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Picture on front cover: Frozen canal in Leeds, 2010, by Emma King

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



January 2021

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” (Ephesians 6. 17-18)

“Prayer at its best opens earth to heaven.” (Selwyn Hughes)

“He showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, in the palm of my hand, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with my mind's eye and I thought 'What can this be?' and answer came: 'It is all that is made.' In this little thing I saw three truths:

The first is that God made it.

The second is that God loves it.

The third is that God looks after it.

What is he indeed that is maker and lover and keeper? I cannot find words to tell.” (Mother Julian of Norwich)

Friday January 1st

God as this new year dawns,
Let us not be blinded by the world's
darkness.

Or consumed by paralyzing fear.
Let us remember,
From darkness you bring forth light,
Out of winter's death you give birth
to life.

Let us remember,
That which is dormant will spring to
life,
That which is pruned will spout new
strength.

Let us remember,
You are the light that gives us sight,
You are the breath that gives us
life,
You are the water that quenches
thirst.

(First part of Christine Sine's New
Year prayer

<https://godspacelight.com/2014/12/31/a-prayer-for-new-year-2015/>)

Saturday January 2nd

This year sees events that will have
an impact on the global
environment. A new President of
the USA will be inaugurated later
this month, and the COP26 UN

Climate Change Conference will be
in November, in Glasgow. Pray for
these, and other large global
events, for the organisers, for the
decision makers and that they will
have a good and lasting impact.

Sunday January 3rd

Lord, we pray:
Let there be peace on earth, and let
it begin with me.
Let there be love on earth, and let it
begin in my heart.
Let there be miracles on earth, and
let them begin with my faith.
Let there be a sustainable future for
your children, and let it begin with
my actions now.

Monday January 4th

Today, lets pray for our local areas,
for our local councils and
campaigning groups who are all
trying to improve our environment.
After a difficult 2020, we pray that
they will have the resources,
finances and opportunities to do
what is needed. Let's also pray for
the national government, the UK
and Scottish Parliaments, the
Welsh Senedd and the Northern
Ireland Assembly, for wisdom and

has been credited with saving over
a billion people from starvation.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/uoc--grs121720.php

Saturday January 30th

Research has shown that this
green revolution saved over 100
million infant lives in developing
world, New research from the
University of California San Diego
shows that since modern crop
varieties were introduced in the
developing world starting in 1961,
they have substantially reduced
infant mortality, especially for male
babies and among poor
households. The study assessed
mortality rates of more 600,000
children across 37 developing
countries, revealing global diffusion
of agricultural technology reduced
infant mortality by up to 2.4 to 5.3
percentage points. This translates
to around 3 to 6 million infant
deaths averted per year by the year
2000. The global scale of the study--
the most sweeping to measure the
green revolution's impact on child
health--is critical because while the
green revolutions represents one of

the most important technological
transformations in modern history, it
did not reach all parts of the world
equally. "If the green revolution had
spread to sub-Saharan Africa like it
did to South Asia, our estimates
imply that infant mortality rates
would improve by 31 percent," said
Gordon McCord, study co-author
and associate teaching professor of
economics at UC San Diego's
School of Global Policy and
Strategy.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/uoc--grs121720.php

Sunday January 31st

Lord, you have given us this
beautiful world, yet in our greed we
are robbing future generations,
poisoning your world and
destroying many of your creatures.
Help us, Lord, to come to our
senses, to realise that we interfere
with your world at our peril, for it is
your hand, not ours, that rules the
world, for you created the universe
and we are here as your stewards.

Thursday January 28th

Metals form the backbone of today's industrialised world - from the steel in our buildings and aluminium in our cars, to the copper in our mobile phones. These same metals are also the building blocks of the green economy. As national governments put in place plans to decarbonise, global demand for metals will rise – to make the batteries, wind turbines and solar panels required to power the transition. According to World Bank estimates, demand for relevant metals will increase 200% for solar panels, 300% for wind turbines, and 1,000% for batteries in scenarios which avoid global temperatures rising between 2-4°C by 2050. As demand for metals increases, so too will expectations on how metals are produced and sourced. The industry is moving in the right direction on this front, with many metals businesses, trade associations, standards bodies and other experts all doing admirable work to respond to and act on changing expectations on sustainable production....But more needs to be done to ensure the

industry collectively rises to the challenge.

