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# Prayer guide for the care of creation

# December 2016



“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)

“Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.”  
(James 5. 7 & 8)

“If you, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”  
(Matthew 7.11)



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### **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

At the annual conference of Energy UK, Greg Clark, the Business and Energy Secretary, launched a consultation to “design a system that can better manage the intermittency (of renewables) and take advantage of improvements in storage, demand-side response, interconnections and IT to create a smart energy system in response to new sources of generation.” “We now get 14% of our electricity from intermittent sources, and those who said that renewables would jeopardise Britain’s ability to keep the lights on have been proved wrong. Our electricity supply remains the most reliable in Europe.”

### **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

Battery storage plays a key role in the greening of utility networks by allowing managers to handle higher volumes of intermittent power from the wind and sun. National Grid has accepted eight bids to provide 201 MW. of battery storage in the first phase of its Enhanced Frequency Response programme. 34 other

bids to provide a further 888 MW. of storage are in the pipeline.

### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

The world’s largest tidal power project, developed by Atlantis Resources, has begun generating electricity for the grid in the Pentland Firth. In the next month three further 1.5 MW. turbines will be installed at the same site. Eventually there will be 269 turbines providing enough clean electricity to power 175,000 homes. At the same time, the Perpetual Tidal Energy Centre has announced a partnership with turbine manufacturers to deliver a 30 MW. tidal energy project off the Isle of Wight by 2020. These projects place Britain at the forefront of global moves to develop tidal energy.

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

Father, we pray for all scientists, that they may combine zeal in research with care for the consequences for the world and its creatures;  
For all politicians, that they may be delivered from self-seeking and the

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short view, and may recognise that they hold the world in trust; For all who feel helpless as they see the dangers to our world that they seem unable to influence. Help each one of us to see more clearly the part that we are called on to play.

### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

The latest WWF Living Planet Report reveals that wildlife populations worldwide have fallen by 58% since 1970 and this decline could reach 67% by 2020. The current rate of extinctions is 100 times greater than what would be considered normal without the impact of human activity. Speaking at the launch, Professor John Rockstrom, Director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre, said: “The last 10,000 years of unprecedented stability on Earth has enabled us to develop the modern world as we know it. The exponential journey of unsustainable development over just the last 50 years has pushed us into a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, where we humans threaten the stability and resilience

of the entire Earth. . . . What we, in this generation, do in the coming 50 years will probable determine the outcome for humanity on Earth over the coming 10,000 years. This report provides a compelling story of the global risks humanity is facing, and the grand challenges and opportunities of a world transformation to sustainability. The door to a future for humanity within Earth's safe operating space is most likely still open, but only just.”

### **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

Alistair Currie of Population Matters comments: “Each new human being arriving on Earth does not fill a niche already carved out for them, and they don't bring a suitcase full of resources – they must elbow their way onto the planet and claim a share of the finite resources it has to offer. We add 80 million people to our planet every year, another billion roughly every 15 years. The reduction by more than half of animal populations since 1970 can be mapped on another graph – a doubling of the human population in the same period.”

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### **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December**

In relation to limiting our numbers, we know that education works, we know that tackling poverty works and we know that contraception works. Yet we also know that there more than 220 million women today who want to delay or avoid pregnancy and have no access to modern contraception. There is a shortfall of at least \$847 million in the aid that is needed to provide contraception where it is most needed.

### **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

Climate change may well be the single issue that finally forces us to face the challenge of our growing numbers. We cannot have more people, living longer and getting richer, and expect the amount of emissions we produce to go down. Limiting human numbers is not a final goal, it is a means to an end. That end is a healthy planet that can sustain us all, human and non-human, now and for future generations. Limiting human numbers is just one solution, and the Living Planet Report makes it

clear that we cannot turn our backs on solutions.

### **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

The FFP 2020 international family planning initiative seeks to empower 120 million more women to access modern contraception than in 2012. Some 30 million more women now have access to contraception, but there is a significant funding gap, with the 2015 figure falling 6% below that for 2014. FP2020's director, Beth Schlachter, said: "We have the opportunity and the obligation to reach the hardest to reach, including young people, the poorest, the marginalised and the most vulnerable, and to ensure that all policies are grounded in the principles of agency, access, availability and quality of care."

### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

The Paris Agreement entered into full force last month – just before the American elections. If President-elect Trump carries out his intention to withdraw from it, it would take four years before the US can actually leave, during which

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domestic pressures and world opinion could force him to think again. The pledges made at Paris were national pledges made by each of the over 197 nations present. Nothing about the election result can reduce the imperative needs of China and India to clean up their air and to build new industries based on renewable technologies.

### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

Loving Father, you sent your Son to be a light to all who walk in darkness. Enlighten us with your Holy Spirit as we seek to follow the new path we must tread if we are to turn away from the destructive habits that have come near to ruining your Earth. Help us each to shoulder our personal responsibility for the changes in lifestyle that are needed if we are to avert catastrophe.

