

Sources:

Environment (CIWEM)
Resurgence and Ecologist
WWF News
Business Green
Root and Branch (A Rocha UK)
Green Christian

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Snowy tree, Leeds by Emma King

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



December 2017

“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)

“In this (economic) system, which tends to devour everything that stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenceless before the interests of a deified market, which becomes the only rule.” (Pope Francis in “The Joy of the Gospel”)



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Friday 1st December

A survey by Green Energy Barometer of 23,000 people across 13 countries in Europe, Asia and North America has found that 82% of people surveyed support the idea of a world fully powered by green energy. National emission reduction pledges are still not enough to meet the Paris Agreement target to limit warming to 2°C, so many countries will have to deploy renewable energy far faster than under current plans.

Saturday 2nd December

A report from the Global Carbon Project finds that global carbon emissions, after years of flat-lining, are set to rise by 2% in 2017 (a new record), thanks to the increase of coal use in China and sluggish progress by the

US and EU to decarbonise their economies. Meanwhile, data from the World Meteorological Organisation reveal that greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are at their highest in at least 800,000 years. The data also showed rising methane emissions from unknown sources, suggesting that feedback loops could be under way where rising temperatures lead to higher emissions from permafrost and forests.

Sunday 3rd December

Loving Father, you sent your Son to be a light to those who walk in darkness. May we who have brought your creation to the edge of darkness see the new path that we must tread, and may we follow it faithfully, in the

subsidies post-Brexit. A Rocha UK proposes that: Subsidies should provide a higher level of funding for farmers that most need it; Subsidies for marginal farming systems such as upland sheep farming should be tied to sustainable land management that benefits wildlife; A new programme of subsidies should help kick-start small-scale innovative farming systems that are ecologically sustainable and have a sound business plan.

Saturday 30th December

A new Fisheries Bill should establish an independent monitoring committee to monitor UK fish stocks, resetting quotas annually and ensuring that no species is over-fished. Our 50 Marine Conservation Zones should

be enlarged and new ones established with adequate provision for management and policing. Stronger laws are needed to minimise by-catch of marine mammals, with enforcement through on-boat CCTV and higher penalties for law-breakers.

Sunday 31st December

Loving Father, 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 passed. 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.

that no country can withstand the loss of its soil and fertility. “If you have heavy machinery churning the soil and compacting it, if you drench it in chemicals, that may improve yields, but in the long term undercuts the future fertility of the soil. You can increase yields year-on-year, but ultimately you are cutting the ground away from beneath your feet.” He also said that farmers needed incentives to tackle soil fertility loss and the decline in biodiversity.

Thursday 28th December

A report from the think tank Bright Blue proposes a market-based scheme to encourage farmers to provide environmental services post-Brexit. Farmers would bid for contracts with 'beneficiaries' such as central and local

government, water companies and insurers to provide services such as woodland creation, restoration of peatlands and removal of invasive plants. The report also calls for single rural payments, combining production and land management costs with flood protection and other ecosystem services. A government-backed Natural Environmental Finance Facility would provide low-cost finance for small farmers and landowners in less developed parts of the country.

Friday 29th December

Next year the Government has promised new Agriculture and Fishery bills. The Agriculture bill will set a framework for farming

power of your dear Son, who gave his life for us.

Monday 4th December

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is a way of capturing carbon emissions from industrial sites and storing them underground. A report from the Global CCS Institute finds that 17 CCS projects around the world are capturing 37 million tonnes of CO₂ a year, with emission savings equivalent to taking 8 million cars off the road. Lord Stern of the Grantham Research Institute said: “Most serious analysis has concluded that it will be very difficult to achieve the Paris goals without carbon capture and storage. We must pursue low-carbon and zero-carbon growth across the board in our cities, infrastructure and land use. CCS can play a key

role in the transition to low-carbon economic growth and development in many parts of the world.”

Tuesday 5th December

A study from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change titled “Natural Gas & Climate Change” finds that EU countries can afford just nine more years of burning gas and other fossil fuels at the current rate before they will have exhausted their share of the earth's remaining carbon budget to keep within a maximum temperature rise of 2°C. FoE Europe warns that Europe is still planning for decades of fossil fuel use including subsidies for new gas infrastructure. It calls for the EU energy system to be transformed into a fossil-free system by 2030.

Wednesday 6th December

Local councils across the UK have £16.1 billion of their workers' pensions invested in fossil fuel companies and are failing to take account of climate change risks in their investment policies, according to a coalition including 350.org, Platform, Energy Democracy Project and FoE. Manchester, Dumfries & Galloway, Torfaen, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Merseyside are the most exposed to fossil fuel investments. However, Lancashire County Council's £12 million investment in Westmill Solar Co-Operative and Strathclyde's £10 holding in Albion Community Power are examples of councils investing in clean energy.

