

today's gathering from 10 til 4 at Gate Church International, Dundee DD1 4JS. "Changing the way we use energy means changing both our way of life and our economy, in heating our homes, travel, food and farming." Keynote speakers: Professor Jim Skea from Scotland's Just Transition Commission and Neil Kermode, director of the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney. Workshops cover Buildings, Awards (Eco-Congregation), Homes & Communities, Energy and Money. Registration is open via: <http://ecocongregationagm2019.ventbrite.co.uk>

### **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March**

Father God, who has set before us the great hope that your Kingdom shall come on earth and taught us to pray for its coming, give us grace to discern the signs of its dawning and to work for the perfect day when the whole world shall reflect your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
(Percy Dearmer)

### **Sources:**

"Wilding" by Isabella Tree  
The Environment (CIWEM)  
[www.BusinessGreen.com](http://www.BusinessGreen.com)

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Picture on front cover: Sheep at Kelbrook, Lancashire

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## **Prayer guide for the care of creation**



# **March 2019**

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen, to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourself on behalf of the hungry, and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you always, he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." (Isaiah 38.9-11)

### Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March

“When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 13.11) We thank you, Lord, for the men and women of faith and determination who have stood up in public and testified to their faith. Be with them in the time of trial, and inspire them ever to speak the truth in love.

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March

Today's Eco Church conference at St Luke's Church, Hillmarton Road, Holloway, London seeks to explore how we can better care for God's earth in our church life, with a focus on church buildings and carbon reduction. Speakers include Caroline Pomeroy (Climate Stewards), Rich Bee (A Rocha) and Joel Payne (Resound Worship). There are workshops on buildings, energy efficiency, worship and fossil-free churches. A tasty vegan lunch is included. A donation of £10 is suggested.

Free tickets available from:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/eco-church-building-for-the-future-tickets-53646837134>

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

Lord, we have not been good stewards of the world you have given us to look after. We confess and repent of all the ways in which we have misused your creation. Teach us how to care for it with wisdom, compassion and dignity, and to pass on to our children a world that is in some degree better for our having lived in it.

### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March

After the presentation of a 100,000 strong petition to the US Congress, a resolution has been tabled calling for the creation of a Green New Deal with the goals of:

- Achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions
- Establishing millions of high-wage jobs and ensuring economic security for all
- Investing in infrastructure and industry

- To introduce a consistent set of materials collected from households for recycling
- To launch a national Deposit Return Scheme for cans and bottles.

The proposals would increase the cost of recycling packaging borne by producers and retailers from 10% to 100%, but would provide a major boost for UK recycling businesses. The existing Producer Responsibility Liability scheme would be extended to textiles, fishing gear, vehicle tyres, building materials and bulky waste such as mattresses, furniture and carpets.

### Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March

Deposit return schemes for drinks containers in other European countries have seen return rates increase by 85-98%. The consultation proposes two schemes, one that would be restricted to containers of less than 750 ml. capacity and the other that would cover all drinks packaging irrespective of size. Commenting on the proposals, Michael Gove said: “We are

committed to cementing our place as a world leader in resource efficiency, so we can be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we inherited it.” The plans received public backing from the Chancellor, Philip Hammond.

### Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March

Tomorrow from 10am to 4pm Beverley Methodist Social Responsibility Group will host a 'How to Go Greener' day with talks and workshops led by Green Christian, Climate Stewards/Eco Church, Vegan Society and East Riding Energy. Speakers and workshops will explore how we can tread more lightly on the earth. A £15 fee includes a vegan lunch and refreshments. Book by email to [lindajanejohnson@icloud.com](mailto:lindajanejohnson@icloud.com) or via [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-go-greener-day-tickets-54426788991](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-go-greener-day-tickets-54426788991)

### Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March

'Transforming Energy, Transforming Lives' is the title of

farms, 'no' to tidal barrages, 'no' to anything other than the fossil fuel supplies that feed our addictions. Help us to make honest judgments about the best technologies for the protection of your creation, not forgetting that the best results often flow from self-denial and a more economical use of resources. Guide our leaders as they make decisions which will affect all future generations. This we pray in the Name of your Son, who died for us and for all your creation.

### **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

A report from the think tank Bright Blue says that ending the UK's dependence on gas will be essential if the UK is to meet its climate targets. A new plan is required to overhaul the incentives to spur investment in green technologies. There should be a new low-carbon gas obligation on suppliers, requiring them to deliver a steadily increasing proportion of biomethane and hydrogen to the gas network.

### **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

A report from the Committee on Climate Change recommends that no new homes should be connected to the gas grid after 2025. This would call time on new gas boilers, radiators and ovens. Instead, new homes should rely solely on low-carbon heat sources such as heat pumps or district heating schemes. Lord Deben, its chairman, said: "Simply put, there is no way in which the UK can meet the legally-binding climate change targets that Parliament has determined unless we take the measures outlined."

Meanwhile, the 30 million existing homes face tougher energy standards such as improving insulation and taking up new carbon heat technologies.

