the sun so that our world is  
becoming too hot.

We are sorry for wasting food while others go hungry  
We are sorry for wasting water when some children spend  
four hours each day collecting it.

We are sorry for buying things we do not need.  
We are sorry for throwing away things just because they are  
old or unfashionable.

We are ashamed that the world is such an unfair place  
We are sorry when we choose to bury our heads in the sand  
rather than seek fair solutions.

Lord forgive us and disturb us until we change to make your  
world a better place.

*R Croft and J Laynesmith*

## 63 Living flame of love – by Chris Polhill

'Living flame of love'  
so touch our hearts with your bright fire,  
that we of tepid, even chilly faith,  
may be alight with your passion,  
and warm the globe with your love,  
reflecting your care  
for all of your creation.  
Amen

## 64 The value of rainforests

Tropical rainforests are an amazing source of biodiversity.  
They cover approximately 2 percent of the globe, but they  
are home to over half the world's living plant and animal  
species. They are likely to contain thousands of species as  
yet unidentified by scientists. Rain forests are rich resources  
of timber and minerals. Unfortunately in many countries they  
are being cleared for agriculture, particularly ranching and  
soya bean cultivation and for human settlement. Once roads  
are built, whole new areas are opened up for exploitation.  
We continue to lose around 90,000 square miles (150,000  
square km) a year.

Tropical rainforests remove carbon dioxide from the  
atmosphere. This lowers the concentration of greenhouse  
gases in the atmosphere. These forests also release  
moisture into the atmosphere through transpiration. This  
cools the local climate, brings rainfall and thus helps to  
reduce global warming.

We pray for a wider appreciation of the value of forests and  
tree cover in preserving biodiversity, protecting soils and  
reducing the impact of climate change.

We also pray that people of all nations and backgrounds will  
work together to safeguard this invaluable part of God's  
creation.

## 65 In you lies our hope for transformation

Lord, you make all things new- you are the God of the exiled  
- in times of darkness, uncertainty and fear we can only cling  
to you. Though we may walk through the valley of shadows,  
we will fear no evil for you are with us.

Lord, you are the God of the resurrection. In you lies our  
hope for transformation. You have shown us a glimpse of  
the mountain top, and we will keep walking that path with  
you. Give us the vision to see how things can be, and help  
us work together to achieve this.

Clothe our leaders with humility and grace to put actions  
before words, and bring greater justice and sustainability in  
this world.

*Put People First prayer*

## 66 Church investment in photo-voltaic panels

The Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus invested over £100  
million in solar energy to build a factory producing photo-  
voltaic panels which capture the sun's energy. The island  
has struggled in the past to meet the demand for electricity.  
Solar panels are being installed on church roofs throughout  
the island as well as on public buildings. Cyprus is not short  
of sunshine and the panels will provide a plentiful supply of  
electricity for the future.

Archbishop Chrysostomos II has said that profits from this  
investment would be used to provide financial help to clergy  
and fund other social work.

Church and parish centre buildings often provide excellent  
sites for solar voltaic panels (particularly since most  
churches are orientated East – West). There may well be  
planning restrictions to overcome, but harnessing the  
potential of these roofs provides not only a positive witness  
within the community, but also a source of potential revenue  
in years to come. Many community buildings can obtain  
substantial grants for this work. Reflect on the potential in  
our area here.

## 67 Reading from Isaiah 55: 6-13 (GNB)

"Turn to the LORD and pray to him, now that he is near. Let the wicked leave their way of life and change their way of thinking. Let them turn to the LORD, our God; he is merciful and quick to forgive. "My thoughts," says the LORD, "are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours.

"My word is like the snow and the rain that come down from the sky to water the earth. They make the crops grow and provide seed for planting and food to eat. So also will be the word that I speak — it will not fail to do what I plan for it; it will do everything I send it to do.

"You will leave Babylon with joy; you will be led out of the city in peace. The mountains and hills will burst into singing, and the trees will shout for joy. Cypress trees will grow where now there are briars; myrtle trees will come up in place of thorns. This will be a sign that will last forever, a reminder of what I, the LORD, have done."

## 68 May clean clear water bless us by Chris Polhill

May clean clear water bless us,  
well-spring or waterfall, life in abundance - flowing,  
cleansing, refreshing.

May we use wisely God's gift of water  
cherish each drop, shrinking all scrub land and deserts.

Jesus, pour your water, greening and satisfying,  
on the dry dustiness of the deserts within us.

Holy Spirit, flow through us, revive our faithfulness,  
cleanse our sinfulness, fill us with prayerfulness.

## 69 Preparations in Bangladesh

Low lying Bangladesh is one of the countries likely to be severely impacted by rising sea levels. Funding to help with adaptation is certainly necessary. However, the Bangladeshis are not sitting around waiting for help. They have set up a national Adaptation programme of Action. Even in the poorest areas, Bangladeshis are building dykes and embankments, changing their agricultural practices and sharing their knowledge with other countries. They have an early warning system in place for cyclones.

