

many others willing and eager to share your gifts for the benefit of all.

Monday 29th February

Plastic microbeads are used in cosmetics, shampoos, soaps, toothpaste and exfoliating scrubs, but are shown to add to the plastic waste polluting our oceans. California has banned all synthetic microbeads from 2020, but they are only a small part of the plastic pollution of our oceans. A recent survey found 300,000 tons of plastic floating in the world's oceans. Plastics do not biodegrade or dissolve, but break into increasingly tiny pieces which persist for hundreds of years. US scientists are calling for a total ban on microbeads.

Sources:

Resurgence & Ecologist
Environment (CIWEM)

www.edie.net

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



February 2016

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when the heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

(Jeremiah 17.7-8)

"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as we see the Day approaching.

(Hebrews 10.21-25)

"You cannot serve both God and Money."

(Matthew 6.24)

Monday 1st February

Last month the UN launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 objectives for international development over the next 25 years. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, noting that world population is expected to grow by a further 1 billion by 2030 and that many developing countries will double their population by 2050, has concluded that the SDGs would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve with current levels of population growth. According to UNICE “Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost than any other known technology.”

Tuesday 2nd February

According to UNFPA “Where rapid population growth far outpaces economic development, countries will have a difficult time investing in the

human capital needed to secure the well-being of its people and to stimulate further economic growth.” This is why, for every \$1 invested in increasing access to family planning, it is estimated that governments can expect a return of up to \$120 in total economic benefits.

Wednesday 3rd February

The labour force in developing countries where 80% are already unemployed is expected to increase by 33,000 per day. Unprecedented economic growth would be required to employ them. Yet increased investment in family planning could ease the growing problem of young unemployed men looking for some meaning in their lives.

Thursday 4th February

SDG 5 concerns Gender Inequality. Lack of access to contraception takes away women's natural choice of when, or whether, to have children.

3. Waste less food. Eating leftovers not only benefits the planet, but eases the bank balance
4. Moderate your meat consumption. Why restrict yourself to sheep, pigs, chickens and cows when peas, beans and nuts are also great sources of protein and allow you to be more creative
5. Buy foods that meet a certified standard such as MSC for fish, free-range for eggs and fair trade for everything – with preference for local foods, so helping rural farmers and communities
6. Eat fewer foods high in fat, salt and sugar. An occasional treat is fine, but with cakes, sweets, chocolate, fizzy drinks, cured and processed meats, the emphasis should be on “occasional”.

Saturday 27th February

Recycling for Good Causes runs recycling projects for schools and charities to help them raise money. It accepts all unwanted jewellery from plastic beads to wooden bangles. Experts ensure that all items are individually assessed and recycled to achieve the highest price possible. It currently works with over 5,000 good causes including Marie Curie, RSPCA, Kidney Research, Hospices, Scouts, Guides and religious bodies.

<http://www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org/about.htm>

Sunday 28th February

Father, we thank you for the skills which, passed down from one generation to another, enable us to harvest the earth's resources. We thank you for those who enable these gifts to be channelled into areas of need. We pray that you will raise up

reduce its carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 in accordance with the Government's obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008.

Wednesday 24th February

Before Christmas the Government announced more than 100 new "licence blocks" - each about 12 km. by 12 km - to allow fracking companies to submit planning applications. FoE is offering a Stop Fracking Action Plan containing:

Information about fracking, its risks and the alternatives;

Guidance for setting up groups, organising public meetings etc.

Stories and advice from people on the front line around the world and tips on joining forces with other climate groups.

Thursday 25th February

Low river flows can increase water temperature, lower oxygen content, concentrate pollutants, hinder fish migration and

increase their vulnerability to predation. Now the Government has pledged to reform water abstraction licences and, in particular to introduce a new charging system to link the amount of water taken from rivers with the amount of water available. Another aim is to protect the environment when water levels are low with local river management tailored to the needs of each catchment area. WWF, the Angling Trust and the RSPB are pressing for a new Water Bill in this year's Queen's Speech.

Friday 26th February

Hugh Fernley-Whittingstall has joined forces with Raymond Blanc OBE to suggest six food tips for WWF supporters and others:

1. Eat more plants such as fruit, vegetables and nuts
2. Get experimental with food. Spice up your life with something different

Besides limiting their access to education, their ability to work outside the home and to participate in public work, more of their lives are spent rearing unintended children and risking their health from complications in childbirth. The UN has found that women's empowerment rises as fertility rates fall.

