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Picture on front cover: Honeysuckle in Langcliffe churchyard by Judith Allison

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



September 2015

“We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance character; and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”
(Romans 5.4-5)

“Each time a person stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the life of others, or strikes out against injustice, they send a tiny ripple of hope, and those ripples, crossing each other from a million different centres of energy, build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”
(Robert F. Kennedy)

“Hope is definitely not the same as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out. It is hope, above all, which gives the strength to live and continually to try new things.”
(Vaclav Havel)

Tuesday 1st September

Pray and Fast for the Climate groups meet today at various venues:

- St. John's Church, Hartley Wintney 9 am – 10 pm
- Trinity URC Church, Wimbledon 12.30 – 1
- St. Laurence, Church Stretton 12.30 – 1
- Cumbria University Chapel, Lancaster 1 – 1.45
- Churches in Tring – various venues 12.30 – 1
- 23 Kensington Square, Westminster 6-7 pm

Wednesday 2nd September

Ben van Beurden, CEO of shell, has described the climate debate as a conflict between two imperatives: to decarbonise the energy supply and, at the same time, to provide poorer nations with enough (fossil fuel-based) energy to fuel economic growth. Jonathon Porritt asks how it can be right to provide energy needs in a way which ensures that “those very same countries will be right-royally screwed as a result of cooking the planet.” We should pray for all policy-makers who seek to put the imperative of addressing climate change above

short-term policies of the “growth-at-all-costs” kind.

Thursday 3rd September

The argument that renewable energy is intermittent and unreliable has been turned on its head by the announcement of Tesla's 1 MW. Powerpack storage system which allows power plants to buffer energy demand by storing energy at periods of low demand and releasing it at peak periods – a system which (it is claimed) could make redundant half the world's power plants. Now German energy firm E.ON has announced the building of a 5 MW. mega-battery covering 500 sq. metres of floor space. The modular design allows various battery technologies to be ‘plugged in’ to the system. Simultaneously a report from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency foresees an international ‘mega-shift’ towards energy storage in the next 10 years as the cost of batteries falls by over 60%.

Friday 4th September

A weekend on climate change entitled “Song of the Prophets” begins today at Hilfield Friary, Dorset, led by Revd.

Sources:

“Honey & Thistles”
by Christopher Jones and John Martin
Resurgence magazine
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

your service and in the service of all around us.

Monday 28th September

Local councils vary in what they take for recycling. The best ones collect garden waste, food rubbish, cardboard, newspaper, glass, cans, tetrapaks (juice & milk cartons), some plastics, clothes and shoes. Some also have collection points at supermarkets or community centres. However, their machines can't distinguish between a clean and a dirty bottle, or spot where polystyrene packaging is mixed up with plastic bottles. One wrong plastic bottle can contaminate the whole batch. Dirty tins and bottles will lower the quality of the material and may lead to its rejection by quality control. The Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations make the producers responsible for their recycling or disposal at the end of their life. The retailer you bought the item from may collect it for you at the end of its life. Otherwise, contact the local authority.

Tuesday 29th September

The world's first repair café was opened in Amsterdam in 2009. Now there are more than 400 around the world. Visitors bring broken items (such as smartphones, bicycles or boots) and watch, learn or help as the repairs get done. Mending is an attempt to resist the throwaway culture. Repair cafes get people talking and offer a chance to learn about local resources. Australia's first repair café, in Sydney, holds weekly repair sessions focusing on bicycles, furniture and electrical items. Britain's latest repair café is in Brighton.

Wednesday 30th September

The Carbon Conversations Handbook "In Time for Tomorrow?" has useful answers to questions we all ask, such as:
Will reducing food waste help reduce our carbon emissions?
Do the vegetables I grow have a lower carbon footprint than the ones in the shops?
Should I support Third World countries by buying their products? The book has a list (taken from "How Bad are Bananas?" by Mike Berners-Lee) of common items with their carbon footprint.

Susan Durber and Stephen Dominy, both of Christian Aid, with Brother Hugh SSF. Drawing from our rich biblical heritage, participants will hear the voices and theology of those suffering the effects of climate change around the world. To book a place, go to: www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/dong-of-the-prophets.pdf

Saturday 5th September

Last month we saw dairy farmers leading cattle through a Morrison's superstore to draw attention to the fact that dairy farmers are paid less for their milk than it costs them to produce it. Last year 400 dairy farmers left the industry and this exodus is likely to accelerate. This crisis has been a long time coming. In November 2010 the Commission for Rural Communities found that 25% of farm households had incomes below the national poverty level. We are told the global market is to blame for the low price of milk. This cannot hide the fact that if we in the UK want to be as self-sufficient as possible in farm produce, we the taxpayers must be prepared to pay for it. The alternative is to become more and more reliant on imports, so

increasing our dependency and our carbon footprint.

Sunday 6th September

Father, for too long we have worshipped the economy and left you out of account. We have not hallowed your Name, nor served your Kingdom. We have chosen what pleases us and have not done your will. Turn us back to yourself, we pray, for the sake of your Son, who died to save us all.

