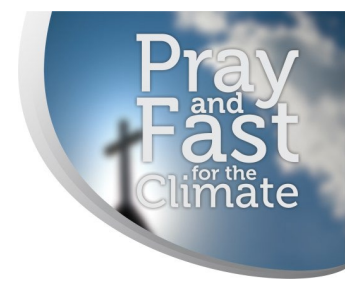


Prayer points – November 2022



For all the saints

Many churches mark the 1st of November – All Saints - as a time for thinking about the ways in which Christians throughout the centuries have witnessed to God's love in their lives. We can draw inspiration from 'the saints' who have cared for God's creation as part of their witness to God's love. Some are well known. We may think of St Francis' vision of all creation joining in a canticle of praise, or St Brigid's love of her fellow creatures.

But 'saints' are not limited to a few widely recognised people: in the New Testament, Paul speaks of church members "called to be saints together with **all** those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 1:2) Who are the saints who have given you inspiration through their witness? We give thanks for all who have shown us Christ's love of creation and inspired us to prayer and action.

"Jam open the closing window!"

The window for climate action is closing. This was the warning from three key reports offered by UN institutions in October. A [report from the World Meteorological Association](#) painted a sobering picture of where we are now, showing that atmospheric levels of the main greenhouse gases reached their highest levels ever in 2021: methane emissions, in particular, have risen steeply. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP)'s [Emissions Gap report](#) and UN Climate Change [synthesis of pledges](#) looked forward, highlighting the gap between where emissions need to be in 2030 and what estimates suggest they will be.

Presenting the UNEP report, Inger Andersen, Under-Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Director of UNEP, [noted](#) that little progress had been made since last year's climate talks. Limiting global warming to 2°C would require emissions cuts of 30% by 2030. Reaching the far safer target of 1.5°C would require 43% to 45% cuts. Current policies, however, would not give us these figures and would instead bring us a disastrous 2.8°C of warming by 2100; while current pledges, the UNEP and UNFCCC reports suggest, would give us only a slight reduction to between 2.4°C to 2.6°C. Net-zero commitments could reduce this to 1.8°C, but, as Andersen [stated](#), without policies and pledges to underpin the commitments "*this scenario isn't credible.*" She added: "*The science ... is resounding: we are sliding from climate crisis to climate disaster.*"

The point of the reports is not to create despair, but, as Andersen said, to "*kick start a system-wide transformation, now.*" The UNEP report offers suggestions for "*a root-and-branch redesign of the electricity sector, of the transport sector, of the building sector and of food systems*" as well as financial sector reforms.

Andersen added: "*I know some people think this can't be done over the next eight years. But we can't just throw up our hands and say we failed before we have even really tried. We must try, because every fraction of a degree matters: to vulnerable communities, to those that are yet to be connected to the electricity grid, to species and ecosystems, and to every one of us...*" She urged governments, businesses, and investors to take on board the report's suggestions, saying: "*This is how we can jam open the closing window for climate action and start to change our world for the better, for everyone.*"

Lord, there have been so many warnings! But we pray the increasing urgency and clarity of the science will move individuals, communities – including churches!, businesses, and governments to take the needed steps. We pray especially for stronger national pledges to be made at and after COP27 - and for governments to create policies that turn pledges into reality.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God – Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God./ It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;/ It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil/ Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?/ Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;/ And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;/ And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil/ Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;/ There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;/ And though the last lights off the black West went/ Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —/ Because the Holy Ghost over the bent/ World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Hope for the Amazon

Brazil's runoff election at the end of October had climate implications that go far beyond Brazil. Incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, elected in 2018, has presided over a [massive increase in Amazon deforestation](#), raising fears that the forests so crucial for their biodiversity and absorption of carbon would [pass a tipping point after which they could no longer recover](#). On the 30th of October, however, Brazilians elected his opponent, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, to the presidency. In his victory celebrations, [Lula pledged](#): "We will fight for zero deforestation in the Amazon ... Brazil and the planet need the Amazon alive ... We are going to restart the monitoring and surveillance of the Amazon and combat any kind of illegal activity." There will be [huge challenges in keeping these promises](#) - but we thank God they have been made. We pray that God will guide the incoming president and his government in protecting the Amazon, indigenous peoples, and our planet.

Extreme weather causing crises

This past month has seen many extreme events which climate change is likely amplifying. The drought in Somalia continues, and the continued failures of rainy seasons, [coupled with political instability and global price shocks, mean parts of the country are on the verge of famine](#). In August, children [were admitted](#) to hospital for acute severe malnutrition at the rate of one child every minute of every day. We pray for all who are unable to access food – and for a response to this crisis which will prevent the worst scenarios and save vulnerable lives. There has also been serious flooding in many countries. In Nigeria, floods have [killed more than 600 people](#), displaced about one and a half million, and done significant damage to agriculture. Australia has also continued to see severe flooding, as the third year of La Nina, [exacerbated by a negative Indian Ocean Dipole and likely also by rising temperatures](#), has brought [chaos in eastern areas](#), especially in the states of Victoria and New South Wales. Lord, we pray for all affected by these disasters. As crises multiply, we pray, too, that you will [keep people's hearts from growing numb](#). Inspire us all to take action to contain emissions, to assist people suffering in climate-amplified emergencies, and especially to work for just compensation for people who contribute the least to climate change and suffer the greatest loss and damage.

UK's new government ... and US midterm elections

New UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak faces many challenges on climate. He has undertaken some positive early moves – indicating that he will retain a ban on fracking, appointing a [development advocate](#) to a key Cabinet role, and speaking of the need to retrofit the UK's notoriously inefficient housing stock. But his [track record on environmental legislation, support for increased fossil fuel production, previous action to cut and redirect development funding](#) – the UK's primary channel for climate finance - and initial decision not to attend COP27 are among some worrying signs. We ask God to grant him and his government wisdom as they confront key economic and environmental questions and pray that they will prioritise care for the planet and the most vulnerable. As the US holds its midterm elections – in which control of both houses of Congress is at stake – we pray, too, that the outcomes of the midterm elections will [take forward, rather than imperiling](#), recent progress on climate action at state and national levels.

Prayers for the COP

The COP27 talks are scheduled to take place in Sharm el Sheikh from the 7th to the 18th of November. Our friends at Climate Intercessors [have asked us all to pray](#) around the theme "Together for Implementation" and [offered prayer points](#). With them, we ask first that God will inspire at the COP "a robust togetherness" which enables often marginalised voices to be heard, trust to be built among nations whose interests are divergent, and – in what looks to be the defining issue of this COP – delivery of climate finance and "a good faith dialogue with actual plans for loss and damage." With them, we pray, too, for work that will enable "faithful, speedy, and effective implementation" of the Paris Agreement to take place. This includes offers of ambitious pledges, preparations for a "thorough, transparent and accurate Global Stocktake" of progress in 2023, and "strong accountability models and mechanisms" for all aspects of the Agreement.

We pray for all who will be at the conference, especially those setting policy: "God of love, teach us to care for this world, our common home. Inspire government leaders as they gather...to listen to and heed the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Let them be united in heart and mind in responding courageously. May they seek the common good and protect the beautiful earthly garden you have created." (*Adapted from the [World Bishops' Appeal to COP21 Negotiating Parties](#)*)

We pray also for [some who won't be there](#). COP27 takes place against a background of [concerning human rights abuses in Egypt](#), and protests and [civil society space are heavily restricted](#). We pray for people suffering because of the lack of human rights and that, despite the restrictions, civil society and NGOs will be able to press for deeper climate action.

www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk