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Picture on front cover: Picture on front cover: Autumn Gifts, artwork from CEL Retreat Oct 2011

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



December 2014

“The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”
(Romans 8.19-21)

“In him (Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”
(Colossians 1.19-20)

“Anyone who believes in infinite growth on a physically finite planet is either mad or an economist.”
(Sir David Attenborough)

“When animals breed out of control, it’s called overpopulation. When humans breed out of control, it’s called economic growth.”
(Anon.)

Monday 1st December

Before the 1990s, when the free market system took root, greenhouse gas emission increases had been slowing from about 4.5% a year in the 1960s to about 1% a year in the early 1990s. But between 2000 and 2008 the annual rate of increase was 3.4% and in 2010 it reached 5.9%. The facts show that, despite the 1992 Rio Earth summit, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and numerous international conferences, greenhouse gas emissions have risen remorselessly.

Ahead of the UN Conference of Parties at Lima this month, the UN has published a carbon budget plan whereby humanity can peak its emissions within 10 years, halve them by 2050 and achieve carbon neutrality between 2055 and 2070. Its “Emissions Gap” report highlights the scope for energy efficiency, where improvements could avoid 3 gigatonnes of CO₂ emissions annually while delivering energy savings and creating thousands of new jobs.

Tuesday 2nd December

Naomi Klein in “This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate” describes the obstacles to cutting our carbon emissions. The

1990s saw three major developments in the global economy:

- Privatisation of the public sphere
- Deregulation of the corporate sector
- Lower corporate taxation, paid for by cuts in public spending.

“How”, she asks, “could societies spend more on zero-carbon public services when the public sphere was being systematically dismantled and auctioned off? How could governments regulate, tax and penalise fossil fuel companies when all such measures were condemned as ‘big government’ – a relic of communism? How could the infant renewable energy sector receive the support and protection it needed to replace fossil fuels when ‘protectionism’ has been made a dirty word?”

Wednesday 3rd December

The more evidence emerges that climate change is a real threat to humanity, the more hardened conservatives understand that to admit the reality is to lose the central ideological battle of our time, namely whether we need to manage our societies to reflect the reality of climate change, or whether that task can be left to the magic of the

considered for fracking amounts to nearly half the island. People in America are asking: “How is it possible that a big distant company can come to my land and put me and my kids at risk – and never ask my permission? How can it be legal to put chemicals in the air right where they know children are playing? How is it possible that the state, instead of protecting me from attack, is sending police to beat up people whose only crime is trying to protect their families?”

Tuesday 30th December

In France, several communities in the department of Var discovered they were in line for gas fracking. Protesting citizens packed local halls to overflowing in this area previously known for its conservative attitudes. As a result of the industry’s French folly, it ended up not just losing the right to frack near the Riviera, but in 2011 France became the first country to declare a nationwide ban on fracking.

New Year’s Eve

Father God, whose patient ways with us and whose unfailing love surprise and humble us, go with us along the unknown paths of this New Year. Forgive the sins of the

year that is nearly past. Help us to live more worthily and to serve you more faithfully, so that our lives may show forth a new beauty and a deeper harmony, so that your holy Name may be glorified throughout your world.

Amen.

Sources:

“This Changes Everything”
by Naomi Klein (Allen Lane)

www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

become willing agents to carry out your purposes. So may true joy fill our lives – joy undimmed by transient sorrow – joy which knows the love that wins hearts and brings nearer your Kingdom on earth.

Saturday 27th December

What can Christians do when confronted with irrefutable evidence of the climatic effects of burning fossil fuels? Naomi Klein describes the rise of “Blockadia”, of grassroots movements around the world, representing a new generation who are not afraid to stand in front of the bulldozers when precious land and homes are threatened by extractive industries. Ecuadorian biologist Esperanza Martinez, a leader of the oil-free Amazon movement, asks; “Why should we sacrifice new areas if fossil fuels should not be extracted in the first place?” While land conflicts are invariably sparked by local livelihood and safety concerns, the global stakes are never far from the surface.

Sunday 28th December

“A wind has blown across the world, and tremors shake its frame.

New things are struggling to their birth, and naught shall be the same.

The earth is weary of its past, of folly, hate and fear;
Beyond a dark and stormy sky, the dawn of God is near.”

(F.C. Happold)

Monday 29th December

Until recently, the people reaping most benefit from the extractive industries have pretended not to see the costs of their comfort so long as the sacrifice zones are kept safely out of view. But in less than a decade, the extractive industries have broken that unspoken bargain. The sacrifice zones have got progressively larger, swallowing ever more territory and putting many people at risk who thought they were safe. Exploitation of the Canadian tar sands and the shale gas revolution in America has impacted growing numbers of vocal citizens. Even Exxon’s CEO, Rex Tillerson, has joined a lawsuit opposing fracking activities near his \$5 million home in Texas, claiming it would lower property values. In Canada, the entire underground soil of Montreal and two other cities in Quebec has been claimed for fracking by gas and oil companies. In Britain, the area

markets. “How”, she argues, “can you win the argument against government intervention if the very habitability of the planet depends on intervening?”

Thursday 4th December

Many climate models predict that wealthy countries may experience short-term economic benefits from a slightly warmer climate while American corporations are nevertheless investing heavily in back-up generators, flood prevention and climate insurance. It was once thought that climate change would bring us together, rich and poor. Now all the signs are that it is dividing us more deeply into a society of haves and have-nots – those whose wealth offers them a measure of protection from ferocious weather and those left at the mercy of increasingly dysfunctional weather patterns.

Friday 5th December

Trade rules enforced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) currently entitle corporations to overturn grassroots victories over controversial activities such as natural gas fracking. Steven Shryman, an environmental lawyer who has defended civil society groups against these trade challenges, says: “If the trade rules

don’t permit important measures to deal with climate change – and they don’t – then the trade rules obviously have to be rewritten. There is no way that we can have a sustainable economy and maintain international trade rules as they are.” When people wake up to the fact that our governments have locked us into dozens of agreements that make illegal some vital parts of our climate resilience, they will have a powerful argument to oppose any such new deals until the small matter of our planet’s habitability is satisfactorily resolved.

Saturday 6th December

Natural gas was once thought to be a cleaner alternative to coal – that is until 2011, when a study by leading scientists at Cornell University found that methane emissions linked to fracked natural gas are at least 30% higher than those linked to conventional gas extraction. Methane is a particularly dangerous greenhouse gas, 34 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide. This means that fracked gas has a greater warming impact than oil, and possibly as much as coal. So, just when we need to look for ways to rapidly cut our emissions, the global

boom in fracked gas is constructing a network of ultra-powerful planetary ovens.

Sunday 7th December

Lord God our Creator, who has made our planet to sustain a myriad forms of life, give us the courage, wisdom and perseverance to stand up publicly against all abuse of your earth for wrongful gain, all exploitation for selfish greed and all casual indifference to the dangers now starkly visible. Make us responsible guardians of our inheritance and give us wisdom to find ways of protecting it in the face of what seems, humanly speaking, a desperate situation. We ask this in the name of your Son, who died to redeem your world.

Monday 8th December

Kevin Anderson of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change, has been translating the climate science to politicians, economists and campaigners for a decade. Now he suggests that we have lost so much time in political stalling and weak climate policies that we are now facing cuts so drastic that they challenge the

fixation on growth that is at the heart of our economic system. We can no longer achieve 8-10% annual cuts with modest carbon pricing and green-tech solutions. The time has come “to liberate the science from economics, finance and astrology and have the audacity to conceive of alternative futures.” Yet still many seem to think it easier to accept chaotic and disastrous changes to the earth’s climate than to change the growth-based, profit-seeking logic of the present economic system.

Tuesday 9th December

One thing we can all do is to consume less. Yet the message of the markets encourages us to consume green rather than to consume less – even though this just means substituting one power source for another. In Britain, 12% of greenhouse gases are implicated in groceries, yet there are no government policies aimed at changing food production methods, incentivising farmers towards low-energy farming or encouraging consumption of local and seasonal food.

virtually guarantees that the planet will cook.