### **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

The COP22 climate talks at Marrakesh saw ratification of last year's Paris Agreement by Australia, Botswana, Italy, Japan, Pakistan and the UK, making a total

of 111 out of the 197 signatories. It was agreed to finalise the rulebook by 2018. The Marrakesh Proclamation, supported by 197 governments, affirmed their commitment to full implementation of the Paris Agreement. "This year has seen extraordinary momentum worldwide, and in many businesses and multilateral fora. This momentum is irreversible.. Our task is to build on that momentum, moving forward to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to foster adaptation efforts, thereby supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals."

### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

The Climate Vulnerable Forum includes 48 nations at particular risk from climate change, such as Vietnam, Bangladesh and Madagascar. Their joint communique included a pledge to act to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. above pre-industrial levels and to move to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible before 2020, and

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preparing mid-century low-carbon development strategies.

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Earlier this year the world's first solar-powered flight around the world was hailed in the media. Now the Solar Impulse Foundation, which organised the flight, has launched a World Alliance for Clean Technologies to accelerate the development and promotion of low-carbon technologies and infrastructure. The group's goal is to advance the cause of any practical solutions that allow a bridge between ecology and economy, not limited to the production of renewable energy, but encompassing technologies, systems, know-hows and processes that protect the environment, improve health, increase energy efficiency or save natural resources, while creating jobs, generating profit and sustaining growth.

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

Despite the good intentions voiced at Marrakesh, the oil industry continues to seek opportunities for

expansion. Oil exploration is set to take place just outside Belize's fragile Barrier Reef Reserve, a World Heritage Site. An oil spill anywhere within Belize's waters could be catastrophic for communities whose livelihoods depend on healthy marine and coastal ecosystems. A coalition of Belizean organisations has called on the government to ban offshore oil from any of Belize's waters in the interests of promoting a sound environment and a sustainable economy.

### **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

The South Australian government plans to import over 500,000 tonnes of high and intermediate nuclear waste for long-term storage and to use some of it as a fuel for "integral fast reactors". A Royal Commission has rejected the last proposal, stating that "advance fast reactors are unlikely to be feasible or viable in the foreseeable future." However, the Commission endorsed the plan to import and store spent nuclear fuel. Two-thirds of a Citizens' Panel of 350 members has now rejected the plan

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altogether. This controversy highlights the global problems posed by the continued accumulation of nuclear waste and the necessity of safe storage.

### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December**

*Emeritus Professor Andrew Blower of the Open University*, author of “The Legacy of Nuclear Power”, surveys various unsuccessful attempts around the world to store nuclear waste safely and emphasises the burdens of risk and cost on generations into the far and unforeseeable future. He suggests two reasons for the current neglect of the issue:

1. In today's world, there is an emphasis on the short run, on security, jobs and investment for the present and foreseeable future.
2. Beyond that the future, both environmentally and socially, becomes unimaginable, and so a perverse, cavalier disregard of issues regarding the legacy of nuclear waste becomes permissible.

He believes that deep geological disposal is not the only solution, but

he does not specify any alternatives – one of which could be (unthinkable though it seems today) a total worldwide ban on producing this toxic waste.

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

Lord God our Creator, who has made Planet Earth 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 so clearly visible. Make us responsible, caring guardians of our inheritance and give us wisdom to find the right means to protect it. This we ask in the Name of your dear Son, who gave his life to redeem your world.

### **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December**

Europe's biggest wetland reserve, the Donana National Park, a World Heritage Site, has suffered a decrease of 80% of the freshwater reaching the marshlands due to government projects in rivers feeding the area, such as the Guadalquivi, and the over-

exploitation of the aquifer. Because of the disappearance of temporary lagoons, 7 out of 10 species of dragonfly listed in the Red List have been lost. Hundreds of thousands of migrating birds that spend the winter in the Reserve now find the marshes almost empty of water. UNESCO has set a deadline for the government to cancel harmful dredging projects before it puts the Park on its endangered list. The European Commission is about to take Spain to the European Court for its mismanagement of water in the Donana area.

### **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

5 trillion pieces of plastic are estimated to be floating around the world's oceans plus another trillion frozen into Arctic ice. The plastic is often ingested by fish and birds in mistake for food, causing damage throughout the food chain, including humans. Now the Dutch are testing a 100 metre long boom that collects floating debris from the surface and funnels it into a cone for collection by boats. If deployed in the so-called 'great Pacific garbage patch', it could capture around half the

huge quantity of floating plastic within a decade.