Monday 7th September

Farmers are constantly exhorted to be more 'efficient' in the sense that their objective should be to lower their costs and raise their productivity. But efficient farming is not just about cash flow. Farmers are in business to produce the nation's food, to care for the nation's soils, its landscape and its wildlife, and to safeguard its water supplies. Now, in addition, they must learn to adapt to climate change. None of this reflected in the prices they receive for what they sell to supermarkets.

Tuesday 8th September

Christopher Jones and John Martin in a new book called “Honey and Thistles” reflect on the story of Naboth and his vineyard (1 Kings 21). King Ahab is the land speculator, regarding land as simply an asset to be bought, sold and exploited. For Naboth, the land is provided by God to support his family. Queen Jezebel’s view is that (like some transnational corporations) what the powerful want, they can have, at any cost to anyone who opposes them. How many big organisations are eying the present plight of dairy farmers with the aim of expanding their reach and their profits?

Wednesday 9th September

The last 20 years have seen the triumph of free market economics over all other considerations. Even the churches tend to regard their land holdings simply as a source of cash ‘to support the ministry of the Church’ without much thought for the biblical idea that land is God’s gift to us to cultivate, care for it and receive its fruits with thankfulness. The global free market can never deliver soil conservation, carbon retention,

watershed protection, wildlife habitats and biodiversity, yet farming is central to these considerations, and we are all in debt to farmers for these services, quite apart from the food they produce.

Thursday 10th September

Biodiversity is more than a scientific catchword. Elm disease in the UK killed nearly all our elms because they were genetically identical. Today, the demand for large quantities of identical crop varieties, the dominance of a handful of seed companies, and the spread of monocultures, all put the world at severe risk. Large areas of a single variety are vulnerable to diseases, with the possibility of one of them overwhelming our defences, just as phylloxera wiped out many of France’s vineyards in the 19th century. Biodiversity in crops, animals and wildlife is nature’s protection system. We should nurture them all, not just because they are God’s handiwork, but because our survival may depend on them.

180,000 supporters in England and Wales, has promised to help the council with legal advice and possibly financial support. Its CEO, Craig Bennet, said: “We will not walk away from councils that make brave, sensible, science-based decisions when they could face legal battles. The Council has made a decision on the side of people and the environment.”

Friday 25th September

New planning advice from the Government will allow the Communities Secretary to overrule councils which take more than 16 weeks to decide applications for hydraulic fracking. Energy Secretary Amber Rudd said that shale gas would help develop jobs and benefit families by improving energy security “To ensure we get this industry up and running we can’t have a planning system that sees applications dragged out for months, or even years on end.” The FoE planning adviser said: “Local authorities have been following the rules. These changes are being made because the Government doesn’t agree with the democratic decisions councils have been making.”

Saturday 26th September

Everything we use – packaging, uneaten food, unwanted items etc. – has needed energy, and therefore emitted CO₂, during its creation. Everything thrown away produces yet more CO₂ when it is collected, dumped or recycled. Most modern products are designed for a short life. Many composite products can never be recycled. Steel from cars is melted down together with copper, paint and plastic. These lower the quality of recycled steel, so that it cannot be used to make new cars. Although the original product is saved from landfill, the recycled product often ends up there. The solution lies in the *design* phase of the product. If it were *designed* to be broken down and recycled, the problem would not arise.

Sunday 27th September

Father, we thank you for the fruits of science and technology. We pray that human technology will never crush the human spirit. We praise you for your great gifts of freedom and inventiveness, and we pray for wisdom to use them aright in

population take three or more flights a year. So the new runway would serve only a small proportion of the UK population and disregard the quality of life of millions who live directly under flight paths and have to endure the noise and pollution.. What message does this take to the UN climate talks in Paris if the UK not only allows but actually encourages higher per capita use of fossil fuels in its aviation strategy?

Tuesday 22nd September

A former director of Sellafield nuclear facility has expressed concern about the proposed Hinkley Point C power station, now being developed by EDF and the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation, controlled by the French and Chinese governments respectively. EDF/Areva has a lamentable record in its efforts to develop the European Pressurised Reactor at sites in France and Finland, while Austria has complained to the European Commission about state aid for the project, and financial analysts at HSBC have questioned its viability. Many are asking whether the time has come for a change in energy priorities towards scaling up renewables. (where there are the skills

and labour already in place), supporting energy storage technology and local authority-led energy service companies.