Tuesday 23rd December

The Carbon Tracker Initiative, a London-based think tank, found that all fossil fuel companies combined have deposits representing 2,795 gigatonnes of carbon, if they were burnt. Yet other studies have concluded that, in order to leave an 80% chance of keeping within 2 degrees C. of global warming, we can release no more than 565 gigatonnes of carbon between 2011 and 2049. These figures tell us that the very thing we must do to avoid catastrophe – stop digging – is the very thing fossil fuel companies cannot do without facing their own extinction. Cutting emissions to the extent necessary to avert catastrophe is simply incompatible with the continued existence of one of the most profitable industries in the world.

Wednesday 24th December

Lord God, we turn from a world distraught by confusion and tumult to worship at the cradle of a little Child, whose power can yet bring peace to the earth and goodwill to all people. May our worship renew our courage, strengthen our

determination and guard our inward peace, so that we may move among our fellow-humans as those whose values are firmly based on your love for mankind and on the sure foundation of your throne. Amen.

Christmas Day

Loving Father, as we ponder the coming of the Child of Bethlehem, we rejoice that you, the Almighty, the Creator, the Infinite, whose being is utterly beyond our loftiest thought and most daring imagination, can speak to us in a little human Child. Save us from being impressed too much by the impressive. Help us to see you in simple things, a child’s love, the quiet loveliness of dawn, human friendship and the peace of our homes. We bow in worship before the majesty of heaven revealed in a human life. Accept our worship, and make us more like your dear Son, who gave himself for us, not counting the cost.

Amen. *(Leslie Weatherhead)*

Friday 26th December

Lord God, as we settle again to the normal routine of our lives, may we realise that we are all instruments in your hand to do your will. May we

food waste. It produces fewer emissions than diesel-powered buses and helps to improve air quality in cities. Operators GENeco said: "Through treating sewage and food that's unfit for human consumption, we're able to produce enough biomethane to provide sufficient gas to power almost 8,500 homes as well as fuelling the Bio-Bus. Gas-powered vehicles have an important role in improving air quality, but the Bio-Bus goes further and is actually powered by people living in the area."

Saturday 20th December

Unilever has announced that by the end of this month all the palm oil required for its European business will be 100% traceable and certified as sustainable. It is supplied from 1,800 palm oil mills. 58% of the global volume of palm oil is now traceable to known mills. Identifying the mills is crucial in the fight against deforestation. Unilever says: "The challenge is enormous, but we are determined and now we want to share our learnings with the rest of the industry. This is about doing the right thing for our planet and our consumers because you cannot have a healthy business in an unhealthy world."

Sunday 21st December

Father, we pray for the millions who lack the essentials for life – clean water, food, fuel and shelter. Help us to respond effectively to their plight, by prayer and action. Give us the wisdom and inspiration to be channels of your grace to the poor, the refugees, the handicapped and the helpless.

Monday 22nd December

Oil and gas companies are expected by their shareholders to have enough fresh reserves to exploit after they have exhausted those currently in production. In 2009 Shell announced that its reserves had dipped to 95% of its current production and its share price dropped alarmingly. It reassured the market by doubling its investment in fracked shale gas, deep water oil and tar sands, while cutting out all investment in wind and solar energy. Every fossil fuel company has to keep finding new reserves. It has to keep running just to stand still. Therefore, all the oil majors are being forced into higher-risk, dirtier territories. Their shareholders insist on them earning the same scale of mega-profits year in, year out. Fulfilling their responsibility to their shareholders

Wednesday 10th December

Many studies have shown that it is technically possible to derive all our power generation and transportation from wind, water and solar within as little as 20 years. Mark Jacobson of Stanford University has shown how New York could meet all its power needs from renewables by 2030 and is developing similar plans for every US state. "It would require an effort comparable to the Apollo moon project, but it is possible, without even adopting new technologies. We just need to decide where we want to head as a society. The biggest obstacles are social and political. Every time a new climate disaster fills our screens with horror, we have reminders of how climate change demands that we invest in the publicly-owned bones of our societies, made brittle by decades of neglect."

