

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by [email](mailto:prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk) (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

September 2012



“Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole world will belong to . them.”
(Matthew 5.5. trans. J.B. Phillips)

“The human heart is an idol-making factory.”
(John Calvin)

“Meekness is not weakness. The meek are free from demandingness – the attitude of those who assert that everything should go their way, or that they ought to be given more consideration, or that people should respect their rights.

Robert Browning wrote: ‘He who keeps one end in view makes all things serve.’
When that one end is confidence in God’s plan for our life, and his power to make it happen, then indeed all things serve.”
(Selwyn Hughes)

Saturday 1st September

“Creation Time” runs from today until October 4th. This year’s theme is “Sustainable Energy in God’s Creation Time.” Resources are available from Churches Together in Britain & Ireland www.ctbi.org.uk

Operation Noah can provide sermon notes and prayers for each Sunday. The notes combine biblical insights regarding climate change taken from Operation Noah’s Ash Wednesday Declaration. See www.operationnoah.org/creationtime

Sunday 2nd September

Father, we pray, each one of us, for an honest appraisal of our own lifestyle, so that we may admit, to ourselves and to you, all that we are contributing, directly and indirectly, to the pollution of your world. Help us to bear witness, by our example, to our resolve to amend our lives, so that others may take heart and act accordingly.

Monday 3rd September

The first showing of “An Inconvenient Truth 2” takes place at 6.30 today in the Bacon Theatre, Cheltenham. It

suggests that society already has answers to climate change, and features positive solutions already implemented in Sweden and elsewhere. Jonathon Porritt will lead a Q & A session afterwards.

Tuesday 4th September

Last April the Royal Society published its “People and the Planet” report. One of its key recommendations was: “Population and the environment should not be considered as two separate issues. Demographic changes should be factored into international meetings such as the Rio + 20 conference.”

Yet that conference had nothing to say about the central importance of population growth in the debate about sustainability. Para. 145 of the Rio Declaration states: “We emphasise the need for the provision of universal access to reproductive health, including family planning, sexual health and the integration of reproductive health in national strategies and programmes.”

Wednesday 5th September

According to a UN/Guttmacher Institute 2012 report, 35% of the 800

Saturday 29th September

A report from the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) finds that more than half the bulky waste taken to household waste and recycling centres (HWRCs) could be re-used. Of the bulky items taken to HWRCs 32% were re-usable in their current condition and another 10% required only slight repair. The most common bulky items taken to HWRCs are televisions, wardrobes and carpets, while the most common for kerbside collection are sofas, mattresses and beds. WRAP commented:

“There is clearly significant re-use potential in such bulky items. It will help local authorities and HWRC operators to remove these items from the waste stream. either for re-sale or for passing on to the third sector.”

Sunday 30th September

Father, you have given us matchless gifts in the realm of science and technology. Help us to understand that you alone are the source of all truth and understanding. Let us never be blinded by the lure of the

market-place or tempted to put at risk the lives and health of our fellow-humans. Watch over our motives, loving Father, that we may always give prime place to the furtherance of your Kingdom.

Sources:

Clean Slate (Centre for Alternative Technology)
Population Matters magazine
Resurgence/Ecologist
www.edie.net

efficiency, renewable energy or carbon capture and storage. Coming together, these could result in ever greater reliance on gas, at a time when its price is likely to increase because of rapidly growing demand from countries including China and India.” As to shale gas, he adds that significant levels of exploitation are unlikely for many years, due to substantial logistical and environmental challenges. “Shale gas is unlikely to be a game-changer in the UK.”

Thursday 27th September

The World Health Organisation’s cancer agency has declared that diesel fumes are carcinogenic – replacing its 1989 advice that diesel exhaust was “probably carcinogenic”. It added that diesel exhaust was as important a public health threat as passive smoking. Ken Donaldson, Professor of Respiratory Toxicology at Edinburgh University said that the people most at risk are those whose jobs expose them to high levels of diesel exhaust, such as truck drivers, mechanics and miners, but “for the man in the street, nothing has changed. It’s a

known risk, but a low one for the average person, so people should go about their business as normal.” Nevertheless, for manufacturers of diesel vehicles, this must be a powerful wake-up call.

Friday 28th September

According to an NHS report, residential care homes account for at least 3.4 million tonnes of CO2 each year and almost £1.1 billion in natural resource costs. In 2008/9 their carbon footprint was the same as Eretria’s. The annual pharmacy waste from UK care homes amounted to around £49 million with a CO2 output of 28,764 tonnes. Potential energy use savings could cut consumption and bills by 11% on average. “If equivalent savings were realised nationally, this could save £52.8 million in energy costs and 220,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions each year – i.e. the same as the entire carbon footprint of the Seychelles in 2003.”

women who die every day in childbirth (that’s 104,000 women a year) did not want the pregnancy that killed them. More than one-third of all conceptions are not planned. That’s an estimated 80 million a year, leading to the tragedy of 40 million abortions each year. “But” say some, “We must not divert attention away from the much more pressing issue of over-consumption in the rich world.” So, must we therefore never address over-population until the challenge of over-consumption has been resolved? If so, we may have to wait a long time.

