

an unprecedented scale, providing food security, jobs and a reason to stay for the millions who live along its path. The Wall promises to be a compelling solution to the many urgent threats not only facing the African Continent, but the global community as a whole – notably climate change, drought, famine, conflict and migration. Once complete, the Great Green Wall will be the largest living structure on the planet, 3 times the size of the Great Barrier Reef.

<https://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall>

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## Prayer guide for the care of creation

# July 2020

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, Psalm 24v1



### Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July

This month is 'Plastic free July', which challenges people to refuse single use plastic and swap for non-plastic items instead. Because plastic wasn't invented until the late 19th century, and production really only took off around 1950, we have a mere 9.2 billion tons of the stuff to deal with. Of that, more than 6.9 billion tons have become waste. And of that waste, a staggering 6.3 billion tons never made it to a recycling bin—a figure that stunned the scientists who crunched the numbers in 2017. <https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/2018/05/we-made-plastic-we-depend-it-now-were-drowning-it>

### Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July

Chemical engineers from UNSW Sydney have developed new technology that helps convert harmful carbon dioxide emissions into chemical building

blocks to make useful industrial products like fuel and plastics. Making catalysts to convert waste carbon dioxide into useful industrial products has been expensive and complicated – until now. The researchers show that by making zinc oxide at very high temperatures using a technique called flame spray pyrolysis (FSP), they can create nanoparticles which act as the catalyst for turning carbon dioxide into 'syngas' – a mix of hydrogen and carbon monoxide used in the manufacture of industrial products.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/engineers-convert-co2-emissions-into-chemical-building-blocks-for-fuel/>

### Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July

The risks of climate change and population growth on water scarcity in the UK remain hidden, with a new survey of 2,000 Brits revealing that water consumption is low down on the

### Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July

Today is International Tiger Day. There are around 3,900 tigers in the wild, across 13 countries. The beautiful, awe-inspiring tiger is one of our planet's most iconic animals. But here's the shocking truth. Wild tiger numbers dropped by more than 95% since the beginning of the 20th century. Now, for the first time in conservation history, their numbers are on the increase. WWF and its partners aim to help double the number of wild tigers to over 6,000 by 2022 – the next Chinese year of the tiger.

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/calendar/international-tiger-day#action>

### Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July

While forest area has declined all across the world in the past three decades, the rate of forest loss has declined due to the growth of sustainable

management. The rate of forest loss in 2015-2020 declined to an estimated 10 million hectares (mha), down from 12 million hectares (mha) in 2010-2015, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020). More than 54 per cent of the world's forests were in only five countries — the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America and China.

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/forests/deforestation-rate-globally-declined-between-2015-and-2020-fao-report-71107>

### Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July

The Great Green Wall is an African-led movement with an epic ambition to grow an 8,000km natural wonder of the world across the entire width of Africa. A decade in and roughly 15% underway, the initiative is already bringing life back to Africa's degraded landscapes at

demand for recycled plastic at a record low, the recycling industry may be left with fewer and fewer buyers. A drop in demand for recycled plastic material would cut into the profit margins of recycling companies. Lower revenue will delay investments in new plants and technologies and limit how effectively the system can improve recycling rates. For waste management and recycling companies to turn a profit, the taxpayer would have to bear a greater share of their costs.

<https://theconversation.com/why-the-pandemic-could-slash-the-amount-of-plastic-waste-we-recycle-139616>

### **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July**

UK policymakers have 'historically disregarded' the economic, social and environmental risks posed by the degradation of nature, meaning more ambition and

action is now desperately needed to mitigate further damage and adapt to changes which are already baked-in. That is according to a new report from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), published in June. The report tracks the UK's progress against 21 "measures of readiness" to adapt to existing environmental degradation and mitigate further harm... In 15 of these categories, only partial progress was found to be present. In the remaining six, the UK is either "completely failing" or "almost completely failing", the IPPR states. Of particular concern is the fact that the UK is currently set to miss existing biodiversity targets and that international emissions are exempted from climate laws.

<https://www.edie.net/news/11/IPPR--UK--acutely-vulnerable--to-environmental-breakdown/>

priority agenda for environmental concerns. The findings of the Great British Rain Paradox survey warn that 72% of the British public believe the UK has enough water to meet daily demands. However, the public remains largely unaware of the risks that population growth and climate change will have on water supplies. February 2020 was the wettest on record and May 2020 was one of the driest, highlighting the impact that climate change will have on weather patterns in the UK. Currently, daily household water usage on a per person basis is 143 litres. In comparison, per person water usage in the 1960s was around 85 litres.