Friday 5th February

The UN claims that increasing school enrolment is under threat in sub-Saharan Africa due to the rapid growth of young populations. Low fertility rates and smaller families make it easier for parents with limited resources to send children to school. Studies have shown that when parents are forced to choose which children to send to school. It is often the daughters that are kept at home.

Saturday 6th February

SDG 6 concerns Conflict and Migration. Factors resulting from unsustainable population growth

such as diminishing job opportunities, poverty and increased competition for resources have all been identified as playing key roles in conflict, extremism and political instability, such as we see in the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Population growth also affects migration patterns. The addition of 1 billion more people over the next 15 years can only add to the refugee and migrant crisis facing Europe.

Sunday 7th February

Loving Father, who sent your Son to share the suffering of humanity, come close to all who have lost loved ones in earthquakes, floods, droughts and other natural disasters, all who have become refugees, and all who are suffering from the devastation of war. Uphold those who minister to their needs and help us all to remember that in serving the least of your children we are serving you. Amen.

Monday 8th February

On Saturday March 5th a conference on the impact of the new SDGs takes place at the Hollymoor Centre, Manor Park Grove, Birmingham B31 5ER from 9.30 to 4.30. It is sponsored by the John Ray Initiative, A Rocha UK, Micah Global and ForMission College. It will consider where we stand on environmental sustainability and how the SDGs can help guide us towards a sustainable future over the next 15 years. Speakers will look at what the SDGs promise for biodiversity and what an appropriate Christian response should be. A range of seminars will cover food, energy, fisheries and cities. Tickets cost £30 for under-25s and £48 for others. See <http://www.jri.org.uk/> or send a cheque to: JRI, Gloucestershire Resource Centre, City Works, Alfred Street, Gloucester GL1 4DF.

Tuesday 9th February

Today at Guildford Cathedral GU2 7UP, a public forum on climate change takes place from 19.45 to 21.45. The event, called "Stories of Hope: Christian Discipleship in a Changing Climate" includes keynote speakers Ben Niblett (Tear Fund) Ruth Valerio (A Rocha) and Jo Musker-Sherwood (Hope for the Future) as well as a Q & A session involving the Guildford Diocese Environmental Adviser. To book a place, go to: <http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/w-hats-on/events/detail/stories-of-hope-Christian-discipleship>

Wednesday 10th February

From today until March 26th EcoChurch Southwest is running an online Lent Carbon Fast focussed on personal and domestic actions to reduce our carbon footprint and, in particular, looking at water as a significant ecological issue. "It is in deepening our awareness of

through prayer and fasting, Jesus discovered your will for his life and overcame the temptations of the Evil One. Help us, during these days of Lent, to come close to you and to listen to your voice. Give us strength to overcome all temptation to please ourselves and to live our lives without reference to you. Teach us Your Way, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Monday 22nd February

The new National Infrastructure Commission is to report to the Government on our energy infrastructure by this year's budget. Solutions are required to strengthen (a) the interconnection between different sources of energy; (b) the management of energy demand, and (c) energy storage capacity. The Renewable Energy Association predicts that electricity storage systems could soon become financially viable. Potential benefits include lower energy costs as the risk of peak

energy prices is reduced, a better balancing of supply and demand and an increased contribution to decarbonisation by enabling a greater spread of renewable energy.

Tuesday 23rd February

The RSPB is to install a 100 metre tall wind turbine at its HQ in Sandy, Bedfordshire, that will generate enough electricity to power more than half its 127 UK locations, so reducing its carbon emissions by 800 tonnes annually. Martin Harper of RSPB said: "Climate change is the biggest threat to our planet. This is about birds and wildlife as well as our way of life. Around the world we can see how these changes are affecting wildlife and the places where they live, as well as damaging our homes and creating economic disruption." Since 2007 RSPB has invested in solar PV, wind power, solar thermal collectors, ground source heat pumps and biomass generators. It is on course to

executive Nigel Hendley said: "There is no minimum concentration below which exposure to nitrogen oxide is considered safe. Every reduction in exposure will be beneficial to health. The final plans must go further to reduce air pollution, not only to achieve compliance with the EU Directive, but to protect human health and the environment."

Friday 19th February

The Government intends to provide automatic planning permission for housing on brownfield sites. The benefits including recycling disused land back into sustainable use, addressing contamination issues, reducing urban sprawl and maintaining other land for food production and biodiversity. However CIWEM points out that the proposals take no account of possible flood risks. Also, if the land is contaminated, a risk assessment should be

undertaken before planning permission is granted.

