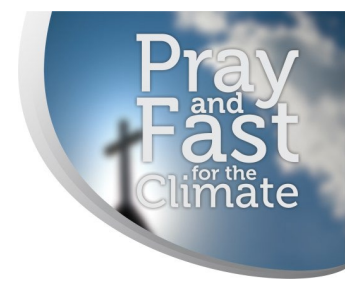


Prayer points – April 2023



Resurrection

From M Shawn Copeland, [*Knowing Christ Crucified: The Witness of African American Religious Experience*](#)

“Even as resurrection characterizes the destiny of Jesus, it is not a private destiny intended for him alone. It is the beginning of the absolute transformation of all creation. Resurrection breaks through, formally and materially, the cosmic, psychic and moral disorder brought about by the reign of sin. Resurrection signals eschatological healing and binds back to the heart of God a marred and broken creation.”

IPCC Synthesis Report

The IPCC recently [presented](#) the ‘Synthesis Report’ for its sixth assessment of climate change. The report offers a stark warning that current efforts are not sufficient to address the dangers of climate change, but [also hope that “if we act now, we can still secure a liveable sustainable future for all.”](#)

Five years after the IPCC argued the importance of keeping warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, we have not done enough and are likely to breach that limit. This poses enormous risks: as we are seeing daily in the news, the interlocking hazards resulting from global warming are creating greater dangers than anticipated. Moreover, these dangers are often affecting most severely those who have contributed the least in terms of emissions.

“Almost half of the world’s population lives in regions that are highly vulnerable to climate change. In the last decade, deaths from floods, droughts and storms were 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions,” [said](#) report author Aditi Mukherji.

The decisions we make in the next few years [have the potential to affect human destinies](#) “now and for thousands of years.” But this is not a call to hopelessness: the technical and financial solutions to enable equitable climate action exist. Prioritising rapid emissions reductions and adaptation that reduces risks for the most vulnerable communities would have huge positive impacts. We pray that individuals, companies and governments will heed the warning in the report – and seize the opportunity to act for climate justice now, before it is too late.

Heat and water

Since [late November of last year](#), portions of Latin America have been experiencing periods of unprecedented heat. While heatwaves in the region were to be expected because of La Nina, temperatures in early March in parts of Argentina [were 8 to 10 degrees Celsius hotter](#) than the 1991-2020 norm – something outside any range of predictability. The impact of such events is serious: Argentina’s heat and drought have led to [large-scale wildfires and crop losses](#). Losses of lives and livelihoods have also occurred as a result of droughts and [storms](#) in other areas. The World Health Organization has stated that [as many as 43,000 people may have died in Somalia](#) in 2022 because of drought. Meanwhile Tropical Cyclone Freddy hit southern Africa twice within three weeks, killing almost nine hundred people, destroying [hundreds of thousands of houses](#), flooding fields, and spreading cholera.

While not all extreme events are a result of climate change, more intense heat and storms are predicted in a warming world. Scientists estimate South America’s December heat [was made 60 times more likely by climate change](#). We lament the destruction caused by human-induced global heating – and pray for protection and comfort for everyone who has experienced loss.

Ears to hear?

The end of March saw policy developments in the UK and US which raised questions about both countries’ ability to meet their net zero targets. In response to legal challenges, the UK Government published [a number of energy and climate-related outlining policies and strategies](#). While these outlined some welcome transformations, Government’s own analysis suggested the policies would not deliver sufficient cuts in emissions to meet our carbon budgets. Analysts welcomed moves such as a rebalancing of energy pricing to favour electricity, but were critical of the reliance on long-term, uncertain technologies such as Carbon Capture and Storage, the continued emphasis on developing fossil fuels, the [failure to create a sufficiently favourable investment climate](#), and the lack of clarity in particular sectors. Meanwhile, in the US, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives [passed legislation that would roll back much of the Biden administration’s climate plans](#). While the legislation will not pass the Senate, it signals that Republicans are going to make climate action a campaign issue.

When the IPCC has warned so clearly of the need for urgent action, pray that policy makers will have ‘ears to hear’ – and strengthen policies to meet the deadlines crucial for all of our continued well-being.

Romans 6:3-4 (ESV)

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Earth Day – The Big One

Around the world, Earth Day (22 April) will be celebrated with prayer, practical action, and protest. The theme this year is [“Invest in Our Planet”](#): in New York, there will be a ‘March for Science’; in Wellington, New Zealand, a rally for decarbonisation; and in dozens of countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe, seminars and discussions about the zero carbon economy and climate justice.

In London, there will be four days of climate action. Supported by [over 70 organisations](#), ‘The Big One’ hopes to bring together 100,000 people for activities around the House of Parliament, with the aim of asking the UK Government to increase its climate and environmental action – and especially to end all new fossil fuel licenses. We pray for this and all Earth Day activities, using [a prayer written by Green Christian’s Andii Bowsher](#):

Compassionate God, you know our hearts and share our sorrows.
We are hurt by the despoiling of the living Earth, which we love.
We are angry at the loss we contemplate.
We long for words of comfort, yet find them hard to hear.
Turn our grief to active love
Turn our anger to energy for repair of the world
Turn our guilt to solidarity
and by your forgiveness make us whole with all creation. Amen

A treaty to protect the ocean

“This is a historic day for conservation and a sign that in a divided world, protecting nature and people can triumph over geopolitics,” [said](#) Greenpeace’s Ocean Campaigner Dr Laura Meller, as the ‘High Seas Treaty’ was signed at the United Nation this month. *“We praise countries for seeking compromises, putting aside differences and delivering a Treaty that will let us protect the oceans, build our resilience to climate change and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of billions of people.”*

For decades, only 1.2% of the ‘high seas’ – international waters – has been protected, with serious consequences for wildlife in the rest of the oceans. A [recent survey found](#) that 10% of global marine species were at risk of extinction. The new treaty [sets up](#) marine protected areas and regulates activities such as fishing, shipping, and exploration of the sea beds. It also establishes rules for the equitable sharing of marine genetic resources.

There is still much to be done: countries need formally to adopt the treaty and, once it is ratified, to implement its provisions. We give thanks for the treaty and promises of money to help implement it. And we pray that this process will move swiftly and that implementation will be effective, [enabling achievement](#) of the goal of protecting 30% of the world’s oceans, which was agreed at last year’s UN biodiversity conference.

Change in Australia

On the 30th of March, the Australian government passed a law which, for the first time, [requires major industrial facilities to reduce their emissions](#) by 5% each year. The move is significant because it affects sites that cause about 30% of the country’s emissions and, as [sustainability professor Tommy Wiedmann explained](#), “it’s the first-time greenhouse gas emissions reduction has been written into Australian law.” While it requires strengthening – it allows part of the decrease to be through offsets and [doesn’t go far enough to prevent companies from opening new sites](#) - it does demand real reductions, make fossil fuel development more costly, and [send a statement of intent](#). Government projections suggest that it will lead to a 205 metric tonne reduction in emissions by 2030. We give thanks for progress after so many years of delay – and pray for further changes in Australia and worldwide.

Easter Blessing (Marty Haugen)

God of all creation, form our hearts anew;
God of our salvation, lead us home to you;
Spirit, inspire our hearts to hear your call;
Living God of Jesus, come renew us all!