

The project is demonstrative of Circular Economy Wales, the country's strategy to reduce waste, combat climate change and provide new job opportunities. To date, almost 94 percent of the waste collected has been fully recycled into damp-proof membranes.

<https://larac.org.uk/blog/torfaen-county-borough-council-fcc-environment-and-capital-valley-plastics-win-lets-recycle>

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

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Picture on front cover: Snow on trees in Leeds, 2010. Taken by Emma King

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



December 2020

“The Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for.” - Ernest Hemingway

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orders all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come again and with us ever dwell**

Tuesday December 1st

CPRE has undertaken new research with Conservative MPs [on the new planning system] and the results are clear: changes to the proposed algorithm are promising, but would still leave the government at odds with its own MPs on its plans to dismantle the planning system. [CPRE] worked with researchers at the Savanta ComRes agency to speak to 40 backbench Conservative MPs from all over the country... to get their take on the government proposals, which were laid out in a white paper in August 2020. And while the government has indicated, pleasingly, that it's in the process of rethinking the housing algorithm element of the planning proposals, today's research shows that Conservative MPs have concerns with other key elements of the government's changes to planning...[A] huge 88% of the Conservative MPs that [were] surveyed [said] that they believe that local people should have a say over specific planning applications in their community –

the very rights that are at risk in the current white paper proposals. <https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/over-half-of-mps-oppose-planning-changes/>

Wednesday December 2nd

Tonight at 7pm is a Green Christian event, *Liturgies for Lament*, led by Andii Bowsher. This highly interactive session will focus on the development of liturgies and rituals for climate mourning, building on the feedback received at the workshop that Andii (lead chaplain at Northumbria University) held in October regarding eco anxiety and climate grief. Free, but you need to register to join. <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0tcO2pqDIHtFUUWMguNSq2Cto0rHrSRzP>

Thursday December 3rd

The American Prairie Reserve (APR), one of the [US's] largest and most ambitious conservation projects, acquired the property of Blue Ridge Ranch in northern Montana's Great Plains in August

Wednesday December 30th

In case anyone is going to buy a little tipple to see out this year tomorrow, here's a news story that will be of interest. People are increasingly aware of the harm plastic waste causes to wildlife, and many would avoid buying single-use plastics if they could help it. But are the alternatives to plastic much better? Let's look at one example – fizzy drinks. You might assume that plastic bottles are the least green option, but is that always the case? To find out, [the University of Southampton] compared five different types of pressurised drinks containers. [They] tested their environmental impact according to a range of criteria, including how each contributes to climate change and the pollution each produces during manufacture, use and disposal. Here they are, ranked from worst to best.

5th place – glass bottles

4th place -recycled glass bottles

3rd place – plastic bottles

2nd place – aluminium cans

1st place – recycled aluminium cans

<https://theconversation.com/ranked-the-environmental-impact-of-five-different-soft-drink-containers-149642>

Thursday December 31st

Torfaen County Borough Council, its waste management partner, FCC Environment, and local recycling company, Capital Valley Plastics, are thrilled to have won 'The Best Local Authority Recycling Initiative of the Year' at the Lets Recycle Awards for Excellence 2020. in collaboration with charity Plastic Oceans UK, the council and FCC Environment provide separate flexible collections for low-density polyethylene packaging at local schools within the Torfaen area....Once collected from the schools, ... the plastics are separated then sent to Capital Valley Plastics for reprocessing into damp-proof membranes, which are sold within the construction industry.

reduce their emissions, with the average business forecasting a 16% related emissions reduction by 2025. That is according to new research from Capgemini's Research Institute, which surveyed 800 industry executives from different large businesses across these sectors. Some 48% of respondents said that their organisation had implemented AI in recent years, with the aim of reducing emissions, improving resource efficiency or generating more low-carbon power. The average outcome of AI projects was found to be a 13% reduction in emissions and an 11% improvement in energy efficiency. Where the AI was used for resource efficiency, an average waste reduction on 12% was realised.