<https://www.edie.net/news/4/-Great-British-Rain-Paradox---Public-unaware-of-UK-s-water-scarcity/>

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July**

Investment in nature recovery could provide a major boost in employment in England and help create a more resilient economy as part of a green economic recovery from Covid-19 according to new figures put together by conservation groups. In addition, it would also help Government and society tackle the nature and climate crises. A list of 330 projects that are 'ready to go' - including a mix of well-tested and innovative approaches, from micro forests to huge coastal realignment schemes - has been put together by Wildlife and Countryside Link to showcase the scale of opportunities available for England through a green recovery. In the short term, these projects could support around 5,000 jobs in the environment sector and 5,000 jobs in delivery, plus supply chain benefits.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/green-recovery/>

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July**

Heavenly Father, have mercy on us in our perplexity as we confront the challenges of climate change. Help us to look at our consumer choices in the light of your biblical truths, to determine where we stand, and then to take whatever action seems necessary to protect your precious earth, for which your Son gave his life.

### **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

On the eve of the summer solstice, something very worrying happened in the Arctic Circle. For the first time in recorded history, temperatures reached 38°C (101°F) in a remote Siberian town – 18°C warmer than the maximum daily average for June in this part of the world, and the all-time

temperature record for the region. New records are being set every year, and not just for maximum temperatures, but for melting ice and wildfires too.

That's because air temperatures across the Arctic have been increasing at a rate that is about twice the global average. Siberia's recent heatwave, and high summer temperatures in previous years, have been accelerating the melting of Arctic permafrost.

<https://theconversation.com/siberia-heat-wave-why-the-arctic-is-warming-so-much-faster-than-the-rest-of-the-world-141455>

### **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July**

From creating jobs in home insulation to hiking dirty fuel taxes and expanding electric-vehicle charging, Britain's government should harness the COVID-19 pandemic to accelerate cuts in planet-heating emissions, an advisory

improvements and procuring 100% renewable energy. As of the end of 2019, L'Oréal had 35 carbon-neutral sites using 100% renewables, including 14 factories.

<https://www.edie.net/news/6/L-Or-al-targets-carbon-neutrality-by-2025-under-new-sustainability-strategy/>

### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July**

Today is the start of National Marine Week. This is The Wildlife Trusts' nationwide celebration of all things marine. It lasts 15 fun-filled days to allow for the variation in tide times around the country. There are 25-30 species of whale, dolphin and porpoise in UK waters, and numbers are looking healthy.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51770375>

### **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July**

Father God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we

cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

(Reinhold Niebuhr)

### **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July**

The short term future of plastics recycling is looking grim. International travel and industrial activity dried up with the onset of global lockdowns, causing oil demand and prices to plummet. Since most plastic is made from oil, its falling price has meant the cost of plastic resin production has dropped too, making it cheaper than ever to manufacture new plastic products. Amid a glut of cheap virgin plastic, petrochemical companies could end up churning out even more to stabilise the demand for crude oil. That would make using recycled plastic material economically foolish, as it would contribute to the oversupply haunting the market. With

- The report also concludes that both blue hydrogen (produced from natural gas after reforming to remove carbon content) and green hydrogen (produced by using power to electrolyse water) are expected to play an important role, providing up to 480TWh of hydrogen, or c.45% of GB's final energy demand by 2050.

<https://www.auroraer.com/insight/hydrogen-for-a-net-zero-gb/>

### Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July

Jaguars in the Atlantic Forest, which spans Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, have doubled in number to 200 in last 15 years. Research using camera traps at more than 200 sites, which took more than 440,000 photographs last year alone, shows a slow recovery in numbers since initial studies in 2005. Efforts across the three countries by WWF, Fundacion Vida Silvestre Argentina and local partners are

focusing on habitat loss, poaching of jaguars and their prey, and reducing conflict between the big cats and local people.