Thursday 7th December

At last month's COP23 summit, Catherine McKenna, the Minister for Environment & Climate Change, said: "The UK is committed to completely phasing out unabated coal-fire power generation no later than 2025 and we hope to inspire others to follow suit." However Northumberland County has approved the opening by the Banks Group of a new opencast coal mine behind Druridge Bay. There was a public enquiry in June and the decision of the Secretary of State is now awaited. How does any decision to open a new coal mine square with the Government's commitment to phase out the use of coal?

impressed by the impressive. Help us to see you in simple things – a child's love, birdsong, the quiet loveliness of dawn, human friendship and the peace of our homes. We bow in worship before the majesty of the Creator revealed in a human life. Accept our worship and make our lives more like his. We ask it in his Name. Amen. (Leslie Weatherhead)

Tuesday 26th December

A ground-breaking molten salt nuclear reactor built by Terrestrial Energy in Canada has secured pre-licensing approval. Simon Irish of Terrestrial claims that this type of reactor can gobble up Britain's 130 tons of plutonium waste and can adapt within minutes to changes in energy demand. Molten salt reactors are in principle Fukushima-

proof. There can be no chain reaction. If the reactor gets too hot, a freeze plug melts and the salt drains away. Both the US and China are working on designs of mini-reactor that are cleaner, safer and cheaper than the old lightwater giants. Britain's Rolls Royce is working on a small modular reactor which looks to critics like a scaled-up version of Sizewell B with all its defects. The project is claimed to require 40,000 skilled jobs, but leaves in place the nuclear waste stored at Sellafield, which will continue to grow, leaving a huge problem for later generations.

Wednesday 27th December

At the parliamentary launch of the Sustainable Soils Association, the Environment Secretary Michael Gove said

Saturday 23rd December

Lord Jesus, who commanded the winds and waves, we lift to you the countless thousands who have suffered through flooding in South Asia and West Africa and through hurricanes in the Caribbean. We pray also for East Africa and Southern Africa, that you will send rains in the right places and the right amounts, that crops will grow and flourish and that the years of hunger may end. May your children affected by these disasters be sources of hope, peace and comfort to all around who do not yet know you for themselves. (A prayer from Barnabas Fund)

Sunday 24th December

Bless tonight, dear Father, those for whom this is a hard and bitter time of suffering

and remembering, those for whom your gift seems to offer little comfort. Deepen in our hearts true care for them and for all to whom this night carries no glimpse of the wonder of your love. We thank you that your gift is to all of us, and that you wait patiently for our acceptance. Bring us all, dear Father, to the point where we receive your gift with joy and thankfulness. Amen.

Monday 25th December

On this Christmas Day, as we think of the little child of Bethlehem, we give you thanks that you, the Almighty, the Creator, the Infinite, whose Being is utterly beyond the power of our loftiest thought and most daring imagination, can speak to us in a little human child. Save us from being overly

Friday 8th December

A paper by scientists from the Chinese Academy of Science, the Nature Conservancy and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture finds that better soil management by farmers could cut annual emissions from agriculture by up to 1.85 tonnes a year – equivalent to taking 400 million cars off the road. The actions needed to achieve this include:

- Using more manure;
- Planting cover crops to regenerate soils between harvests;
- Adding mulch so as to curb herbicide use;
- Practising 'conservation tilling, which leaves crop residues to break down naturally.

Saturday 9th December

Our planet is losing 10 billion trees a year, leading to

widespread impacts on biodiversity. Carbon sequestration, local economies and human health. WWF, the Wildlife Conservation Society and Birdlife International have launched a Trillion Trees programme, a 25-year initiative to scale up global forest commitments and spur greater ambition towards protecting and planting 1 trillion trees by 2050, the number needed to reverse the global decline in tree cover. Since the dawn of civilisation, half the world's forests have been lost and most of the remainder have damaged by large-scale human activities, yet they still hold more than 45% of terrestrial carbon, are home to 2/3rds of all land-based plants and animals, and support the livelihoods of 1.6 billion people. "Trillion

Trees will bring together a diverse group of corporate, non-profit and community stakeholders to deliver targeted conservation projects and unlock private-public funding.”

Sunday 10th December

The earth is becoming a wasteland:

Breath of the Most High, come and renew it.

Humanity is becoming a battleground:

Child of Peace, come and unite it.

Society is becoming a playground:

Key of Destiny, open doors to our true path.

The world is becoming a no-man's land:

God-with-us, come and make your home here and in our hearts. (Ray Simpson)

Monday 11th December

A coalition of Christian agencies including Christian Aid, CAFOD and TEARFUND have set up a Big Church Switch to advise churches on how to switch to clean electricity and save on energy bills. Climate change is already affecting the poorest communities and the Church can play a leading role in curbing carbon emissions. Further details can be found at

<https://www.bigchurchswitch.org.uk>

Tuesday 12th December

Insurers Zurich have followed Axa, Allianz and Lloyds in cutting their ties with coal-intensive industries. Fifteen insurers have so far pulled out \$20 billion worth of investments in coal. “Coal needs to become uninsurable” said Peter

Thursday 21st December

Microscopic plastic fibres have been found to contaminate 83% of tap water samples from five continents, according to research by Orb Media. The US had the highest contamination rate (94%) while Europe had 72%. The University of Minnesota team tested 159 samples, using a technique which factors out contamination from other sources. The fibres might come from wear-and-tear of clothes which, via washing machines, can then pollute local water sources. No procedure exists for containing this pollution.

