

Prayer points – March 2021



St David's Day

For those of us in the United Kingdom, the spring glow of golden daffodils brings real cheer at this time of year - and reminds us of St David's Day on 1st March. This day commemorates the patron Saint of Wales, who brought many to faith there. During St David's last sermon, his words to his followers were: "Be joyful, and keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us."

St David, you chose to live a simple life, and helped others whose lives were simple not through choice but through circumstance. Pray that I may consider my choices and live more simply in order to make a big difference to others. Show me the way to make small tasks occasions of prayer. Kindle in me a love of God so that in everything I do, I will keep that spirit of prayer. Amen *A prayer from CAFOD*

The greatest security risk – and our chance to tackle it together

Sir David Attenborough's recent [speech](#) to the UN Security Council reframed the concept of security, noting the world now faces "threats to security of a new and unprecedented kind. These threats do not divide us. They are threats which should unite us, no matter from which part of the world we come, for they face us all."

"If we continue on our current path, of climate change and environmental degradation," he stated, "we will face the collapse of everything that gives us our security: food production, access to fresh water, habitable ambient temperature and ocean food chains. And if the natural world can no longer support the most basic of our needs, then much of the rest of civilisation will quickly break down. Please, make no mistake, climate change is the biggest threat to security that modern humans have ever faced."

Attenborough also added a call to action: "While it's true we can never go back to the stable benign climate that enabled us to flourish for the past 10,000 years, I do believe that if we act fast enough, we can reach a new stable state. In November this year, at COP26 in Glasgow, we have what may be our last opportunity to make this step change. If we recognise climate change and the loss of nature as worldwide security threats, as indeed they are, then we may yet act proportionately and in time ... And through global co-operation, we may achieve far more than tackling climate change. We may finally create a stable, healthy world where resources are equally shared and where we thrive in balance with the rest of the natural world. We may, for the first time in the entire history of humanity, come to know what it feels like to be secure."

Pray that many people and in particular world leaders, may recognise the threat climate change poses to security for all humanity, and be inspired by the vision of a greener, more cooperative, stable and secure world.

Prayers needed for COP26

At the next climate talks, countries are due to present their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – the name for countries' plans to reduce their emissions.

On 26 February, the UN released a report on what has been offered so far. As Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UNFCC [noted](#), the report "shows that current levels of climate ambition are very far from putting us on a pathway that will meet our Paris Agreement goals" COP25 president Caroline Schmidt [was even more blunt](#): "significant work must be done, in particular by major emitters. Only 2 of the 18 largest emitters, the UK and the European Union, presented an updated NDC in 2020 containing a strong increase in their GHG reduction targets. Other major emitters either submitted NDCs presenting a very low increase in their ambition level or have not presented NDCs yet." All told, the reductions proposed so far would reduce emissions only 1% from 2010 levels by 2030 – far below what is needed.

We pray urgently for an increase of ambition from every country that has not yet made an adequate commitment – especially the major emitters. This is going to require a huge change of heart – and potentially quite a bit of negotiation. We pray for all working on individual countries' proposals and on [diplomacy](#) leading up to the climate talks, which [has been so seriously affected by restrictions](#) on travel and meetings.

Floods

The kind of threat posed by climate change was seen clearly this month in India, when a Himalayan glacier, which [scientists said had been weakened by climate change](#), collapsed. The collapse [swept away dams](#) and caused severe flooding: more than one hundred people lost their lives. We pray for all affected - and for wisdom for people planning programmes in that region, given the threat a changing climate poses to the glaciers in general. We also pray for all whose lives and livelihoods have been threatened by other floods in recent weeks – including in [Indonesia](#), [Peru and Brazil](#), and [Mozambique](#).

Winter Cold

[Disturbance to the polar vortex](#) created a dip in the jet stream, which in turn brought bitter cold, snow and ice to much of North America during mid-February. The impacts were felt perhaps [most strongly in Texas](#), where deregulation, independence and [failure to winterise key infrastructure](#) meant that the [grid couldn't cope](#) with demand, and millions suffered blackouts. We pray for people who suffered and now face a difficult recovery. We pray, too, that those who have tried to promote misinformation about climate change and green energy in [response to the grid failure](#) will cease doing so. We give thanks for [scientists who have been helping people](#) to understand the context of what happened – and for all those who have offered practical help to neighbours.

While scientists are debating the attribution of this event, they are [signaling a clear danger in the Atlantic](#), where global warming is weakening the pattern of circulation that brings warm waters to the surface in the north. The circulation is at its weakest point in over 1,000 years, a recent study said. Further weakening could bring more extreme weather to northern Europe and the eastern US. Pray people heed this warning.

Standing in the gap

At our February online prayers, Dr David Golding, Development Coordinator, North East CALL TO ACTION, invited us to pray about the proposal to [open a new coal mine in Cumbria](#), which it's estimated would release 8.4 million tonnes of carbon a year into the atmosphere – as much as one million households. As the [local authority reconsiders its decision](#), we lay this before God, thanking God for those campaigning to raise issues around the plans and praying that their “calls for the local authority and the national government to seek a better way, a way to a sustainable future, may yet be heeded.” We pray, too, for campaigners throughout the world who are mobilising people to care for our common home. Guide and strengthen them, Lord!

Farming

Farming everywhere is in transition. Those who grow our food face unprecedented challenges: from climate change, from the pandemic, from degraded resource base and from declining biodiversity. Each of these is an emergency in itself. At the same time, there are the complexities of domestic and international trade. The industry includes many different actors holding diverse views and interests. New initiatives that support farmers in their sensitive environmental management are key.

We pray for governments in our own countries and around the world, for wisdom and leadership as they chart the way forward for sustainable and secure food production, regenerated industry, recovered nature and restored landscape. We pray especially this month for those who farm on a smaller scale. We give thanks for [Fairtrade](#) and other mechanisms that help them to get a just return and to adapt to climate change. We ask God's guidance as they address areas of concern, including export issues in the UK and new agricultural rules in India which [would leave small farmers more vulnerable](#) to price fluctuations on the open market.

Signs of Hope

We've seen some real signs of encouragement in recent weeks. Some are large scale: South Korea is [planning the world's biggest offshore wind plant](#) – 8 times the size of the current largest plant - as part of its plans to build back after COVID and to end its reliance on fossil fuels. Major auto makers such as [Ford](#), GM and [Jaguar](#) are announcing massive investments in Electric Vehicles, as well as plans to phase out internal combustion cars. Some are smaller: around the world, people are [planting micro-forests](#), increasing biodiversity, sequestering carbon and helping people in cities to be educated about the value of nature. Give thanks for these. Pray God brings good plans to fruition and inspires more!