

## Prayer points – April 2021



### Alleluia! The Lord is risen!

As we celebrate Easter this April, we'll be greeting the day with the age-old Easter acclamation – a reminder of the joy the first Christians felt at the Resurrection, and our rejoicing in all that God has done for us.

The wonderful hymn “Now the green blade riseth” reminds us that Christ's saving work seemed at the time of his death to have been ended by those who killed him: *“In the grave they laid Him, Love who had been slain, Thinking that He never would awake again ...”* But God's loving power raised Christ from the dead in triumph. What seemed impossible became reality. *“Quick from the dead the risen One is seen: Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.”*

At this time of unrest and uncertainty, when we are conscious of so many issues facing our world - and of our own limitations, we may sometimes feel despair. How can we play a part in solving what seem like intractable problems? But we hope in Christ – through whom all things were made, who loves us and the whole world, and longs to reconcile all things. And Christ has been raised from the dead.

So we give thanks for the Resurrection and for the hope it gives us.

*“When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again”*

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

### Industrial Fishing Creates More CO2 Emissions Than Air Travel

A study just [published in Nature](#) has calculated the environmental and carbon cost of bottom trawling. This is a troubling method of using weighted nets to scrape along the sea-bed, gathering up fish, shellfish and crustaceans, but in the process causing huge damage to the sea bed itself.

Our oceans absorb about a quarter of global CO2 emissions each year – and marine sediments at the bottom of the ocean, when undisturbed, are a very effective carbon sink. But when weighted nets scrape the sea floor that carbon is released back into the water. A team [led by Enric Sala, explorer-in-residence at the National Geographic Society, found](#) that bottom trawling therefore results in one gigaton of carbon emissions a year - more than the total annual emissions from aviation.

Carbon released into water also turns it acidic, damaging sea life. The team found that marine protected areas (MPAs) that ban bottom trawling also boost the production of marine life, so that there are benefits to marine biodiversity, seafood production, and the climate. They have produced a road-map to show where it would be most effective to have such bans, which they hope will feed into global agreements.

We give thanks that this week comes news that damaging [trawl fishing has been banned in more than 100 square miles of seabed off Sussex, UK to help once vast kelp forests recover](#). Wildlife groups hope that the protection of 300 square kilometres of coastal seabed will help with ‘rewilding’ the sea by allowing the underwater seaweed forests to regenerate. We pray that many more areas will be given such protection following these findings.

### Keeping the Tropics Liveable

How important is it to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius? Very. Another reason why has emerged in a recent study. A team of scientists has predicted that if global warming is limited to 1.5 degrees, [most tropical areas will stay at temperatures that are liveable](#). If we exceed that limit, however, we risk the combination of heat and humidity – otherwise known as the wet bulb temperature – [rising above 35 degrees Celsius](#). At that point, the human body can no longer [cool itself down by sweating](#), as the sweat doesn't evaporate. In the short term, this can cause illness; if exposure is prolonged, it can be fatal. The study didn't work out how frequent the episodes of unbearable heat would be or how long they would last – but the threat to the [3.3 billion people](#) – almost half the world's population – living in the tropics is clear. Lord, inspire us with urgency to seek solutions: we must not put ourselves and our brothers and sisters at such risk.

## A prayer from Hereford Diocese Eco Church workshop

O Christ,  
Firstborn of all creation  
Through whom all things were made  
Whose breath imparted life to all  
Whose covenant embraced Noah and all creatures  
Who willed to make your dwelling in matter, becoming flesh for our sake  
Teach us how we may let creation fulfil its destiny  
To glorify you, to praise you and to highly exalt you for ever.

Revd Nick Read

## Prayers for the Green Recovery

Throughout this year, we have been praying that COVID recovery measures would help us ‘build back better’ – and there have been encouraging pledges and statements. But prayers are needed that countries and international groups actually follow through. There are some positive recent developments: for example, the US infrastructure plan [has clean energy and energy efficiency as major goals](#); a Chinese research team has [proposed a detailed plan](#) to enable China to reduce its coal use; the Supreme Court of Canada [upheld](#) a federal carbon price scheme; and more than 100 UK MPs are supporting a [Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill](#).

But there are also disappointments: the failure of the UK’s [Green Homes Grant scheme](#), UK plans to reduce passenger duty on domestic air travel; a [Five Year Plan from China](#) that some feel [isn’t sufficiently ambitious](#); a [lack of progress from the European Parliament](#) on the European Climate Law. Equally worrying are decisions by one country that will have an impact on others – such as the [cuts to climate research](#) in developing countries resulting from cuts to UK development assistance. We pray that promises will be equalled by action – and that God will show us how we can play our part in making change.

## Making the transition from fossil fuels

The [Baptist Union of Great Britain has decided to fully divest from fossil fuels](#), with 98.5% of Council members voting in favour. Following the debate, the updated wording of the Baptist Union investment policy now reads: *“We will therefore avoid investment in companies with significant trading in: the extraction, production and refining of oil, gas, tar sand and coal.”* Revd Dr Dave Gregory emphasised that this step ‘enables us to walk more firmly with our partners in the gospel in light of the climate crisis which affects the whole ‘community of creation’, both human and others, across the world today and threatens the order of creation into the future.’

Scottish churches [also launched a COP26 pledge on divestment and a just and green recovery](#) – and the Diocese of Oxford publicly [announced its divestment](#). We give thanks for these actions and pray they will inspire more churches – and groups more generally – to action.

We give thanks, too, for the [decision to review the permission granted for a new coal mine in Cumbria](#) – and pray for a rapid resolution to that situation. And we pray for the [eight young people in Australia](#), who, with the help of Sr Brigid Arthur, [are suing the Federal Minister for the Environment](#). They argue that if the Minister were to give permission for a proposed extension to a mine whose products could lead to 370 tonnes of carbon emissions, she would fail in her duty to protect young people from future climate impacts.

## Key meetings this month ...

From 5 to 11 April, the World Bank and IMF will be holding their [Spring Meetings](#). In another high profile event, US President Joe Biden [is convening a climate summit](#) on 22 and 23 April, and has invited 40 world leaders. The summit will focus on increasing ambition in order to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees – and is expected to include the [announcement of a more ambitious plan to cut emissions by 2030](#) from the United States. Meanwhile, quietly behind the scenes, there are [numerous meetings](#) throughout April that form part of the UN Climate process – and that are tackling key issues like climate finance, carbon markets, and agriculture. It’s all too easy for meetings to be more talk than action. Please pray that all of these meetings may help countries and global institutions agree to and start implementing plans that meet the challenge of the climate crisis.