<https://www.edie.net/blog/Transparency-is-the-first-step-as-we-forge-a-more-sustainable-future-for-metals/6098841>

Friday January 29th

In the course of the past 60 years, the green revolution catalyzed the spread of modern crop varieties for staple crops such as wheat, maize and rice throughout the developing world. It also exemplifies successful U.S. international cooperation--the Rockefeller and Ford foundations were the initial funders of the green revolution in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by the governments of wealthy countries, including the United States. Developed by dozens of national agriculture programs with the support of international agricultural research centers [sic], the crops have high yield potential such as resistance to stress, pests and disease, and improved quality of the harvested material. The increase of agricultural production worldwide

clarity and for good decisions that will affect the environment, both here and abroad.

Tuesday January 5th

Digital finance refers to the integration of big data, artificial intelligence (AI), mobile platforms, blockchain and the Internet of things (IoT) in the provision of financial services. Sustainable finance refers to financial services integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria into the business or investment decisions. When combined, sustainable digital finance can take advantage of emerging technologies to analyse data, power investment decisions and grow jobs in sectors supporting a transition to a low-carbon economy. Many governments and corporations have made bold commitments to tackle climate change, labelling the next 10 years as the “decade to deliver”.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/sustainable-digital-finance-low-carbon-economy/>

Wednesday January 6th

Without the pomp and protests of an actual summit, world leaders met online on Saturday December 12 2020 – the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement – to talk about action on climate change. The challenge before them was stark: even if all nations kept their original promises in the 2015 agreement, one report warned, the world would still be on track for between three and four degrees of warming, rather than the 1.5°C publicly aspired to... So, how did it all go?... Overall, it was all pretty underwhelming given the scale of the problem. Even UK business secretary Alok Sharma conceded: “Have we done enough to put the world on track to limit warming to 1.5°C and protect people and nature from the effects of climate change? We must be honest with ourselves – the answer to that is currently no.”

<https://theconversation.com/climate-ambition-summit-showed-how-much-the-pandemic-has-cost-momentum-on-climate-change-152025>

Thursday January 7th

There's been a marked improvement in European air quality over the past decade, the European Environment Agency reports, with European Union, national, and local policies and emission cuts in key sectors making a big difference in lowering air pollution levels. According to the EEA's *Air quality in Europe — 2020* report, since 2000, emissions of key air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides, from transport have declined significantly, despite growing mobility demand and associated increase in the sector's greenhouse gas emissions. Pollutant emissions from energy supply have also seen major reductions while progress in reducing emissions from buildings and agriculture has been slow.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/environmental-policies-europe-cleaner-air-2020/>

Friday January 8th

After major drop in recent years coal demand set to rise next year and is unlikely to flatten out until

2025, warns International Energy Agency. The coal industry is likely to benefit from the global economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis next year, with demand expected to rise 2.6 per cent as governments gear up to restart their economies in 2021, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Coal demand has plummeted in recent years in the face of growing competition from cheaper and greener forms of energy, but following the pandemic some emerging and developing economies, such as China, have moved to ramp up their coal plans as part of their economic recovery plans.

<https://www.businessgreen.com/news/4025154/iea-global-coal-demand-rise-2021-immediate-decline-sight>

Saturday January 9th

Europe's banks are not integrating climate change and other sustainability concerns into their risk management systems as quickly as regulators expect, a study by BlackRock for the

thanks to a group of 8 to 21-year-olds. In September 2020, four children and two young adults from Portugal – all witness to the extreme heat and wildfires that have ravaged their home region – submitted a historic complaint to the European Court of Human Rights, the top institution dealing with human rights violations in Europe. Their complaint is against 33 European countries. In a nutshell, the plaintiffs claim that they face unprecedented risks to their lives and livelihoods and accuse the defendants of contributing to climate change and failing to take any effective measures against it...The ECHR normally considers only those complaints that were previously brought before national courts...But in this case, the plaintiffs filed their complaint directly to the ECHR without first going through the Portuguese national courts.

