
Prayer guide for the care of creation



March 2011

"Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds."
Psalm 36.5.

"His compassions never fail. They are new every morning: great is your faithfulness."
Lamentations 3.22-3.

"If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself."
II Timothy 2. 13.

"Everything about God is vast and incomparable, including his faithfulness. He never forgets a thing, never makes a mistake, never fails to keep a promise, never falters over a decision, never retracts a statement he has made, and has never breached a contract. Every promise he has given, every covenant he has struck is guaranteed by his faithful character."
Selwyn Hughes.



Tuesday 1st March

A new WWF/Ecofys report called “100% Renewable Energy 2050” has ten priority recommendations:

1. Clean Energy: Promote only the most efficient products.
2. Grids: Share and exchange clean energy through grids and trade, making the best use of sustainable energy resources in different areas.
3. Access: End energy poverty and provide efficient cook stoves to all in developing countries.
4. Money: Invest in renewable energy and energy-efficient products and buildings.
5. Food: Stop food waste. Promote sustainably-sourced food to free up land for biodiversity, sustainable forestry and biofuel production. Wealthier people need to eat less meat.
6. Materials: Reduce, re-use, recycle, to minimise waste and save energy. Develop durable materials.
7. Transport: Give incentives for greater use of public transport. Promote electrification wherever possible and support research into hydrogen for shipping and aviation.
8. Technology: Develop national, bilateral and multilateral action plans to promote research and development

in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

9. Sustainability: Enforce strict sustainability criteria to ensure that renewable energy is consistent with environmental and development goals.
10. Agreements: Support ambitious climate and energy agreements to provide global guidance and promote co-operation on renewable energy and efficiency efforts.

Wednesday 2nd March

For the UK, the report recommends reform of the Electricity Market this year:

- To set a strong emissions performance standard. The proposed standard of 450 g.CO2/kWh is too weak.
- To establish stable long-term financial incentives for investment in renewables.
- To rule out any implicit or explicit subsidy for nuclear power, which otherwise would crowd out the potential for renewable energy.

Thursday 3rd March

A co-ordinated offshore grid system would make it easier to connect with European grids and make development cheaper for consumers.

In particular, the UK needs to take a leading role in the North Sea Grid Initiative with clear rules and timed objectives for its construction. Also, as part of the EU Budget Reform, the EU needs to develop links between its members' national grids.

Friday 4th March

Today sees the first of four weekly meetings at the Mint Methodist Church, Exeter, on "The Environmental Crisis: a Christian Response". Today Sir John Houghton, former chairman of the IPCC, speaks on "Climate Change: a Lot of Hot Air or Creation in Crisis?"

March 11th. Dr. John Sale, former UN Adviser Conservation, on "Where Have All the Tigers Gone? The Significance of Biodiversity Loss".

March 18th. Richard Weaver, policy adviser to Tearfund on "Fighting for Survival: How Environmental Problems Impact the World's Poorest."

March 25th. Ruth Valerio, manager of A Rocha's Living Lightly project, on "Living it Out: Christian Living that Doesn't Cost the Earth."

Attendance free. Retiring collection.

Our prayers are asked for the Vale Villages in Transition, a Christian Group which showing "Power of Community" today and holding a

"Green Day" on the 12th focussing on local food and sustainable energy.

Saturday 5th March

"Ending the Age of Thorns: Surviving Consumerism" is the title of today's CEL gathering at St. John's Church opposite Waterloo Station, London, from 11 to 5. Peter Owen Jones, presenter of the BBC's "How to live a simple life" will open the day with Professor Tim Cooper of Nottingham Trent University. There will be workshops on Green Economics, shopping as if the planet mattered and greening the church in daily life. Cost £20 (£15 for CEL members. To book a place ring 0845 459 8460 or email: bookings@christian-ecology.org.uk

Sunday 6th March

Loving God, we acknowledge the peace it brings when we realise that, of all the things you can do, the one thing you can't do is to fail. May the reality of this be the pavement on which we tread this day and every day. Amen.

Monday 7th March

Father, we give you thanks for answers to prayer:

That the plan for a dairy farm for 3,770 cows at Nocton, Lincolnshire, will not now go ahead;

That Japan has withdrawn its whaling fleet from the Antarctic;

That the British government has withdrawn its plans to sell many of our national forests.

Help us to understand that you have authority over all human plans and that our calling is but to trust and obey.

Tuesday 8th March

The WWF/Ecofys Energy Report highlights the importance of helping householders with energy retrofits to reduce the massive waste of energy in inefficient housing. In particular:

The Green Deal should provide certainty to businesses and investors in helping the UK to meet its carbon budgets.

The Green Deal needs a cross-departmental strategy to include financial incentives for householders to participate.

For the private rented sector there should be a strict energy efficiency standard to ensure that inefficient and unhealthy homes cannot be rented, so reducing fuel poverty.

Wednesday 9th March.

Ash Wednesday

The Carbon Fast

(www.tearfund.org/campaigning/carbon+fast) provides simple actions and prayers to help individuals and churches to reduce their carbon footprint and protect poor communities from the changing climate. The resources include a weekly reading, reflections, prayers and actions so that churches and small groups can take part together. The weekly themes of simplicity, sacrifice, community, creativity and generosity act as a focus for each reflection, helping us all to reduce our carbon footprint.