<https://theecologist.org/2020/jun/18/jaguars-may-avoid-extinction>

### Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July

Global cosmetic firm L'Oréal has unveiled a new sweeping set of sustainability targets, pledging to reach carbon neutrality by 2025, halve carbon emissions, use 100% renewables and ensure all plastic packaging comes from recycled or bio-based sources. The "L'Oréal for the future" strategy outlines a new set of sustainability commitments for 2030, with various targets also set to a 2025 deadline. The strategy commits the Group's manufacturing, administrative and research sites to reaching carbon neutrality by 2025 through energy efficiency

panel said [in late June]. With public support for low-carbon shifts growing and the state spending billions to boost its flagging economy, now is "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to ramp up the transition, said John Gummer, chair of Britain's Committee on Climate Change. "If we are to emerge successfully from COVID-19, there is only one route and that route is one that enables us also to fight climate change," said the head of the independent advisory body, which released its annual progress report on [25<sup>th</sup> June]. <https://news.trust.org/item/20200624231549-va7gr/>

### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July

In its annual progress report to government, the Committee on Climate Change highlights five clear investment priorities in the months ahead:

- 1 Low-carbon retrofits and buildings that are fit for the future.
- 2 Tree planting, peatland restoration, and green infrastructure including in our towns and cities.
- 3 Energy networks must be strengthened for the net-zero energy transformation
- 4 Infrastructure to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely.
- 5 Moving towards a circular economy.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/2020/06/25/covid-19-can-be-an-historic-turning-point-in-tackling-the-global-climate-crisis/>

### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July

A researcher from New Brunswick has rediscovered a species of harlequin toad presumed extinct, and the details of the discovery offer hope not just for the species, but for the entire *atelopos* genus, which was nearly wiped

out by the amphibian epidemic. Caused by bacteria, the fungal disease chytridiomycosis has wreaked havoc on amphibians worldwide, with harlequin toads (*atelopus*) proving particularly susceptible. However Canadian herpetologist Melissa Costales's sighting of the Mindo harlequin toad (*atelopus mindoensis*) in Ecuador could mean the epidemic of chytrid may be subsiding; evidence supporting an already established and hopeful hypothesis.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/extinct-harlequin-toad-rediscovered-such-survivors-are-bringing-hope-that-amphibian-apocalypse-is-abating/>

### Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July

A new study for the journal *Nature Communications* reviewed recent scientific literature on the links between affluence and environmental impacts, on the systemic

mechanisms leading to overconsumption and on possible solutions to the problem. The facts are clear: the wealthiest 0.54 percent, about 40 million people, are responsible for 14 percent of lifestyle-related greenhouse gas emissions, while the bottom 50 percent of income earners, almost four billion people, only emit around 10 percent. The world's top 10 percent income earners are responsible for at least 25 percent and up to 43 percent of our environmental impact. It is less clear, however, how to address the problems that come with affluence. Progressive mainstream policymakers talk about "greening consumption" or "sustainable growth" to "decouple" affluence from climate breakdown, biodiversity loss and other planetary-scale destruction. Yet the research confirms that, in reality, there is

banner year. Sales of electric cars topped 2.1 million globally in 2019, surpassing 2018 – already a record year – to boost the stock to 7.2 million electric cars. Electric cars, which accounted for 2.6% of global car sales and about 1% of global car stock in 2019, registered a 40% year-on-year increase.

<https://www.iea.org/reports/global-ev-outlook-2020>

### Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July

New survey results from 40 countries shows that climate change matters to most people. In the vast majority of countries, fewer than 3% said climate change was not serious at all. Almost seven in ten think climate change is "a very, or extremely serious, problem", but the results show notable country differences. Lack of concern is far higher in the US (12%) as well as in Sweden (9%), Greta Thunberg's home

country. Despite disastrous bush fires at the time of our fieldwork, 8% of respondents in Australia report that climate change is not serious at all. These groups with low levels of concern tend to be right wing and older.

<https://theconversation.com/how-much-do-people-around-the-world-care-about-climate-change-we-surveyed-80-000-people-in-40-countries-to-find-out-140801>

### Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

A new independent report by Aurora finds that Hydrogen can play an important role in UK's ambitious decarbonisation plan and boost its global industrial competitiveness. Key insights from this new analysis include:

- Hydrogen can meet up to half of [our] final energy demand by 2050, providing an important pathway to reaching UK's ambitious Net Zero targets.

increase protection for this solitary insect eater, which, when undisturbed, makes its home in tree hollows or burrows. China's decision to upgrade the protection status of pangolins from second to first class – that's the same level as the giant panda – should now mean stricter enforcement of wildlife laws and penalties for this harmful illegal trade.