<https://theconversation.com/childrens-climate-change-case-at-the-european-court-of-human-rights-whats-at-stake-151417>

Wednesday January 27th

Indonesia's biofuel bid threatens more deforestation for oil palm plantations. The Indonesian government says it will need to establish new oil palm plantations a fifth the size of Borneo in order to supply its ambitious biodiesel program. The program, through which Indonesia plans to eventually phase out the use of conventional diesel, will require planting 15 million hectares (37 million acres) of oil palms, according to the energy minister. Energy and environmental experts say it's inevitable that massive swaths of forest will have to be cleared to meet this target, and have called for it to be scaled back. They also question the drive to ramp up the biodiesel program, given that Indonesia has expressed its ambitions to be a global production hub for electric vehicles — which don't run on diesel, whether conventional or bio.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/12/indonesia-biofuel-deforestation-oil-palm-plantation-b30/>

ray conservation programme. “As IUCN’s Shark Specialist Group continues to pull the curtain back on the state of sharks and rays, the crisis should be triggering alarm bells for anyone who cares about the health of our ocean. Twenty years have passed since the international community recognised the threat of overfishing through the International Plan of Action for Sharks. Yet, obviously, not nearly enough has been done to halt the overfishing that is pushing these animals to the brink of extinction.”

<https://www.panda.org/?1171816/More-than-300-species-of-sharks-and-rays-now-threatened-with-extinction>

Sunday January 24th

Save us, dear Lord, from reliance on short-term fixes and our own ingenuity as we strive to repair the damage that we have wrought to your world. While acknowledging our reason to be your most precious gift, inspire us to put our trust in you alone, who gave us your Son for our salvation.

Monday January 25th

Activist Fikile Ntshangase’s death is another case of the injustice that environmental defenders endure. The voices singing and the dancing in honour of environmental defender Fikile Ntshangase would not be silenced during a memorial streamed around the world. And her story will not be silenced. “Mam” was not just a grandmother. The 63-year-old was also an everyday hero fighting for justice as the vice-chairperson of a sub-committee of the Mfolozi Community Environmental Justice Organisation (MCEJO). A vocal anti-mining activist, she dedicated her life to stopping Tendele Coal controversial Somkhele mine. The mining company has consistently claimed it acts within the law.

<https://theecologist.org/2020/nov/05/ntshangases-voice-rings-louder-gunshots>

Tuesday January 26th

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) finally has the opportunity to take on climate change. And it is taking it seriously,

European Union showed [in mid December]. In an interim report, BlackRock said it had analysed feedback from the region’s lenders and found most were only just starting to reflect environmental, social and governance (ESG) related risks in their internal processes. A final report, which will be used by Brussels to help develop new regulations, is due by April next year. “While interviewed banks often state that they have initiatives in place to enhance the integration of ESG risks, the majority have not formalised an ESG risk integration strategy with clear timelines and responsibilities,” it said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/europe-banks-blackrock/europe-banks-have-a-way-to-go-on-sustainability-blackrock-study-idUSKBN2801ST>

Sunday January 10th

We thank you, dear Lord, for the work of scientists and technologists who are striving to find solutions to the intractable problems of our time as we struggle to meet the

challenges of climate change, feeding an ever-growing population and protecting the natural world.

Monday January 11th

BP, Glencore and Rolls-Royce are among eight FTSE 100 companies who have refused to comply with investor demands to disclose their carbon dioxide emissions, as the UK government prepares to compel firms to report their climate impact. The other laggards who have not reported data included Melrose, the engineering company, and B&M, the fast-growing discount retailer. Meal delivery app Just Eat Takeaway and enterprise software company Aveva also failed to provide any data. A Just Eat Takeaway spokeswoman said the company was still working out its carbon footprint after completing its merger. Homeserve, the home repairs company, said it planned to report for the first time in 2021.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/dec/13/climate-crisis-ftse-giants-fail-to-disclose-their-carbon-footprint>

Tuesday January 12th

Sri Lanka has sent back the first batch of hundreds of containers of waste to the UK., becoming the latest nation in the Global South to push back against abuses of a worldwide recycling framework by exporters in the West. An initial consignment of 21 containers arrived back in the UK., the country of origin, in late November, according to the ship-tracking data. There are still another 242 containers waiting to be shipped back, according to Sri Lanka Customs. Sri Lanka, like many other countries in the Global South, routinely imports waste from the West to recycle. The country is also a party to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which means exporters must obtain its consent to send medical or other biohazardous waste. But the exporters behind the containers in question appeared to have flouted that rule by packing their containers with suspected medical waste, according to a customs inspection in July 2019.