### **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March**

The Government has launched a 12 week public consultation on its new waste proposals:

- To make packaging producers pay the full cost of dealing with their waste

- Securing clean air and water, climate and community resilience, healthy food, access to nature and a sustainable environment for all
- Promoting justice and equality. This resolution has been endorsed by all the Democrat presidential hopefuls.

### **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

With the global population set to rise to 19 billion by 2050, we are told we need to increase food production by 70-100%. But the truth may be a little different. The world already produces enough food to feed 10 billion people. but one-third of this is wasted.

According to the UN FAO (2011), 20% of meat and dairy products, 30% of cereals, 35% of fish caught for human consumption and 40-50% of fruit and vegetables never reaches the mouths of consumers.

Supermarkets, in the interests of perfection, squander mountains of both fresh and cooked products post-delivery. Restaurants around the world dish up portions that

their customers can rarely hope to finish, then throw away the leftovers. Consumers routinely overbuy, tempted by 2 for 1 bargains and loyalty points. Yet from 1940 to 1954 wasting food was a criminal offence. Current wastage costs the UK economy £12.5 billion annually, emits 20 million tonnes of CO2 and uses 5,400 million cubic metres of water – 250% of the annual discharge of the Thames.

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March. Ash Wednesday**

A number of Lent courses are available at:

<https://greenchristian.org.uk/recommended-for-advent-and-lent>.

### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March**

In developing countries, food is lost at an earlier stage. Lack of refrigeration, poor storage and transportation equates to a loss of 630 million tonnes of food – about the same as in the developed world. But here, food wastage induces hunger rather than obesity. In Sub-Saharan Africa

grain worth \$4 billion – enough to feed 48 million people a year – is lost to mould, insects and rodents, India loses an estimated 35-40% of its fruits and vegetables before they can reach the markets.

### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March**

In the developed world, [we burn](#) as fuel nearly as much food as we eat. Consumption of biodiesel in the EU – mostly home-grown rapeseed oil and palm oil imported from Indonesia – increased by 34% between 2010 and 2014. The EU imposed a cap of 7% on the proportion of biodiesel allowed in motor fuel, but by some measures, taking into account the destruction of forests to make way for palm oil plantations, biodiesel made from vegetable oil is 80% worse for the climate than fossil diesel.

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March**

“The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself” (F.D. Roosevelt) According to the [UN FAO 2015](#) report, one-third of land across the planet is moderately or highly

degraded due to erosion, salinisation, compaction, acidification and chemical pollution. 25-40 billion tonnes of topsoil are lost to erosion every year. In the UK, land degradation costs between £900 million and £1.4 billion a year, half of which is caused by the loss of organic matter, over a third by compaction and about 13% through erosion.

### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March**

Show us, dear Father, how to protect your creation, not just the plants and animals, but the soil, air and water by which we live, so that nobody may exploit or pollute them for private profit or convenience. Help us to cherish these necessities for our survival, and guide those in authority to ensure that the human spirit may not be starved in pursuit of material comfort and wealth.

### **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March**

Artificial fertilisers are not only costly, but wasteful. Without a healthy soil biology, up to half of nitrogen inputs are lost, washed

square km of tunnels. Nottingham University has developed a 'Deep Farm' project for converting these to support intensive food production, growing crops in hydroponic planters that feed plant roots with nutrient-rich water, or else by aeroponics, growing plants in an air or moist environment, lit by LED lights to illuminate them at wavelengths that maximise photosynthesis with minimum power input, to replace sunlight. The technology allows year-round crop production, delivering up to 10 crop cycles a year. One Deep Farm shaft, costing around £200,000 could produce 80 tonnes of food a year, using the same amount of energy as three UK homes.

### **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

Deep below Clapham Common lies a converted WW2 air-raid shelter where, last year, 2 tonnes of herbs were grown for sale in mixed salads to M & S, Waitrose, Ocado and Plant Organic. The herbs are propagated on sheets of recycled carpets and grown in

metal trays lit by warm LED lights. The founders of 'Growing Underground' have raised £650,000 to rent additional tunnel space to enable them to supply customers within the M25, using hydroponic technology.

### **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

Orkney-based Orbital Power will next year launch the UK's first floating tidal-stream turbines at a cost of £7 million. Each of the two 1 MW turbines will be fitted on either side of a 73m long float. Orbital's chief executive, Andrew Scott, said: “The UK public is hugely supportive of seeing tidal energy brought into the domestic and global energy mix. We are excited to be moving forward with this flagship project and to deliver the first turbine for costs similar to offshore wind and so provide the basis for a new sustainable industry.”

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March**

Father, we confess that we are too ready to say 'no' to any new technology – 'no' to onshore wind

## **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

The OEP will have no power to issue fines for non-compliance and, as a branch of government, it will be powerless against short-term political pressures, despite its long-term responsibility of working to environmental principles, which governments may disregard when it's politically convenient to do so. CIWEM is demanding that the OEP be funded by an instrument of Parliament, not the Government. This would be without precedent, but it is unprecedented that any state has left the EU and its environmental protection laws. Furthermore, the environmental challenges we face today have never been faced before.