Floating gardens were first introduced in Bangladesh. Water weeds provide the base for a thin layer of soil and crops. They cost little to build and will survive flooding.

Pray for the work of HEED Bangladesh, providing extensive training in community developments and disaster preparedness.

## 70 Creator God by Chris Polhill

Creator God,  
from quark to planet your universe is awesome.  
Give us eyes to gaze at the wonders daily about us,  
and the will to live in the harmony of your creating.  
Help us to own the connections of all things,  
even at cost to our own wants and comforts;  
So we may live gently on earth,  
and all creation praise you. Amen.

## 71 Concerns over bees

Honey bees are vital to human wellbeing because they pollinate many of our food crops. But bee numbers in the UK are in crisis. Bees have lost much of their natural habitat during the last 60 years and many scientists believe that particular kinds of insecticides – neonicotinoids – are a major threat.

Bumblebees are good pollinators too but their numbers are also declining with the destruction of hedgerows, flower-rich meadows, ponds, marshes, and woodland. People are now helping by planting more wildlife friendly gardens.

We pray for Apimondia, the International Federation of Beekeepers Associations, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Friends of the Earth as they work to halt the decline in bees. We pray that gardeners and those responsible for public lands and churchyards, will encourage nectar-producing plants, reduce insecticides and plant more wild flowers.

## 72 Psalm 104: 24, 31 and 33-34 (NIV)

"How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works.

I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord."

## 73 A confession

God our Creator and Healer  
we confess that we have sinned:  
we have used creation not cherished it;  
we have lived selfishly; not watched the balance of life;  
we have been greedy - not sharing earth's gifts;  
and our footprints are heavy not gentle.

Forgive us the damage that disturbs our planet. Grant us the grace to live for the world's healing and our own.  
Bless the seasons of the year, may they be restored to Your design.

*Lent Challenge 2008, Lichfield Diocese*

## 74 A prayer from the Community of Grandchamp

*Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.*

We beseech you, bless every effort and every search,  
Every struggle and every pain that seek to restore the harmony and beauty of your Creation.  
Renew the face of the earth, so that every human being may live in peace and justice, fruits of your Spirit of love.  
Blow your Spirit of life on your creation and all humanity.

*Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.*

We beseech you, Lord, bless the fruits of the earth and the work of our hands and teach us to share the abundance of your goods.  
Send rain to the dry soil, sun and fair weather where harvest is endangered by storms.  
Blow your Spirit of life on your creation and all humanity.

*Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.*

*Community of Grandchamp, Areuse, Switzerland*

## 75 Overshooting the mark

According to the Global Footprint Network, this year's 'Overshoot Day' was reached on August 13. This means that humankind's demands on nature from 1 January to 13 August used up all the resources that Earth could regenerate this year. From 'Overshoot Day' onwards we are exceeding the natural limits.

Such overuse jeopardises our future; our shared natural resources are vital for the continuation of balanced life on earth, so that plants and animals can safely reproduce and build up stock for years to come.

By the end of the year, humanity as a whole will have used up 1.5 planets worth of renewable resources. Some countries are overshooting at an even greater rate: estimates suggest that the UK uses up 3.3 times the resources available to it. We're often aware of the need to live 'within our means' financially but much less so ecologically. We pray for an increased awareness of how we can better 'within our means' without building up ecological debt.

## 76 A prayer for our 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.

Pope Francis

## 77 Live simply – a prayer by Linda Jones

Compassionate and loving God,  
you created the world for us all to share,  
a world of beauty and plenty.  
Create in us a desire to live simply,  
so that our lives may reflect your generosity.

Creator God,  
You gave us responsibility for the earth,  
a world of riches and delight.  
Create in us a desire to live sustainably,  
so that those who follow after us  
may enjoy the fruits of your creation.

God of peace and justice,  
You give us the capacity to change,  
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.  
Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,  
so that the pillars of injustice crumble  
and those now crushed are set free.  
Amen.

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## 78 Reading from Psalm 46:1-3 (GNB)

"God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths; even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence."

## 79 A fast changing tapestry

Creator God, what a complex tapestry your creative fingers have woven; We delight at the daily reminders of your creative power.

This tapestry is closely interwoven, fragile, changing; changing too fast. Scientists confirm what our hearts already know – and we are fearful. We are fearful of seasons that have lost their pattern; of all the uncertainties that climate change is bringing.

Politicians bend and bow to meet national priorities, while greenhouse gases build, oceans acidify and air streams shift.

Forgive us for our lack of response. For seeing the scale of this crisis as reason not to engage.

Grant that through our prayers your Holy Spirit may give wisdom, inspiration and resolve to our politicians, leaders and negotiators, enabling them to make the tough decisions necessary for all people to live, to hope and to shape a greener world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Isabel Carter

## 80 Reading from Micah 4:1-2

In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.'

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