<https://www.eco-business.com/news/sri-lanka-returns-first-batch-of-imported-waste-from-the-uk/>

Wednesday January 13th

Greenhouse gas emissions reached a new high last year, putting the world on track for an average temperature rise of 3 degrees Celsius, a U.N. report showed [in early December]. The report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ... follows a year of sobering weather extremes, including rapid ice loss in the Arctic as well as record heat waves and wildfires in Siberia and the U.S. West... The annual “emissions gap” report measures the gap between anticipated emissions and those consistent with limiting the global temperature rise this century as agreed in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Under the global climate pact, nations have committed to a long-term goal of limiting the average temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit it even further

everything back to what it was 50 years ago and doing [it] so much faster than we could have imagined. If the elephants continue to stay here in these numbers, this place will look totally different in just a few years.”

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/12/herd-opportunity-hundreds-of-elephants-return-to-drcs-virunga/>

Friday January 22nd

In good news that has scientists excited, bowhead whale populations are nearing pre-commercial whaling numbers in U.S. waters. According to a recent National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report card on the species, bowhead whales are the true Arctic baleen whale species and the only one that lives in the cold waters year-round. In the 1700s, they were targeted for their oil, blubber and baleen, or whalebone. Because they're slow-moving and large, they made easy targets and were nearly hunted to extinction by the start of the 20th century. According to NOAA, the cessation of whaling, improved

management and the general inaccessibility of their habitats helped several populations rebound, including the U.S. one off the coast of Alaska.

<https://www.ecowatch.com/bowhead-whale-recovery-arctic-2649537801.html?rebellitem=1#rebellitem1>

Saturday January 23rd

New assessments by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) show 316 chondrichthyan species – sharks, rays and skates, and chimaeras – are now threatened with extinction... Among them are four hammerhead shark species (*Sphyrna* family) and four species of angel shark (*Squatina* family) that are endangered or critically endangered, making them some of the most threatened shark families, as well as the giant manta ray (*Mobula birostris*), which is now facing a very high risk of extinction. “These findings are sadly predictable,” said Dr. Andy Cornish, Leader of Sharks: Restoring the Balance, WWF’s global shark and

between NO_x (nitrogen oxide) and O₃. The main reason is the change in the nitrogen dioxide levels but the warm sunny weather in April and May also increased the ozone level.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/uoy-pds121820.php

Wednesday January 20th

MPs, trade bodies and the UN's Environment Programme are urging banks to unify their response to the net-zero transition ahead of COP26 next November and commit to time-bound phase-outs for fossil fuel finance. The call to action is being made by Bankers for Net-Zero – an initiative convened by the APPG (All-party Parliamentary Group) on Fair Business Banking, along with Volans and Re:Pattern. Bankers for Net Zero was formed shortly after the UK set its net-zero target in law and was confirmed as COP26 co-host along with Italy. Now, members have developed a commitment framework which is hoped to garner the support of all major banks ahead of the summit in November 2021. The commitment

includes a requirement for signatories to “state the date” to end all financing for fossil fuels and for companies with links to deforestation.

<https://www.edie.net/news/7/Banks-pressured-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels-and-deforesters-ahead-of-COP26/>

Thursday January 21st

A group of about 580 savanna elephants recently returned to Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo after crossing over from Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda. The reappearance of the elephants brings hope to a park that's been beset with civil unrest, violence, and poaching for decades. In May, Virunga National Park closed due to the spread of COVID-19, which caused serious financial damage to the park. “Now not only are we seeing the elephants, which is an unbelievable sight from above, but we're noticing the impact of such a big herd on the park,” [anti-poaching pilot Anthony] Caere said in a statement. “They're restoring

to 1.5C. Emissions have, however, grown by an average 1.4 percent per year since 2010, with a steeper increase of 2.6 percent last year due, partly due to a large increase in forest fires.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/climate-change-emissions/global-emissions-hit-new-high-on-track-for-increase-of-3-degrees-celsius-idUSKBN28J16B>