Thursday 6th September

The same report finds that about 222 million women who do not use modern contraceptives say they want no more children (www.guttmacher.org/media/nr/2012/06/19/) Nobody today advocates coercion. Instead, in order to meet the need for family planning and other reproductive health services, these should be freely available and fully accessible to everyone. As to the problem of over-consumption, there is regrettably little unmet demand for reduced consumption. The poor reasonably aspire to a better standard of living

while many rich people just want more of the same.

Friday 7th September

Many European politicians and pundits seem to fear the prospect of an ageing population if population growth comes to an end. Do they realise that the only way to avoid the grim prospect of an ageing population is to keep the population growing for ever? Perhaps that is what they really want.

Saturday 8th September

Current population growth results in more than 200,000 extra mouths to feed each day. This, together the increasing consumption of grain-fed meat in countries such as China and India, takes at least 40% of the US corn crop. This year, the US corn harvest has been devastated by drought and prices have rocketed by 50% in just one month. Producing countries such as Russia, Argentina and Vietnam are trying to keep prices down by banning exports, while importing countries such as China, S. Korea and Saudi Arabia are buying up land in developing nations to feed their own people. The World Bank

estimates last year's land purchases at 140 million acres – an area bigger than the US corn and wheat cropland combined. Lester Brown in his forthcoming book "Full Planet, Empty Plates" concludes: "The geopolitics of food is fast overwhelming the geopolitics of oil."

Sunday 9th September

Merciful Lord, we pray for farmers who belong to the land and the land belongs to them. They plough it. Their hands become coarse. Their sweat runs down into the earth to give fruitful crops to be enjoyed by all people on earth, and mostly by those who never dirty their hands.

Open our hearts to seek justice for them. Save us from the temptation to enjoy better living standards at the cost of increased poverty for others. Help us to remember that Jesus spoke for the weak and gave them a message of hope. Help us to accept his call to work for the weak and oppressed. (A prayer from Pakistan)

Monday 10th September

How should we adapt to the increasing mismatch between the natural world and our engineered world of industrialism?

Wendell Berry suggests this agenda:

1. We must not think on a heroic scale, but on a scale proper to our limited abilities. We must not break the things we cannot fix.
2. We must abandon the delusion that damage done by industrialisation can be corrected by yet more industrialisation.
3. We must quit solving problems by "moving on", but must learn where we are, geographically, historically and ecologically.
4. We must learn the sources, and costs, of our economic lives.
5. We must give up the notion that we are too good to clean up our own messes. It's not acceptable for this work to be done by wage slavery or by enslaving Nature.
6. We must make locally-adapted economies based on local Nature, local sunlight, local intelligence and our own local work.
7. These measures cannot be performed for us by any expert, political leader or corporation.
8. "This is an agenda that may be undertaken by ordinary citizens at any time on their own initiative".

Monday 24th September

The sell-off of England's public forests was suspended last spring and the Independent Panel on Forestry (IPF) was set up under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Liverpool to make recommendations. Its final report recommends keeping England's forest stock in public hands and calls for "a revival of a woodland culture that appreciates how important trees are for people, nature and the economy." It says that woodlands are "multifunctional spaces" that can satisfy a number of outcomes, but it is vague on how this is translated into action on the ground. Clearly, continual vigilance is required if the public is to continue to enjoy this national heritage. As the Bishop said, "The public forest estate needs to be free from the electoral cycle, for trees have long lifecycles." This sounds like a call for an all-party approach to the issue, perhaps resulting in the creation of a truly independent body.

Tuesday 25th September

The Government's draft Water Bill outlines proposals for better regulation and wider competition in the industry, but the Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has warned that, as climate change begins to bite, Government must make water meters mandatory and tackle the environmental effects of over-abstraction before it is too late. While the Committee wants to make water more expensive to deter profligate use, the draft Bill aims to make water as cheap as possible and to increase shareholder benefit. Only the Government can resolve this dilemma.

Wednesday 26th September

As Britain becomes ever more dependent on imported gas, Professor Mike Bradshaw of Leicester University, addressing the Royal Geographical Society's annual conference, said: "There is a high degree of risk and uncertainty associated with every element of the UK's energy strategy – whether that's energy

around 2,000 tonnes of CO2 a year. It is thought to be the world's biggest community-owned solar farm.

Thursday 20th September

Subsidies for offshore wind farms have recently been reduced by 10%, while support for tidal stream and wave power has been more than doubled. However, development of shallow-water gas fields is to be supported by £500 million in tax breaks, so impacting on any possibility that the UK will meet its targets for reductions in carbon emissions.

Friday 21st September

Super-insulated homes known as Passivhauses were the subject of awards held in July by the Passivhaus Trust. A primary school, an agricultural college and a social housing scheme were among the winners. Wimbush Passivhaus, a social housing development of 14 homes in Essex, won the residential category, while the non-domestic prize went to Oak Meadow primary

school, the first Passivhaus school in Britain.

