

Prayer points – July 2022



Heat, drought and floods

Recent months have seen [numerous countries experiencing extreme heat](#): [China](#); [Japan](#); India; Pakistan; and countries in the Middle East and [northern Africa](#), [Europe](#), and [North America](#) are among those affected. For vulnerable people, the impact can be devastating – impacts on [crops](#) are also exacerbating the food crisis currently gripping the world. Nor is this a short-term issue: long term heat and droughts in places like central [Chile](#) and [California](#) may permanently alter patterns of life. We tend to think that after a heatwave passes, we will rebound – but in some places, that may not be possible.

Warm air holds more water, intensifying the likelihood of extreme rains – and many areas have also experienced severe flooding, especially [China](#), [India](#) and [Bangladesh](#), where floods have [affected millions of people](#).

Recent [work by climate attribution specialists](#) suggests that it is no longer necessary to ask whether climate change is playing a role in extreme heat events: “*every heatwave that is occurring today has been made more intense and more likely because of climate change*,” [says](#) Friederike Otto, a pioneer in the field. Extreme rain events are also known to be increasing because of climate change. Pray that leaders and all of us will see the risks we face and be inspired to reduce emissions and tackle practices that trap heat. Pray too for all affected by heat, drought and floods – and that wealthy countries will provide funding to protect vulnerable people and to respond adequately to loss and damage.

Some progress ...

There have been some positive developments in recent months. For example, the [EU has agreed a package](#) of climate legislation, including the phasing out of fossil fuel cars. Australia's new government has, as promised, [set a higher target for emissions cuts](#) by 2030 – 43% instead of 26-28%. It [has also pledged](#) to lower taxes on electric cars and to take forward work on the grid that will increase access to renewables. China has [pledged](#) to create a new financial and taxation system to support moves towards net zero. In addition, its [new-energy vehicle sales are soaring](#), and it is in meetings with the United States to increase cooperation on climate issues. And the US Government [will make it cheaper](#) to develop clean energy projects on public lands – increasing the drive towards renewable power – and has [taken moves to increase production of solar panels](#).

We give thanks for these, and other areas of positive change.

But more risks emerge

Progress is occurring – but not fast enough, and amidst the many current crises, there is a real danger of countries' renegeing on promises. This was particularly notable with respect to the recent G7 and Bonn meetings.

G7 leaders clearly [weakened earlier climate commitments](#). The group agreed to allow both some public support for gas development and some funding of overseas fossil fuel projects. Moreover, discussions of dates to phase out coal and a suggested target on low-emission vehicles were quietly dropped. “*The decisions now being made ... exacerbate the challenges of the climate crisis*,” Sir David King [stated](#), while Tasneem Essop of the Climate Action Network, [said](#), “*The G7 countries have once again proved that they are morally bankrupt and have no real intention to solve the climate crisis and take responsibility for this crisis caused by their disproportionate use and relentless support for fossil fuels.*”

Meanwhile negotiations at Bonn [failed to make progress](#), as talks around finance, loss and damage, and responsibility for emissions cuts, were sidelined or stalled. The Prime Minister of Vanuatu [stated](#): “*At the United Nations climate change summit in Paris seven years ago, we, the island nations and the least-developed countries, demanded that prosperous nations cut emissions so as to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. They agreed to “pursue efforts” to do so. Seven years on, we ask: where are those efforts? Ambition was not one of the results to be found at the recent climate negotiations in Bonn.*” We pray for increased ambition around climate finance and emissions cuts among developed countries and greater cooperation among all. We pray that the current crises may become the inspiration for a shift to renewables, rather than increased reliance on dangerous fossil fuels.

Prayers for wise leadership

Patricia Espinosa, the current UN climate chief, ends her term of office on the 15th of July. We give thanks for her [vision and work to facilitate climate action](#) and pray for discernment for all involved in choosing her replacement.

A concerning ruling

The US Supreme Court has just made [a ruling](#) that has major implications for the country's efforts to reduce emissions. At issue was the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to create regulations that would force states to decarbonise the power sector, and specifically to phase out coal. The ruling [stated](#) that the EPA did not have the authority to mandate sweeping reforms: "a decision of such magnitude and consequence rests with Congress itself, or an agency acting pursuant to a clear delegation from that representative body."

The ruling [could have been worse](#): it left intact the EPA's authority to regulate individual power plants and motor vehicles, for example. But it severely limited the executive branch's tools to tackle emissions, raising the prospect that any regulation with genuine, wide-reaching impacts would be the target of similar lawsuits. This is particularly problematic because partisan divides on climate make it almost impossible to get climate legislation through Congress. We pray for a reduction in that partisan split and for wisdom for politicians at federal, state and local level who are working out ways to promote climate action despite the obstacles.

Send your anointing

Lord God Creator

Send your anointing that we may resist the deep sleep of hopelessness

and stay awake to hear your love filled commands to us

That we may grow into what you have made us -your consciousness,
and so proclaim the infinite goodness of your loving creation.

Lord God

Help us to weep with you when we experience your sorrow

Help us to act on your behalf when called to resist the deep shadows
of rebellion against you and your Way.

Anoint us by your Holy Spirit

So that, with Her, we will live, sing and shout your praise and glory

Chris Walton

Community comes together with hope

As lockdown began in March 2019, nature lovers in Church Stretton, Shropshire had just made the decision to try to purchase some of the wetlands they had been monitoring over the past five years. It was not a great time to launch an appeal, but amazingly £25,000 was raised through leaflets, emails, news items and online talks. Even after purchase, COVID meant it was very hard to bring volunteers together to work on the site. But this June [Cudwell Meadow](#) was finally formally opened by the town mayor with the assistance of two young men (representing our future). An astonishing 141 plant species have so far been recorded on the three acre site, now managed as a wetland, wildflower meadow. Watervole are hanging on in the adjacent brook; egret, willow warbler and pied flycatcher have all been seen, and we have some unusual and impressive Longhorn beetles breeding there. We give thanks for beacons of hope within our communities, and the joy all involved have in preserving this tiny area as a reserve for the benefit of all God's creation. We pray that such examples may give hope and inspiration to others.

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."