<https://updates.panda.org/world-s-most-illegally-traded-mammal-gets-vital-lifeline>

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

A survey of more than 600 business representatives by the UN found that just 39% believe their employer has targets that are sufficiently ambitious to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the 2030 deadline. Conducted by the UN Global Compact (UNGC) in partnership with DNV GL, the survey asked representatives from the

sustainability teams or C-suite of 615 businesses what their organisations were doing to drive progress towards achieving the SDGs... Less than half of respondents (46%) said that considerations around the Global Goals were embedded across all business departments and in key strategic decisions.

<https://www.edie.net/news/7/SD-Gs--Just-39--of-businesses-think-they-are-taking-enough-action--UN-survey-finds/>

### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

Help us, dear Lord, so to deal with the things we possess that they may never possess us. May we use all that you have given us in your service and to the glory of your Kingdom. Amen.

### **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

Global sales of passenger cars were sluggish in 2019, but electric cars had another

no evidence that this decoupling is actually happening.

<https://theecologist.org/2020/jun/25/affluence-killing-planet>

### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July**

Today is World Population Day. At time of writing no details for this year's theme are available. But the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the world's blueprint for a better future for all on a healthy planet. On World Population Day, we recognize that this mission is closely interrelated with demographic trends including population growth, ageing, migration and urbanization."

<https://www.un.org/en/events/populationday/index.shtml>

### **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July**

Heavenly Father, we face hard choices as we confront the realities of climate change and the depletion of natural

resources. Help us to understand the opportunities offered by a return to a simpler lifestyle. Help us to fulfil our responsibilities to those suffering from our careless use of natural resources, and give us the resilience to adapt to a lifestyle that is fairer to others and gentler on your world.

### **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July**

This week should be Love your Parks week. Local Authorities, who look after our parks and municipal gardens, are under huge financial pressures, due to austerity and now the coronavirus pandemic. Pray for local councils to value their green spaces and to have enough resources to allow them to be havens for us and wildlife to enjoy for years to come.

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/love-parks-week>

## Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July

Every year, we buy 30 billion tonnes of stuff, .... We throw out or demolish 13 billion tonnes of it as waste – about 2 tonnes per person. A third of what we discard was bought the same year. The extraction, use and discarding of so much stuff creates a large environmental burden, from the depletion of minerals to the destruction of rainforests. The idea of a circular economy aims to address these problems by rejecting the take-make-dispose model of production and consumption that governs our world. Instead, waste is “designed out” and materials are kept at a high value for longer through reuse, repair and recycling. Unfortunately, some wastes are an inevitable result... So how should we deal with it? In a recent paper, researchers from UCL argue for a legal requirement to recognise

the potential for this waste to be used again.

<https://theconversation.com/why-well-still-need-waste-in-a-circular-economy-136470>

## Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July

Despite a major trend towards strengthening climate commitments in recent months, oil and gas majors are broadly failing to take responsibility for their entire emissions footprint, with some on track to deliver just a 3% cut in absolute emissions by 2050. That is the key conclusion of new analysis from think tank Carbon Tracker, which analysed the climate targets of nine large oil and gas firms, in addition to their policies for meeting these goals and metrics for tracking progress. The analysis found that six of the firms – Shell, Total, Equinor, Chevron, Conoco-Philips and Exxon-Mobil - have designed their climate ambitions in a way that will enable them to shirk

responsibility for all or some of their Scope 3 (indirect) emissions, particularly emissions generated by the burning of their products by the end-user. Scope 3 emissions can account for as much as 95% of an oil and gas firm’s overall carbon footprint, with the average among the businesses analysed being 85%.

<https://www.edie.net/news/10/Roport--Most-oil-majors--net-zero-strategies-are-greenwash--with-US-firms-faring-the-worst/>

## Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July

Using the methods of Japan’s most famous botanist, European countries are beginning to dot their urban landscapes with tiny forests, as productive and biodiverse as any in wilderness areas, yet sometimes only as big as a tennis court. Growing more than 10x faster, and possessing up to 20x more biodiversity potential than contemporary

forests, the Miyawaki method is perfect for organizations like Urban Forests in France and Belgium, and the Tiny Forest initiative in Holland, with their strong desire to prevent the worst of climate change upon their nations’ relatively small landmass.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/tiny-forests-spring-up-around-europe/>

## Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July

The pangolin is the only mammal in the world to have large scales covering its body – a protection from many predators but not from the rampant illegal trade that threatens the future of all eight pangolin species. An estimated 195,000 pangolins were trafficked in 2019, for their meat and scales – a trade that’s larger than for any other mammal. So [the WWF] welcomes the Chinese government’s decision to