Friday 22nd December

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), in a study published in *Elementa*, finds that more than 90 coastal communities in the US face

chronic inundation from rising seas caused by climate change. The number could jump to more than 170 within 20 years and as many as 670 by 2100, including Boston, Newark, Fort Lauderdale and four out of New York's five boroughs. Holding global warming to 2°C by 2100 could spare 200-380 coastal communities, including nearly 50 major cities. “Despite President Trump's attempts to undermine federal action on climate change, other countries, as well as US states, cities, businesses and citizens, are showing firm resolve to honour the Paris Agreement. They understand that if we fail to limit global warming, we're committing countless people to a future of flooding and inundation and the hard choices and costs that come with it.”

developing countries and 20% of the UN's total membership. Their commitment to sustainable development could easily include legal action on marine plastic pollution. Many of them have already set their own house in order and are in a good position to take joint legal action in the International Court at The Hague against any state that can be proved to have contravened international treaties on marine pollution.

Wednesday 20th December

For successful legal action, there must be conclusive proof of liability. Plastic rubbish would have to be collected from affected coasts and labels must be analysed to prove the country of origin. The costs of taking legal action, given the huge public

concern about the problem, could be raised via NGOs, foundations and the general public through crowdfunding platforms. As Olive Tickell puts it in a 'Resurgence' article: "Nothing in this will be quick or easy, but few things worth achieving ever are. Legal action by plastic-polluted states against those countries that allow their wastes to contaminate the marine environment would have a powerful effect in persuading the perpetrators to reform their ways. Such is the scale and urgency of the plastic problem that we should take this option forward, vigorously and effectively. Our oceans and their irreplaceable ecosystems depend on us."

Bosshard of Unfriend Coal. "If insurers cease to cover the numerous natural, technical, commercial and political risks of coal projects, new coal mines and power plants cannot be built and existing operations will have to be shut down."

Wednesday 13th December

According to a survey for CHEM Trust and SumOfUs, 63% of British citizens believe there should be no reduction in regulatory standards for potentially harmful chemicals once Britain has left the EU. The EU REACH system covers chemicals in thousands of everyday products and aims to ensure that all substances used and sold are safe for people and the environment. CIWEM director, Michael Warhurst, believes that it is possible for

the UK to remain within the EU REACH system, as Norway does, without being part of the EU. Enforcement will however be a big problem if the UK leaves the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

Thursday 14th December

Michael Gove, the Environment Secretary, has already promised that the Government will not dilute environmental standards post-Brexit. Now he has announced plans for a new, independent environmental watchdog to ensure that EU rules transferred into the UK statute book are enforced. In addition, a new National Policy Statement will embed environmental considerations into all future government policy and decision-making,

Friday 15th December

Iraq largely depends for its water supplies on two major rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, both of which rise in neighbouring countries.

Turkey's intention is to build 22 dams and 19 hydropower plants on these two rivers.

Water flow into Iraq has fallen by at least one-third since 1970, and the UN predicts that the volume flowing through the Euphrates will more than halve by 2025.

Iraq's oil and gas industry, which generates 95% of the country's revenue, needs nearly 2 billion cubic metres of water a year, just for enhanced recovery services.

CIWEM recommends:

Introduction of proper water tariffs to reduce wasteful consumption;

Encourage farmers to switch to less water-intensive crops;

Introduce modern irrigation technology to replace traditional flood-irrigation methods;

As soon as the political situation allows, reach a water access and flow agreement with its upstream neighbours.

Saturday 16th December

According to Oxfam, nearly 480,000 Rohingya people have crossed from Myanmar into Bangladesh since August and are living in terrible conditions without adequate shelter and access to clean water. Our Lord was a refugee when he fled with his family to Egypt following persecution at home. We remember all the millions of displaced people around the world and the aid agencies that work to relieve their suffering.

Sunday 17th December

Dear God, we pray for another way of being, another way of knowing. Across the difficult terrain of our existence we have attempted to build a highway and in so doing have lost our footpath. Lord, lead us to that footpath. Lead us where, in simplicity, we may move at the speed of natural creatures and feel the earth's love beneath our feet. Nothing can be loved at speed. Father, lead us to the slow path, to the joyous insights of the pilgrim – another way of being, another way of knowing. (Michael Leunig)

Monday 18th December

Hardly a day passes without news of plastic rubbish polluting the world's oceans. Yet the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea has since

1994 required states “to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from any source” and “to ensure that activities under their jurisdiction or control are so conducted as not to cause damage by pollution to other states and their environment.” In Europe the 1998 OSPAR Convention requires 15 European countries and the EU “to protect the maritime area against the adverse effects of human activities so as to safeguard human health and to conserve marine ecosystems.” Other treaties elsewhere reinforce the point. What is lacking is any means of enforcement.

Tuesday 19th December

The 44 members of the Alliance of Small Island States comprise 28% of all