<https://www.edie.net/news/8/Capgemini--Half-of-big-businesses-are-using-AI-to-cut-their-climate-impacts/>

Tuesday December 29th

Dutch students have created a fully functioning electric car made

mostly out of waste, including plastics fished out of the sea, recycled PET bottles and household garbage. The bright yellow, sporty two-seater which the students named 'Luca', can reach a top speed of 90 kilometres (56 miles) per hour and has a reach of 220 kilometres when fully charged, the Technical University of Eindhoven said. "This car is really special, because it's made out of waste", project manager Lisa van Etten told Reuters. "Our chassis is made out of flax and recycled PET bottles. For the interior we also used unsorted household waste." Hard plastics normally found in televisions, toys and kitchen appliances were used for the car's body, while the seat cushions consist of coconut and horse hairs. The car was designed and built by a group of 22 students in around 18 months, Van Etten said, as an effort to prove the potential of waste.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201112100518-ewdri/>

last year. [It] is like nothing else on the North American continent. It is a project designed to acquire enough privately owned land...to connect two units of federally managed land in a mosaic of terrain that would create the single largest reserve in the lower 48 states. The eventual goal is to acquire 3.2 million acres, or around 5,000 square miles of ground, which is about the size scientists reckon an ecosystem-scale grassland reserve would have to be to ensure that all the resilience and resources necessary would be present for the wildlife, and have it be managed by private, state, Indian, and federal wildlife management agencies together.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/montanas-american-prairie-reserve-conserves-land/>

Friday December 4th

Former US presidential candidate John Kerry has been named as President-elect Joe Biden's special presidential envoy for climate change — a role that will

include a seat on the National Security Council (NSC).

"This marks the first time that the NSC will include an official dedicated to climate change, reflecting the president-elect's commitment to addressing climate change as an urgent national security issue," said Biden's transition team. Kerry, who lost the 2004 presidential election to George W Bush, was said to have discussed climate change at every international bilateral meeting he held while Secretary of State under President Obama from 2013-17 — and he signed the Paris Agreement, where he oversaw the US negotiating effort, on behalf of America in 2015.

<https://www.rechargenews.com/transition/john-kerry-named-as-president-elect-bidens-powerful-new-climate-tsar/2-1-917549>

Saturday December 5th

Today is the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's World Soil Day. This year, by addressing the increasing challenges of soil management, the Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO) campaign "Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity" aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being. By encouraging people around the world to engage in proactively improving soil health, the campaign also aims to fight soil biodiversity loss. If we do not act soon, the fertility of soil will continue to be adversely affected at an alarming rate, threatening global food supplies and food safety.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-soil-day>

Sunday December 6th

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

- A world of justice where the costs of climate change will be equitably shared between nations;
- A world of plenty where sufficient food and water will be available to all;

- A world of fairness, where success is founded on service, and honour is given to integrity alone;
- A world of peace, where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for this wonderful world which we all share.

Monday December 7th

Indonesia's environment ministry has issued a new regulation aimed at boosting domestic crop supplies, but critics say it prioritises the interests of agribusiness at the expense of small farmers and the environment. The government's "food estate" programme calls for establishing millions of hectares of new farmland, mostly for rice and other staple crops. To ensure there's sufficient land for the programme, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry issued a regulation on October 26th this year permitting protected forest areas to be cleared for that purpose on a "large scale."

imagination, can speak to us as a little Child. Save us from being over-impressed by the impressive. Help us to see you in simple things: a child's trust, birdsong, 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 of himself, not counting the cost. (Leslie Weatherhead)

Saturday December 26th

Seems like an appropriate day to mention this one as many of us will have bought batteries to go with presents! In the UK, around 40,000 tonnes of portable batteries are sold each year. However, in 2018, only 8,000 tonnes were recycled. For local authorities, the impact of such a large number of batteries evading responsible disposal routes can be dangerous and costly, as well as environmentally unsound. One of the greatest issues – aside from the leakage of hazardous

chemicals in landfill – is the potential for outbreaks of fire. Incidents of battery-related fires seem to be on the increase; often, they are small-scale, but even the smallest fire results in downtime and damage to equipment. In recent years, the number of lithium batteries on sale has doubled. These, in particular, are prone to ignition, if the batteries are damaged or, where terminals touch, they ignite easily.

<https://larac.org.uk/blog/powertodomore-%E2%80%93-keeping-batteries-safe>

Sunday December 27th

Lord Jesus, the carpenter, help us not to be afraid to get our hands dirty as we work in your Name. Challenge us every day to care for your world, and always to work gently for it.

Monday December 28th

Almost half of the world's biggest industrial, energy, FMCG (fast moving consumer goods), retail and manufacturing companies are using artificial intelligence (AI) to

human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust. Isaiah had prophesied, For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counsellor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:5), and He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. (Isaiah 2:4) .