Thursday 10th March

The WWF/Ecofys report calls for a Green Investment Bank (GIB) to raise finance for essential energy reforms and to reduce the risk on the huge levels of private finance required to decarbonise UK energy. A GIB established by statute is urgently required with £4-6 billion of capital and the ability to issue bonds to generate the £450 billion investment required by 2025.

Friday 11th March

A detailed action plan is needed to implement the Government's 2030

Food Strategy. WWF calls on the Government:

To develop a roadmap to reduce emissions from the food supply chain by 25% by 2025 and at least 70% by 2050;

To commit to reducing the wastage of food that results in 40% of UK food ending up in the bin or in landfill;

To define the key principles of a sustainable diet in partnership with the food industry and civil society organisations.

Saturday 12th March

Today at South Parade Baptist

Church, Headingley, a "Climate of Hope" ecumenical conference, free and open to all, looks at the role the global church can play in the fight against climate change by

campaigning, prayer and practical action. Running from 10 to 4:30, the conference features Sir John

Houghton as keynote speaker with a range of workshops led by

representatives of TearFund, Christian Aid, A Rocha, Breathe and local

churches, including a workshop for young people aged 11-16 and an exhibition featuring green

organisations. Website:

www.climateofhope.co.uk

Sunday 13th March

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111.10)

Loving Father, teach us how to use your great gifts of inventiveness in the service of the world that you created, acknowledging you as the source of all wisdom and strength.

Monday 14th March

The WWF/Ecofys report calls for strict criteria to ensure that the use of biofuels is compatible with

sustainability. Biofuels are less suited

to aviation and long-haul freight, so

reform of the electricity market should include a certification scheme for

sustainable bioenergy and guidance

on the use of bioenergy for different sectors of the economy.

Tuesday 15th March

Last December's UN Convention on

Biological Diversity held at Nagoya,

Japan, closed with a de facto

moratorium on geo-engineering

projects and experiments in tackling

climate change. Geo-engineering

involves large-scale manipulation of the Earth's oceans, soils and

atmosphere, such as proposals:

To put sulphur particles into the

atmosphere to reflect the sun;

To add iron particles to the oceans to grow CO₂-absorbing plankton;
To inject silver iodide into clouds to produce rain.
Geo-engineering does not cover plans for carbon capture and storage.

Source: www.ecologicalinternet.org

Wednesday 16th March

The Government has received nine applications for carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects and five for renewable energy projects – all to be funded through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. Of the renewable energy projects, three are tidal stream projects and one a wave energy project, all in Scotland, and one is an offshore wind project in North-East England. Of the CCS projects, two are on Teesside and four on the Humber estuary. Energy Minister Charles Hendry said: “The strong level of interest received for CCS projects is particularly heartening – it shows that UK industry is keen to move forward in the development of CCS and confirms the lead that the UK is taking in this critical technology.

Thursday 17th March

Over 20 UK energy companies are challenging the Government’s decision to review solar farm projects

of up to 5 MW. Ministers want to ensure that the £360 million fund is solely directed to individuals putting solar panels on their roofs. The energy companies say they want to drive down costs with projects covering large areas with solar panels – particularly in the South-West. The subsidies are small compared to those for offshore wind farms and nuclear power, but the need for certainty in Government policy over long-term investment must be a major consideration.

Friday 18th March

A study for RENEW (which facilitates environmental technology across the north-east) examines the feasibility of using anaerobic digestion (AD) to convert food waste into biomethane for use as a fuel in the areas of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Stockton. A plant which processes 30,000 tonnes of food waste a year could provide up to 4.25 million litres of diesel or petrol – more than enough for the three authorities. The next stage is to work with these authorities on the practicalities.

Saturday 19th March

UK company Advanced Plasma Power (APP) plans to dig up 16.5 million

tonnes of landfill waste at a site near Hasselt, Belgium, and put it through a gasification process called “Gas Plasma”. The synthetic gas produced will, when burnt, give off steam to drive a generator, which in turn will feed a 60 MW. power plant – enough to supply the electricity needs of 60,000 homes. APP claims that the process leaves behind only 1.5% of the input and this, consisting mainly of metals and minerals, can be broken down into a glassy ash that can be used to make concrete, cement and screed mixes.

A similar plant near the Austrian town of Gussing has been in operation since 2003 and has an energy output twice that required for operating the plant.

Sunday 20th March

Father God, we have not been good stewards of the world that you have given us to tend. We confess and repent of all the ways 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. Amen.

Monday 21st March

Today marks the beginning of Climate Week when charities, faith groups, teachers, businesses, local and national politicians are helping to shine a spotlight on the steps being taken to combat climate change. Awards will be given for inspirational actions in fifteen categories. The panel of judges includes Lord Stern, Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project, and Tony Juniper, special adviser to Prince Charles.