Wednesday 23rd September

Norway's capital Oslo has joined nearly 40 cities around the world, including Oxford and San Francisco, in selling its investments in coal. Warwick University has joined Edinburgh and Oxford Universities in divesting from many of their fossil fuel investments. Cambridge University has set aside a carbon reduction budget of £2 million a year to cut its carbon emissions by 34% of 2005 levels within 5 years and to aim for carbon-neutral status by 2050. It aims for a 20% reduction in water consumption by 2020 and to eliminate non-hazardous waste to landfill in the same period

Thursday 24th September

Caerphilly Borough Council faces a legal appeal with costs after it unanimously rejected an application to extract 6 million tonnes of coal from a 1,100 acre site near Rhymney, despite its attractions for local jobs and the local economy. FoE, which has

Friday 11th September

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in a new report links the herbicide glyphosate (marketed as Roundup) specifically to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer on the increase in Denmark. Philippe Grandjean, Professor of Environmental Medicine at South Denmark University, points out that 1,389 tonnes of glyphosate were sprayed on Danish crops in 2013. He does not advocate a total ban – other herbicides may be worse – but this report gives an opportunity to shift to non-GM, organic, health-enhancing, sustainable and climate-friendly agriculture. For more information, go to: www.i-sis.org.uk/Roundup-listed-carcinogen-by-Danish-Authority.php

Saturday 12th September

A report from the journal Environmental Research Letters finds that six European countries waste 22 million tonnes of food a year, and of these the UK is the worst offender. 16% of all food that reaches consumers is thrown away. A petition calling for Britain to follow France and force supermarkets to give surplus food to charities attracted 183,000

signatures. However, only 1.3% of food waste comes from supermarkets; around 50% is lost in the supply chain and the rest is thrown away in the home.

Sunday 13th September

Father God, we thank you at this harvest time for creating this wonderful world and for giving us the task of caring for it. Forgive us when the way we live denies our calling. Have mercy on us and our planet. Fill us daily with your grace, that we may always remember that we are your stewards, who one day will give an account.

Monday 14th September

Earth Overshoot Day is that day in the year when humanity has used up a full year's supply of ecological resources and goes into 'ecological debt'. According to the Global Footprint Network, an international think tank, that day has moved from early October in the year 2000 to August 13th this year. "The largest proportion of the ecological budget is being used up by the vast amount of carbon being pumped into the atmosphere . . . As more is being demanded for food and

timber products, fewer productive areas are available to absorb carbon from fossil fuels. This means carbon emissions accumulate in the atmosphere rather than being fully absorbed.” “If carbon emissions are reduced by at least 30% by 2030, as recommended by the IPCC, Earth Overshoot Day could be moved back to September 16th 2030.”

Tuesday 15th September

Sales of Ultra Low-Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) reached more than 9,000 in the 1st quarter of 2015. Highways England is committed to installing plug-in charge points for electric vehicles every 20 miles throughout the motorway network. Trials of wireless-charging technology could soon see ULEVs recharging their batteries on the move, without any need to stop for lengthy power-ups. Europcar is now pioneering an electric car-sharing scheme for the UK. Milton Keynes Council has tested an all-electric bus route with buses charged by electronic coils buried in the road. Only 10% of the road needs these power strips, while each bus needs only a small battery due to its ongoing charging capacity.

Wednesday 16th September

Nottingham City Council has built the UK's largest solar carport at the re-designed Harvey Hadden Leisure Centre. A canopy over the 40 car spaces houses 448 solar panels, which will deliver up to 55.7 MWh of electricity a year – enough to power 20 homes. Through the Government's Feed-in Tariff, the council expects to generate over £10,000 a year from the project. In the UK, solar carports are a novelty. In Nairobi, Solarcentury has been commissioned to build a 3,300 panel solar carport capable of delivering 1,256 MWh a year.

Thursday 17th September

India contains 13 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world, with air pollution thought to kill millions each year. While it expects to double its coal production by 2022 to meet increased demand, it also aims to instal 175 gigawatts of renewable energy – mainly solar – as well as developing the country's grid infrastructure. However, India's present population of 1.21 billion is forecast by the UN to grow to 1.707 billion by mid-century. As elsewhere, the urge towards economic growth

has largely drowned out the voices warning of the dire consequences of unrestricted population growth.

Friday 18th September

Australia's Great Barrier Reef has lost more than half its coral cover in the last 30 years and populations of animals such as dolphins, dugongs and sharks are in decline. UNESCO, which is responsible for World Heritage sites, has warned that significant threats to the Reef remain and called on the Australian Government to report back on progress in 18 months. WWF Australia has given a cautious welcome to Australia's Reef 2050 plan, but says that A\$100 million in new funding announced by the Government falls short of what is required to halt the Reef's decline.

Saturday 19th September

In the draft of the proposed UN Sustainable Development Goals (designed to follow the Millennium Development Goals) population size is nowhere mentioned. Goal 5 relates to gender equality and aims to tackle child and forced marriages, female genital mutilation, violence against

women and universal access to reproductive healthcare. According to an article in The Lancet, 233 million women globally have an unmet need for modern family planning. So Goal 5 is an important step, but could be strengthened by making the connection with environmental issues.

Sunday 20th September

Father, we lay before you the needs of the world's poor for food, clean water, sanitation, fuel and family planning. Help us to stand with them in the search for renewable resources that do not destroy your creation. Empower those who are working on gentle technologies appropriate to small communities, and give to industrial leaders the grace and integrity to promote such developments, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Monday 21st September

The debate about expansion of London's airports has taken for granted the assumption that a new runway is vital for UK business. However, the proportion of business flights to the total is under 20% and falling. Less than 15% of the UK