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Wednesday December 23rd

O Emmanuel: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Saviour of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God. Isaiah had prophesied, The Lord himself will give you this sign: the Virgin shall be with child,

and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7:14). Remember, Emmanuel means God is with us. <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Thursday December 24th

Gracious 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 all our pride. As we remember his pure life, take away our sins. As we remember how he came, not to be served, but himself to serve, help us to strive more unselfishly, to give more generously and to love more devotedly.

(Leslie Weatherhead – adapted)

Friday December 25th

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

<https://www.eco-business.com/news/new-rule-clears-indonesias-protected-forests-for-agribusiness/>

Tuesday December 8th

European companies are the leaders in corporate disclosure on greenhouse gas emissions but Asia overtook the United States to claim second place in 2019, according to an analysis of more than 2,000 of the largest companies by Arabesque. Arabesque, an ESG (environmental, social and governance) research and asset manager headquartered in Frankfurt, found that the quantity and quality of global corporate emissions data disclosure had risen between 2014 and 2019 but was uneven across major regions. “What is more surprising is the recent change in second place from the USA to Asia in 2019. This is driven both by a decrease in disclosures from the USA and an increase in disclosures from Asia,” it added.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-companies/asia-overtakes-united-states-in-corporate-climate-disclosure-arabesque-says-idUSKBN280001>

Wednesday December 9th

The federal government is set to introduce climate accountability legislation as early as [late November] to formally commit Canada to its target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The long-awaited bill will set out mandatory national five-year targets to cut emissions, starting in 2025. While the Liberal government has promised the five-year targets will be “legally binding,” the legislation isn’t likely to include an enforcement mechanism to ensure those targets are being met. One key hurdle facing Ottawa is getting the provinces on board with reporting mechanisms — particularly the oil-producing provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan still pursuing a court challenge of the federal price on carbon, which is set to rise to \$50 a tonne by 2022.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/climate-change-net-zero-trudeau-carbon-1.5799546>

Thursday December 10th

Trade bodies including WindEurope and SolarPowerEurope have received backing from Bill-Gates-backed Breakthrough Energy to form a new coalition aimed at growing renewable hydrogen production and use across the continent. Called the Renewable Hydrogen Coalition, the initiative has been launched in recognition of the fact that more than 90% of hydrogen produced globally in 2019 used fossil fuels. While hydrogen is posited as a key way to tackle emissions from sectors like aviation, shipping and heat, low-emission production is needed before it is classed as a robust solution. The Coalition will build a network of academics, researchers, entrepreneurs, trade bodies and large businesses. It also has backing from the EU's commissioner for energy, Kadri Simson, who played a key role in

the development of the bloc's hydrogen strategy. The framework includes a goal to produce 10 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen by 2030.

<https://www.edie.net/news/6/Renewable-Hydrogen-Coalition--trade-bodies-team-up-to-grow-Europe-s-green-hydrogen-sector/>

Friday December 11th

[Mid November] saw the first ever international meeting of public finance institutions, dubbed the Finance in Common Summit, as development banks from around the world sought to agree on joint responses to the climate emergency and Covid-19 pandemic. However, an international group of civil society organisations and parliamentarians have issued two joint statements that are highly critical of these financial institutions, arguing that they exacerbate climate change and inequality, whilst also undermining human rights. The...statement, signed by over 80 organisations from across the world, argues that

our aid. Isaiah had prophesied, But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. (Isaiah 11:1), and On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10). Remember also that Jesse was the father of King David, and Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be of the house and lineage of David and be born in David's city, Bethlehem (Micah 5:1).

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Sunday December 20th

O Clavis David: O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom. Isaiah had prophesied, I will place the Key of the House of David on His

shoulder; when he opens, no one will shut, when he shuts, no one will open. (Isaiah 22:22), and His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over His kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. (Isaiah 9:6).

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Monday December 21st

O Oriens: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. Isaiah had prophesied, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shown. (Isaiah 9:1).

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Tuesday December 22nd

O Rex Gentium: O King of all the nations, the only joy of every

whom we have addressed in these seven Messianic titles, now speaks to us, Tomorrow, I will come. So the O Antiphons not only bring intensity to our Advent preparation, but bring it to a joyful conclusion.

Thursday December 17th

O Sapientia: O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation. Isaiah had prophesied, The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:2-3), and Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom. (Isaiah 28:29).