Website: www.climateweek.com

Tuesday 22nd March

An Oxford University study using computer modelling has shown that greenhouse gas emissions, even at today’s levels, are significantly increasing the likelihood of extreme weather events in the UK. The floods of 2000 alone cost the insurance industry £1.3 billion. Secretary Chris Huhne believes that prevention is the best cure and the Government’s response is to focus on energy efficiency through the Green Deal and on a low-carbon energy supply using renewables, a new nuclear policy and clean gas through carbon capture and storage. “We must keep our options

open and not put all our eggs in one basket.”

Wednesday 23rd March

Professor Dieter Helm CBE, giving evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Energy & Climate Change, said that consumers faced sharply rising electricity bills by 2015 to meet the costs of renewable energy unless there was a plan to deal with it. This would require putting gas back into the energy plan since supply had recently become more secure and gas would give us a temporary breather to get to grips with climate change policies. Meanwhile we need to rely on a mix of energy supply: gas, nuclear, renewables and a smart grid.

Thursday 24th March

According to the WWF/Ecofys report, solar energy contributes only 0.02% to global energy supply, but the proportion is growing fast. By 2050, solar energy could supply half our global electricity needs, half of our building heating needs and 15% of industrial heat and fuel. Concentrating Solar Power (CSP) uses mirrors and lenses to focus the sun's rays on a small area where the heat can be collected to heat water, and the steam used to generate electricity. CSP

devices that can store electricity up to 15 hours are now being designed.

Friday 25th March

The South African government has announced its intention to build a 5 GW solar power station, the world's largest, in the Northern Cape, using a mix of solar technologies. The solar park will meet nearly 10% of the nation's electricity needs, so reducing its dependence on coal, which currently supplies 90% of its electricity.

The development of similar facilities in North Africa would benefit those countries while supplying Europe with much-needed energy.

Saturday 26th March

Today (Earth Day) millions of people across the world will turn off their lights at 8.30 pm local time as a reminder to all that we have only one Planet Earth and we must reduce our impact on this our only home.

At Oxford Place Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX, a conference called “The Gospel's Green Light: Motives for Environmental Care” will explore Christian activism in theory and practice. Speakers include: Rev. Peter Harris on “A Rocha's Green Lights”;

Prof. Andrew Basden on “Green Activism with Christ: Is spiritual regeneration needed for effective change?”

Prof. Tim Cooper on “Christians in Environmental Discourse: Leaders or Followers?”

Prof. Mike Hulme on “Should Christians be trying to stop climate change?”

Cost: £20, Concessions £15, Students £8 including lunch.

Website:

www.wysocs.org.uk/events.php

Sunday 27th March

Heavenly Father, you know, more than we, what is happening to us and our world. We know that the way we live exploits and degrades your creation. May your Holy Spirit enlighten our political leaders and guide us to support those who suffer from the effects of our affluent lifestyles. May your Kingdom come throughout the world. Amen.

Monday 28th March

Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University, questions Government priorities. Is it to keep food cheap or to lower its carbon footprint and the cost of diet-related healthcare? Are consumers modern gods, or should

they have their choices restricted before the food is on the shelves? He believes that the only future for us and the planet is to put food systems on a sustainable course. “New priorities will be required, such as soil conservation, setting aside land for food rather than houses or motorways, eating differently and perhaps accepting a choice of 7,000 items in supermarkets instead of 30,000.” Unfortunately DEFRA’s Food Business 2011-2015 paper places its focus on production rather than sustainable consumption. A sustainable system would lower greenhouse gas emissions and water footprints, conserve the soil, enhance biodiversity and create energy as well as reducing the need for it. Many think this will mean a big reduction in meat and dairy products, an end to animals reared on cereals instead of grass and an increase in rural jobs. “The current system cannot go on.”

Tuesday 29th March

Midland Pig Producers has made a planning application for an indoor pig factory in Derbyshire to house 2,500 sows and around 20,000 piglets. The Soil Association has compiled scientific evidence which suggests that raising pigs on this scale would risk serious impacts on human health

as well as on the pigs themselves. Already half of all antibiotics prescribed in the UK are prescribed by vets. MPP has threatened legal action while the SA has responded with scientific arguments. Website: www.soilassociation.org/notinmybanger

significant part of the environmental impact of these bags is in the resources used for their production. All multi-use bags need to be re-used as much as possible to reduce their environmental impact, and to be responsibly recycled at the end of their life.”

Wednesday 30th March

A study by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Parkinson’s Institute in California has found that exposure to paraquat and rotenone more than doubles people’s chances of getting Parkinson’s disease. Paraquat is one of the most commonly used industrial herbicides in the world and both chemicals are used in large-scale farming. According to the study, it increases production of certain oxygen derivatives that may harm cellular structures. Any comments from the chemical industry would be of interest.

Sources:

Living Earth (Soil Association)
Resurgence
Green Futures
WWF: The Energy Report
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

Thursday 31st March

A study by the Environment Agency has found that lightweight single-use plastic bags have a smaller carbon footprint than standard ‘bags for life’, but only if the latter are used less than 4 times before being thrown away. An agency spokeswoman said: “A

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Picture on front cover: Snowdrops by Poppy Pickard

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