## **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March**

A report from the Environmental Audit Committee called 'Sustainable Seas' urges the UK to re-think its 'sea-blind' attitude that fails to tackle the waste entering our seas through waterways, sewers and drains – including run-off from fertilisers

and contaminants such as oils, pharmaceuticals, untreated sewage, pesticides, heavy metals and radioactive material. It urges the Government

- To set legally-binding water quality targets with clear milestones to reduce chemical pollutants;
- To ban plastics that are difficult or impossible to recycle and to bring forward the 2042 deadline to eliminate avoidable plastic waste; and
- To expand and speed up deposit return systems and to make retailers and manufacturers take responsibility for the waste they generate.

The report names climate change, overfishing and pollution as the greatest threat to the world's oceans. However, it expects the demand for resources and growth in deep-sea mining to exacerbate those pressures.

## **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March**

The UK has more than 150,000 abandoned mineshafts and 25

into waterways where they cause algal blooms which suck oxygen out of the water and suffocate other forms of life. Every spring, 6,500 square miles of the Gulf of Mexico becomes a dead zone caused by fertiliser run-off from the Mississippi. Huge areas of the Black Sea may never recover from catastrophic algal blooms caused by massive agricultural discharges in the 1970s. According to the European Nitrogen Assessment, pollution caused by nitrogen-based compounds costs EU countries 70-320 billion euros a year due to polluted drinking water, damaged soils and dead zones in coastal seas.

## **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March**

Key to the restoration of soils is the humble earthworm. Worm casts hold up to 5 times the nitrogen, 7 times the soluble phosphate, 3 times the magnesium and 11 times more potassium than the surrounding topsoil. The discovery that earthworms can metabolise toxins

such as PCBs, DDT and dieldrin provides a simple low-cost solution to the detoxification of soils. Worms are now used to restore open-cast mining and industrial sites as both soil improvers and removers of pollution, so taking the concept of ecosystem engineering to a new level.

## **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March**

The world's soils hold more carbon as organic matter than all the vegetation on the planet, including rainforests, so improving soil structure and returning unproductive agricultural land to permanent pasture could be a crucial weapon in the battle against rising levels of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. The French '4 per 1000' initiative finds that CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is increasing by 4.3 billion tonnes a year, so that increasing the volume of carbon stored in soils by just 0.4% a year, through restoring and improving degraded agricultural land, could halt the annual increase of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. The potential

for rewilding projects, such as in Ennerdale, the Frome catchment and the Knepp Castle Estate in Sussex, is attracting attention from a government under pressure to reduce carbon emissions by 57% from 1990 levels by 2030.

### **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March**

A 'Grow Green' farming conference is to be held on April 11<sup>th</sup> at the British Library in London. It will explore how a plant-strong future can help meet climate change targets. Speakers include Dr Helen Harwatt, Farmed Animal Law & Policy Fellow at Harvard University, Marcela Villareal, director of South-South cooperation at the UN FAO and Natalie Bennett, former leader of the Green Party.

### **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

A study by Natural England and the RSPB has shown that symptoms of common disorders such as depression, stress, anxiety and phobias are all alleviated with time spent in

natural surroundings. Measurements of blood pressure, pulse rates and cortisone levels in young adults demonstrated a decrease in anger and an increase in positive moods when walking in a nature reserve. Low levels of self-discipline, aggression and hyperactivity in young people all improved through contact with nature. Many public figures including George Monbiot, Chris Packham, Simon Barnes, Mike McCarthy and Matthew Oates have written movingly about nature's ability to restore a sense of connection and to balance the mind.

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March**

Methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is produced by cattle and by decaying vegetation, fires, coal mines and natural gas plants. Until about 2000 atmospheric levels were stable, but from 2007 onwards levels started rising and have been accelerating since 2014. In a paper published by the American Geophysical Union, Professor Nisbet of Royal

Holloway College admits that he is not sure why levels are rising so alarmingly. Some believe that rising numbers of cattle – as well as water swamps – are producing more methane. Others warn that natural chemicals in the atmosphere may be changing because of temperature rises, causing them to lose their ability to absorb the gas. “Either way” says Nisbet “It is important to unravel what is going on.” Ed. note: Earlier it was thought that melting of the permafrost was causing much of the problem.

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

Lord, many people in developing countries are suffering the effects of climate change through our habits of consumption. We pray for all who are working to relieve malnutrition, disease and human suffering. Be close to them when they face obstacles of bureaucratic obstruction, corporate greed and the tyranny of prejudice. Support them in every circumstance and crisis and

make your presence known to them in every time of need.

### **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

The Government's Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill requires the Secretary of State to set out environmental principles post-Brexit including polluter pays and precautionary principles, plus long-term targets for restoring nature and reporting progress to Parliament. However, unlike the climate targets, they are not legally binding. The Bill will establish an Office of Environmental Protection (OEP) to advise the Government on environmental matters. The OEP chair and non-executives would be appointed by the Government and its budget set by the Government. This means that the OEP would effectively be a branch of government – not the world-leading independent body that would earn the public's confidence.