Saturday 20th February

National Grid owns around 2,000 hectares of land, much of which could be improved, for example, by restoring wetland habitats to improve water quality and reduce flood risks, by creating new woodlands and managing grasslands so that grazing regimes benefit both farmers and biodiversity. Consultants Aecon, in a pilot study of NG land in S. Yorkshire and Derbyshire, found that £9,000 worth of natural capital improvements per hectare could enhance the value of the land eightfold over 3 years. Taken across the whole of the NG estate, this could deliver around £18 million of additional value from company land that is currently underused.

Sunday 21st February

A prayer for Lent.

We thank you, Father, for those days in the wilderness when,

the web of life and our interconnectedness with all things that we can deepen our love of God and appreciate and protect the planet for the future." There will be daily emails with bible readings, reflections and good examples from around the region. A recommended book "Places of Enchantment: Meeting God in Landscapes" by Bishop Graham Usher seeks to answer the question "How do we encounter God in creation?" To sign up, go to:

<http://ecochurchsouthwest.org.uk/carbon-fast>

Thursday 11th February

A report from the World Economic Forum warns that by 2050 the world's oceans will contain more plastic by weight than fish, unless we take drastic action to stop rubbish entering our seas. At least 8 million tons of plastic – equivalent to one truckload of rubbish per minute – end up in the ocean each year. As emerging economies use and

discard ever more plastic, the rate is expected to increase to two truckloads a minute by 2030 and four truckloads by 2050. The report calls for a radical increase in recycling and the use of re-usable packaging, as well as joint action from consumer goods companies, plastic packaging producers and policymakers.

Friday 12th February

Four new Pacific Ocean sanctuaries have been announced where commercial fishing and mining will be prohibited. New Zealand is designating a 620,000 sq. km. sanctuary in the north-east Kermadec region. Chile is proposing a 631,368 sq. km. marine park around Easter Island. The UK is planning a 843,000 sq. km. marine protected area around the Pitcairn Islands. The western archipelago of Palau has approved the creation of a 500,000 sq. km. marine sanctuary.

www.tinyurl.com/pacific-sanctuaries

Saturday 13th February

Today at London City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA there will be a Day of Action called "Divest to Stay Afloat", when a flotilla of lifeboats and speakers from divestment campaigns and impacted communities will highlight the contradictions between the impacts of climate change and the billions flowing into fossil fuel companies from London's public institutions. London's mayoral candidates have been invited.

http://act.350.org/event/show-love-divest_attend/12193/attend/?action_id=10621281

Sunday 14th February

Father God, you have shown us clearly where our present lifestyle is leading us. Open the eyes of all – especially the rich and powerful – and draw us together in a common determination to change our ways, to reduce our consumption of natural resources and to share

what we have with others who have so little to sustain them.

Monday 15th February

The Chartered Institute of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM), in its response to the winter floods, emphasised the multi-faceted nature of the challenge. Factors to be addressed include land-use management in river catchments, farming practices, development control in flood plains, flood defences, property protection and insurance. Many, possibly competing, interests are involved in finding solutions. It advocates an increased role for DEFRA and the Cabinet Office and a more coherent approach to climate change.

Tuesday 16th February

There are three ways of preventing damage from flooding:

Increasing the capacity of rivers by widening or dredging;

Creating better warning systems to alert emergency services and flood action groups to respond quickly to flood risks;

More intelligent land management and the creation of storage areas for peak flow and runoff.

The National Flood Management scheme aims to attenuate flood flow, to catch sediment before it enters watercourses and to create new habitat with, potentially, new sources of energy. A pilot scheme at Belford, Northumberland, tested different techniques, such as:

Diversion ponds for temporary storage;

Creating bunds (barriers made of soil, wood or stone) to slow the rate of flow;

Placing woody debris across streams and ditches to create a sediment trap and cause backwater effects.

A combination of these

techniques could reduce peak flow by 30%.

Wednesday 17th February

A study of a 12 sq. km. agricultural catchment area in mid-Wales showed that forest cover could reduce sediment movement and flood runoff at a rate 60 times higher than grazed pasture. Planting is however a long-term project and where land is needed for growing food, that should take priority. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP has called for the Government to increase its planting target from 11 million trees by 2020 to 200 million.

Thursday 18th February

The impact of air pollution in the UK causes damage estimated in billions and around 50,000 deaths a year, yet the Government has passed responsibility for implementing clean air zones to local authorities in five of our major cities without any additional funding. CIWEM's chief