### **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

We in the UK use and discard 35 million plastic bottles every day. A deposit return scheme is being considered in Scotland. The idea is that whenever you buy a plastic bottled drink, you pay a little bit extra and get your money back when you return the empty bottle. This not only incentivises people to return their empty bottles, but also puts pressure on manufacturers to ensure that their materials are recyclable. A poll has shown that 93% of Scottish people are concerned about the effects of plastic litter on marine life. So, as with the plastic bag charge, Scotland now has an opportunity to lead the way for the rest of the UK.

### **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Last month, the world's largest marine protected area was created in the Ross Sea off Antarctica. Covering an area of 1,500,000 sq. kilometres (twice the size of Spain), it provides protection for whales, penguins and toothfish as well as



for the plankton at the base of the food chain which help to absorb CO2 from the atmosphere. Also this year, President Obama has established a massive marine park in the Pacific and Chile has established another around Easter Island, while the UK has pledged to create protected 'Blue Belts' around its overseas territories. Despite a pledge at the World Conservation Congress this summer to protect 30% of our oceans, there is still a long way to go to reach that target.

### **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

This year's meeting of the International Whaling Commission has tightened up the rules against so-called 'scientific whaling' and recognised for the first time the benefits that whales confer by mixing nutrients, fertilising the oceans and helping to fight climate change. However, there is still no agreement on the creation of a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary. The next meeting, in 2018, will take in Brazil, so the possibility of such a sanctuary will be high on the agenda.

### **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Eve**

Heavenly Father, our Creator and Sustainer, we thank you today for that little child who would make us all your children. As we remember his lowly, humble birth, take away our pride. As we remember his pure life, take away our sins and shortcomings. As we remember how he came, not to be ministered to but to minister, help us to serve more freely, to give more generously and to love more devotedly. Amen.

*(Leslie Weatherhead – adapted)*

### **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Day**

Dear Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into our hearts that peace which the world so desperately needs, and which you alone can give us. Help us to know one another better, and to live as children of the same Father.

### **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December**

Pope Francis, on the newly-designated Day of Prayer for the

Care of Creation, called for urgent action to counter climate change, saying that its impacts were being felt most by those who were least responsible for it, notably the poor. Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana is to head a new Vatican department responsible for the environment, migration, justice and health. He said: “The first step is to humbly acknowledge the harm we are doing to the Earth through pollution, the scandalous destruction of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity, and the spectre of climate change, and to realise that when we hurt the Earth, we also hurt the poor.”

### **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December**

A WWF report titled “Are you sitting comfortably? Sustainable timber sourcing and the UK furniture industry” finds that 68% of the most prominent furniture retailers either have no published policy or no credible statement on where they source their timber. Among these are Laura Ashley and Oak Furnitureland. However, 22% of retailers including B & Q and Wickes are making good progress.

Furniture imports from 'high risk' countries are worth over 1.9 billion euros, but two-thirds of retailers could still be supporting the destruction of forests through lack of robust sustainability policies.

### **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> December**

The latest report from the International Energy Agency forecasts that demand for oil will continue to grow up to 2040 as the needs of shipping, aviation, trucks and plastics more than offset the growth in the electric car industry and climate targets. Despite the push to tackle climate change, there were areas where efficiency policies were not widespread and alternative fuel sources were not readily available. Yet investment levels in conventional oil projects in the last two years have been at low levels not seen since the 1950s. Clearly, rising demand and falling supply will once again lead to rocketing oil prices, lending force to the argument that only renewables can provide a sustainable supply of energy in the long term.

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## **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

A £500,000 tree-planting project in Yorkshire was shown to help Pickering to avoid last winter's floods, and other natural ways of stopping floods have been shown to be effective. Andrea Leadsom, the Environment Secretary, said: "I fully support natural defence initiatives, such as planting trees, which can slow the water."

However, a DEFRA spokesman has told FoE: "There is no funding earmarked specifically for natural flood management." Clearly, the minister needs to get a tighter grip on her department.

## **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December**

The outgoing Obama administration has introduced a ban on offshore oil drilling in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas off northern Alaska, although the plan would allow new oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. This announcement follows a ruling to limit methane emissions from oil wells. In addition, a raft of new measures are expected to include limits on the use of HFCs, new water pollution rules for the coal industry and increased biofuel

quotas for petrol. All these initiatives are driven by fears that President-elect Trump will make good his threats to axe environmental regulations governing the fossil fuel industry. Pray that this will not happen.

## **Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> December New Year's Eve**

Father God, as we prepare to enter a new year, we approach your throne of grace in fear and humility. We confess that we have brought your world to the brink of destruction through our blindness and greed. Help us to re-examine our lives, that each of us may ask ourselves what part we may play in restoring and renewing your creation. This we ask in the Name of your Son, who came to save us and all your creatures.

### **Sources:**

Business Green

Resurgence

The Ecologist

The Environment (CIWEM)

## Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by email (free), please email :

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