Saturday 22nd September

Since its launch in 2009, the National Community Wood Recycling Partnership (NCWRP) has reclaimed over 7,000 tonnes of waste wood from construction sites, much of it saved from landfill. The wood is collected, sorted and sold to the local community, reducing the need for virgin timber and preventing wood from rotting and releasing CO2. NCWRP has created 50 permanent jobs and recorded 13,500 volunteer days per year. Sales have generated over £1 million for further expansion.

Sunday 23 September

Lord, you asked for my hands, that you might use them for your purposes. I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them, for the work was hard. Help us, Lord Jesus the carpenter, to be ready to get our hands dirty in your service. Amen.

Tuesday 11th September

A number of medical publications by NASA-backed scientists have drawn attention to the physiological dangers to humans travelling in space, for example, the damage to human DNA from deep-radiation, the effect of weightlessness on the virulence and growth of infectious microbes and the optical abnormalities revealed by a survey of 27 astronauts. John Naish, author of "Enough: Breaking Free from the World of More", comments: "The sheer impossibility of sending human bodies into the blasting expanses beyond our solar system should make us change our attitude towards our home planet. We must stop using the myth of galactic exploration to excuse the way we treat Earth as a disposable.

Wednesday 12th September

President Eisenhower once said: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

In 2011 the world trade in arms was worth \$1.74 trillion. The US still tops the list, spending \$711 billion on its military, but China and Russia are catching up fast., while poorer countries are wasting ever more of scarce resources on expensive weapons and the fuel to operate them, rather than on irrigation, pollution control, education and other life-improving essentials that their people lack. Stopping militarism and redeploying resources towards completing the UN Millennium Development Goals would leave a lasting legacy for generations to come, moving humanity towards a peaceful future.

Thursday 13th September

In its report "Antarctic Ocean Legacy: A Vision for Circumpolar Protection" the Antarctic Ocean Alliance identifies 19 key Antarctic marine habitats that could be connected to create the world's largest network of marine protected areas. They would be "No-Take Zones" and fully protected from mineral extraction and other damaging industries. To

read more and sign the petition, go to: www.antarcticocean.org/

Friday 14th September

This weekend, beginning today at 1.30 pm, the Friends of the Earth annual conference takes place in South Kensington, with speakers Vivienne Westwood, Caroline Lucas MP, Satish Kumar, Polly Higgins, Liz Jensen and others from the Philippines and Mozambique. Included are workshops on film-making, photography, prop design and blogging. For more details, go to: www.friendsoftheearthconference.eventbrite.com

Saturday 15 September

Today a Festival of Wellbeing takes place from 10 to 6 at the Bishopsgate Institute, 230 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4QH. Under the title “The Great Transition from economic growth to growth in wellbeing” Resurgence and the Ecologist are presenting a programme of talks, music, poetry and dance, with speakers Richard Layard, Jonathon Porritt, Matt Harvey,

Geoff Mulgan, Caroline Lucas MP, Nic Marks, Polly Higgins, Satish Kumar, James Sainsbury, Patrick Holden and others. Tickets @ £45 include veggie lunch, with proceeds going to the Resurgence Trust. To book a place, ring 01237 441293 or email info@resurgence.org

Sunday 16th September

Father God, we thank you for this beautiful world, for the food you provide and the abundance of its store. Help us to look after nature, to watch it and to learn from it. Weed out from our leaves all that hinders peace, so that your kingdom may be spread through us to all who we meet, and that we may become channels of your peace.

Monday 17th September

George Marshall, founder of the Climate Outreach & Information Network (www.coinet.org.uk), writes that “most people tacitly agree that it is socially inappropriate to talk about climate change.” Why?

Stanley Cohen in “States of Denial” finds that people deliberately maintain a level of ignorance so that they can claim they know less than they do. They exaggerate their own powerlessness and wait indefinitely for someone else to act first. If they have to give their opinion, “It’s a global problem, not a local one” or “It’s a problem for future generations” or “I’m not the problem: it’s the Chinese/Americans/rich people” or (in the case of politicians) “Environment is important, but my priorities are jobs and the economy”. Marshall believes that people only accept a challenging message if it speaks to their own language and values and comes from a trusted communicator. Personal conversation is the best way to bring climate change back to people’s attention, especially if they realise the real benefits arising from a low-carbon world – buildings near them being insulated and re-modelled, electric cars in the driveway and everywhere the physical adaptations we need for a changing climate.

Tuesday 18 September

The Government’s draft Energy bill was released in May, when the Chancellor said: “Gas is cheap, has much less carbon emissions than coal and will be the largest source of electricity for years.” Yet Britain’s target is a completely de-carbonised electricity supply by 2030. This cannot be met if we build new gas plants and fail to develop the new green infrastructure needed for renewables. Imported gas comes from unpredictable and volatile countries, adding to the risk of unforeseen price hikes. A government declaration of support for renewables would give the industry the signals it needs to ensure a constant supply of locally-sourced energy for years to come.

Wed. 19th September

Britain’s first community-owned solar park has been opened at a 30-acre site near Faringdon. £3.5 million has been raised from over 900 investors in the Westmill Solar Co-Operative. The 5 MW. solar park will produce enough electricity to power 1400 homes and will save