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Friday December 18th

O Adonai: O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed

yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free. Isaiah had prophesied, But He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the lands afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. (Isaiah 11:4-5); and Indeed the Lord will be there with us, majestic; yes the Lord our judge, the Lord our lawgiver, the Lord our king, he it is who will save us. (Isaiah 33:22).

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-the.html>

Saturday December 19th

O Radix Jesse: O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to

DFIs [development finance institutions] should invest taxpayers' money in the public interest, not in the interests of corporations: "In contrast to development cooperation bodies, which provide grants and loans to governments of the global south", the statement argues, "development banks invest in the private sector for a financial return.

<https://theecologist.org/2020/nov/19/polluting-investments-not-our-name>

Saturday December 12th

On Friday 13th November, the most remote inhabited island on Earth becomes one of the world's biggest sanctuaries for life above and below the waves thanks to an international partnership that is supporting the local community and protecting nature. The community of Tristan da Cunha, a small chain of islands over 6,000 miles from London in the South Atlantic has declared that almost 700,000km² of its waters will join the UK's Blue Belt of marine

protection, becoming the largest no-take zone in the Atlantic and the fourth largest on the planet. The 687,247km² Marine Protection Zone – almost three times the size of the UK – will safeguard one of the world's most pristine marine environments and protect the wealth of wildlife that lives there. The Marine Protection Zone around Tristan is the gold standard of marine protection, with no fishing or other extractive activities permitted across the whole area, also known as a 'no-take zone'.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/tristan-da-cunha-mpa/>

Sunday December 13th

Loving Father, you sent your Son to be a light to those who walk in darkness. Enable us who have brought your creation, the land, the water, the creatures and our own selves to the edge of darkness, to see the new path that we must now tread, through the power of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Monday December 14th

Flooding is known only for the ruin it brings to homes and livelihoods, but targeted flooding, to create or restore floodplain wetlands, is part of the solution to climate change. That's because the damp and low-oxygen conditions of wetlands make them very good at slowing the rate at which organic matter decomposes. Letting floodplain wetlands resume their natural function could change the dynamics of flooding too, slowing the rate of water building up and trapping sediment downstream – a problem which usually causes flooding in towns and villages. Freshwater wetlands only cover about 6% of the Earth's surface, but they hold up to 30% of all the carbon contained in soil. Wetlands are also among the Earth's most biodiverse ecosystems. Approximately 40% of the world's species make their home in them. Unfortunately, these habitats are also among the most threatened. <https://theconversation.com/flooding-can-help-resurrect-wetlands->

[and-slow-climate-change-heres-how-148939](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-and-slow-climate-change-heres-how-148939)

Tuesday December 15th

Investors are pushing major European companies to make sure the “missing” costs of climate change are properly reflected in their financial statements, a move that could wipe billions of dollars off the value of sectors from energy to aviation. The European and U.S. investors, who manage \$9 trillion in assets, have sent 36 carbon-heavy companies a document setting out how they should account for the likely impact of the 2015 Paris climate accord on their future profits. JPM Morgan Asset Management (part of JP Morgan Chase & Co), DWS, Fidelity International and M&G Investments were among 38 asset managers to back the document. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-accounting/investors-tell-european-firms-to-reveal-missing-climate-costs-in-their-accounts-idUSKBN27W0FG>

Wednesday December 16th

Tonight at 7pm is another Green Christian online event, *Electric Cars: benefits, issues, options and costs*. This workshop looks at sharing the experiences of GC members regarding electric car ownership - or not - including: the issues, highs and lows, options and costs. If you have experience with electric cars and feel you have something interesting to share, get in touch at staffan.engstrom1@gmail.com or alternatively just join the discussion on the day. Free but you need to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZ0sdu2gpzLqH9WuxMiRA4JttH2Kdha1tevC>

Over the next few days, the prayers in this year's December Prayer Guide are based on the 'O antiphons', which are ancient parts of an evening service, most common in the Catholic tradition, but can also be found in many other traditions too. They are based on seven names of Jesus, and each also refers to a prophecy from Isaiah looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. They often reference the natural world, and are a heart-cry for justice for all, fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

According to Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a definite purpose. If one starts with the last title and takes the first letter of each one - Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia - the Latin words *ero cras* are formed, meaning, Tomorrow, I will come. Therefore, the Lord Jesus, whose coming we have prepared for in Advent and