

Prayer points – April 2022



We need to act now

“We are not on course for a safe world. I am sorry that immediate response is to increase oil, gas and even coal. We should never waste a crisis let alone a double crisis – the crisis of climate change which is getting worse, the crisis of Covid which we’re coming out of – and now we have this terrible crisis of a war that was unprovoked.... We need to take all this and go absolutely for clean energy, right now, like a moon shot, and we need to spend money to do this, money to help people insulate their homes, use green energy, build cycle ways, rewilding our natural environment and getting back the biodiversity we’ve lost. We need to be spending money now – to spend our children’s money- otherwise they will have no future.” *Mary Robinson speaking on the Late Late Show - Raidió Teilifís Éireann*

We pray that individuals, churches, businesses, and above all governments will respond to the current rise in energy prices by doing all that they can to move from unsustainable use of fossil fuels to sustainable and respectful use of earth’s resources.

Encouragement to change

The [latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Working Group III](#), which focuses on mitigation should be released this month – and will offer a clear picture of what scientists feel we need to do to limit global heating. We pray that amidst all the other pressing news of this time, the report may be heard – and its suggestions embedded into policies at every level. As we prepare to receive the report, a [new article in Nature magazine reminds us](#) that the costs of positive climate action are often overestimated, in part because the estimates don’t properly take into account either the savings from the beneficial effects of taking action and the potential costs of disasters averted. We pray that this article will also be widely circulated – and that it will encourage governments to be bold in their plans.

Hunger striking for climate action

Angus Rose is a [UK man on hunger strike](#) who has been sitting in front of the UK parliament for over two weeks. He is terrified about the future of his five nephews and niece because of the impact of climate change. He wrote a letter to the MP Greg Hands, Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change on 14th March, requesting that the [briefing](#) given by the Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance, to Boris Johnson in 2020 - which convinced him (at the time) to change his mind regarding the need to respond to climate change – be now given by Sir Patrick to all MPs, the cabinet and made available for televising to the public. “I have said to him that I will continue not eating until he arranges a briefing where Sir Patrick Vallance will brief parliament and the cabinet and make the recording available to be televised,” Rose [told The Guardian](#).

Rose is willing to continue his strike to the point of death. Thus far he has lost 21 lbs in weight. We pray for him. We pray that the briefing will indeed be released. And we give thanks for the scientists whose work is able to help people see clearly the risks ahead and what we need to do.

Jeremiah 12:1-3a

You are always righteous, LORD, when I bring a case before you.

Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper?

Why do all the faithless live at ease?

You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit.

You are always on their lips but far from their hearts.

Yet you know me, LORD; you see me and test my thoughts about you.

Polar extremes

During March, scientists raised considerable alarm in reporting that they were observing unprecedented high temperatures in the polar regions - both in Antarctica and the Arctic. In Antarctica, temperatures were recorded at up to 40°C above average seasonal temperatures and between 20°C and 30°C above normal for up to a week. [Weather records for the South Pole go back 65 years](#) - but such high temperatures have never been recorded before. The temperatures were however still well below 0°C.

In the Arctic the high temperatures were dangerously close to 0°C, but not quite enough to result in thawing. "The Northern polar region is the world's hardest hit by climate change. Temperatures there are rising three times faster than elsewhere on average, and extreme weather events are beginning to multiply," noted Julienne Stroeve, a polar climate specialist at University College London.

Even though these records occurred at the same time, "it's a coincidence", Stroeves said. "There is almost no connection between the air movements that shape the weather in the Arctic and the ones that shape the Antarctic's". The high temperatures were caused by 'atmospheric rivers' that transported warm moist air to the Arctic from south-western Spain and northern Africa, and to Antarctica from SE Australia and New Zealand.

Scientists are still discussing whether these were one-off events or alarming changes in the climate, but they have shocked researchers. [Prof Matt King, who leads the Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science](#), said the impact of the climate crisis meant events like these would be a "view to the future. Sometime down the track, depending on what we do with our carbon emissions, we might see these types of temperatures much more regularly....The main concern is a [weakening of ice shelves](#), extensions of ice sheets that float over the ocean. They play an important role in restraining inland ice. Once we lose ice shelves, grounded ice that sits inland would flow out faster ... go to the ocean and cause sea level rise," Mackintosh said. The melting of ice results in a [vicious cycle](#): a greater area of dark water is exposed, leading to increased absorption of the sun's energy, which then causes more warming.

Lord, we pray, may these unprecedented events be a warning that is heeded. Use them, we pray, to warm the hearts of all with power to make systemic decisions, and especially those who are responsible for governments' climate plans. Help them to see that it is vital for us all that their plans are strong.

What's happening in China?

We often hear people say – "but what about China"? In recent weeks, [China has released a slew of policy statements](#), including a clarification of its promise not to build new coal power projects overseas and its next 'five year plan' for energy. Some of the news is encouraging; some less so. The clarification on overseas coal is seen as potentially positive, as it not only formalises the ban on new projects but appears to leave China room to withdraw from projects that are already underway. The five year plan offers a mix: on the one hand, it is clear that China is putting energy security as its priority and is continuing its approval of domestic coal plants. On the other it is massively increasing renewables. Overall the plans are in accord with China's strategy of increasing renewables as its primary option, and, while increasing coal capacity, seeking to reduce coal's operational usage. We give thanks for signs of hope, pray that the growth of renewables increases apace and makes coal usage ever less necessary – and pray that in China, as globally, people may prioritise care for creation.

Continuing in Hope

"As we continue our Lenten journey together, amidst war, or threats of war, still affected in different ways by pandemic uncertainty, daunted in the Global North by agricultural anxiety well known for decades in the Global South, as each and every area of the world is increasingly affected by the climate crisis, despite all these threats to Creation and Community, we proceed with hope, a hope which does not disappoint us (Romans 5:5), a hope celebrated by the Psalmist poet (Psalm 121:1), a hope proclaimed by the prophets (Isa 40:31), and a hope made visible in the person of Jesus (Matthew 12:21) whom we call Saviour and Lord." Introduction to the [Anglican Communion Environmental Network's April newsletter](#)

Amen! As we approach Easter this month, may we be sustained by our hope in Christ who, having suffered temptation, pain and death, rose from the dead to redeem the world He loves.