Thursday 11th December

Stephen Pascala of the Princeton Environmental Institute calculates that about 500 million of the richest people on earth are responsible for about half of all global emissions. Among ways of helping poorer communities to weather the coming storms are these:

- 1) a small financial transaction tax which would have the benefit of slowing financial speculation;
- 2) closing tax havens to raise at least \$190 billion at a 30% rate;
- 3) a 1% billionaires' tax to raise \$46 billion annually;
- 4) a \$50 tax per tonne of CO₂ emitted in developed countries, raising \$450 billion annually according to a 2011 report from the World Bank and IMF;
- 5) phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, so raising \$775 billion according to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Friday 12th December

The fracking of natural gas has been touted as a "bridge" towards zero carbon energy. This might be true if the gas was replacing coal and oil (which it is not) and it was not undercutting renewable energy (which it is). Naomi Klein asks: "Why would fossil fuel companies accept a business model that requires them not to compete with the renewable energy sector, with the eventual goal of putting themselves out of business?" The rapid rise of renewables in Germany points to a new type of business model, where utilities are run by the communities who use them,

ensuring that they direct their resources into the renewables that will power our economies in the future. About half of Germany's renewable energy is in the hands of farmers, citizen groups and about 900 energy cooperatives.

Saturday 13th December

Nuclear energy, despite claims to the contrary, is not carbon-free. Vast amounts of fossil fuels must be burnt to mine, transport and enrich uranium. Moreover it takes 10-19 years to plan and build a nuclear plant. A wind farm typically takes 2-5 years. Mark Jacobson, lead author of the Stanford University roadmap for 100% global renewable energy by 2030, comments: "If we invest in nuclear v. true renewables, you can bet that the glaciers and polar ice caps will keep melting while wait, and wait, for the nuclear age to arrive."

Sunday 14th December

Grant us, Father, a new vision of your world:

A world of justice, where none shall prey on others;
A world of plenty, where poverty shall cease to fester;
A world of brotherhood, where success shall be founded on

service, and honour be given to integrity alone;
A world of peace, where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for the land and oceans which you created.

Monday 15th December

Agroecology is a method of farming which maximises species diversity and enhances natural systems of soil protection and pest control. It integrates trees and shrubs into crop and livestock fields, uses solar-powered drip irrigation (delivering water directly to plant roots), planting two or more crops near each other to maximise the use of light, water and nutrients, and uses green manures to prevent erosion and renew soil nutrients. In Malawi, for example, a turn to agroecology has doubled or trebled maize yields in some areas. Average yields have increased by 80% in 57 developing countries, with an average increase of 116% for all African projects.

Tuesday 16th December

A report from Forum for the Future finds that UK farms can offer 10 gigawatts of untapped renewable energy – three times that of the planned Hinkley Point nuclear plant.

Most of the energy would come from ground-based solar and wind, with a smaller proportion from anaerobic digestion. "The fact that this potential can be met in a manner that complements food production – livestock and poultry can happily co-exist with ground-based solar and farm-scale wind, with space for pollinating insects – provides all the justification politicians need to embrace the farm power revolution." The report refers to barriers such as reliable grid connections and supportive planning. "Removing these barriers will require the support of key decision-makers from central Government to Ofgem and the UK's six distribution network operators."

Wednesday 17th December

Recycling specialist ReFood has unveiled a scholarship programme to inspire a new generation to demonstrate why they believe that minimising waste is key to achieving a circular economy. From agriculture and logistics to manufacture, retail and hospitality, the project will see hundreds of students competing to win a £5,000 bursary to further their studies. Partners in the scheme include Sheffield Hallam University, Moulton Agricultural College and

Leith's School of Food & Wine. Candidates will offer a 500-word entry from which "sustainable champions" will be selected to present their ideas at ReFood's anaerobic digestion (AD) facility in Doncaster and compete for the £5,000 bursary.

Thursday 18th December

An AD facility is being built at Cattigate Farm, Potters Bar, London, near its new composting facility, which is already accepting up to 25,000 tonnes of green waste a year. Half the £15 million cost will come from the Green Investment Bank. The AD facility, due to open next summer, will process up to 30,000 tonnes of waste. A grid connection already exists for the export of 1 MW. of electricity. The digestate produced as a by-product will be spread across the farm to increase yields. The waste will come from all parts of London including Arsenal FC, the Rugby grounds at Twickenham and Saracens Rugby Club.

Friday 19th December

Britain's first bus powered by human and food waste now runs between Bath and Bristol Airport. The Bio-Bus can travel up to 300 kms. on gas generated from treated sewage and