Thursday January 14th

The Chinese island province of Hainan is putting a new plan in place to keep its beaches clean. Cities like Sanya and Haikou are ground zero for an ambitious new plastic pollution control plan that began in August when single-use plastic items were banned from sale in the area. Plastic polymer food containers, forks, drink cups, knives, straws, plastic bags, packaging bags, and other items that are not biodegradable are no longer allowed to be sold at major establishments like supermarkets, hospitals, government and state-owned buildings like schools, and tourist attractions. The ban plan

was announced in February, when the Chinese government decided that Hainan, the smallest province in the country, would be the site of a new “national ecological civilization pilot zone,” and that the success or failure of the plastic ban would inform future policies across the country.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/china-hainan-plastic-ban/>

Friday January 15th

Despite nations investing in retrofitting and businesses looking to make energy savings amid lockdown restrictions, global progress on energy efficiency has slowed in 2020, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). The Agency had warned in 2019 that the global pace of progress in reducing primary energy intensity – its main metric to track energy efficiency – was insufficient to meet climate targets. Now, in its ‘Energy Efficiency 2020’ report, it has recorded the poorest rate of improvement in primary energy intensity since 2010. Efficiency is likely to be less than 1% higher at

the end of December than it was a year ago. The report predicts that investment in energy efficiency worldwide is likely to be down 9% in 2020, on a year-on-year basis. While many governments have upped investments in energy-efficient buildings, through programmes like the UK's Green Homes Grant and the EU's Green Renovation Wave, other nations have chosen not to, and the benefits of these schemes aren't likely to come to fruition until 2021 or 2022.

[https://www.edie.net/news/6/IEA--Energy-efficiency-improvements-for-2020--the-weakest-in-a-decade-/
/](https://www.edie.net/news/6/IEA--Energy-efficiency-improvements-for-2020--the-weakest-in-a-decade-/)

Saturday January 16th

The idea of a natural world that dwarfed humanity and its creations long persisted, even into modern times... Now a new study in Nature by a team of scientists from the Weizmann Institute in Israel upends that perspective. Our constructions have now – indeed, spookily, just this year – attained the same mass as that of all living organisms on

Earth. A couple of years ago they worked out the first part of the equation, the mass of all life on Earth – including that of all the fish in the sea, microbes in the soil, trees on land, birds in the air and much more besides. Earth's biosphere now weighs a little less than 1.2 trillion tonnes (of dry mass, not counting water), trees on land making up most of it... The stuff we build totted up to something like 35 billion tonnes in the year 1900, rising to be roughly double that by the middle of the 20th century... In the past 20 years it has doubled again, to be equivalent to, this year, the mass of all living things.

<https://theconversation.com/anthropocene-human-made-materials-now-weigh-as-much-as-all-living-biomass-say-scientists-151721>

Sunday January 17th

We thank you, Lord, for the women and men who have given their lives to the protection of your beautiful world. We pray that their labour and sacrifices may not be in vain, but that the torch they lit may be carried by the rest of us as long as it takes

to free your world from pollution, degradation and the bitter harvest of human greed.

Monday January 18th

Efforts to tackle gender inequality can play a key role in how countries adapt to the growing risks posed by climate change, a new study says. There is a growing body of evidence showing that women are generally more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change than their male counterparts. Now new research, published in Nature Communications, shows that empowering women through improved healthcare, education, and representation in government could help societies adapt more quickly and easily to the impacts of a changing climate. At present, more than 70% of girls experience high levels of gender inequality – predominantly in developing countries – the study says. However, it finds that if society can follow a pathway of sustainable development in the coming decades, progress towards achieving gender equality could see

this number could drop below 25% by 2030.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/tackling-gender-inequality-is-crucial-for-climate-adaptation>

Tuesday January 19th

Less traffic on the roads during the first lockdown led to a reduction in air pollution but may have caused potentially damaging surface ozone levels to rise, a new study has revealed. The study - led by the University of York - shows levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) down on average across the UK by 42 per cent, but surface ozone (O₃) increased by 11 per cent on average. Surface, or ground-level ozone, can trigger a variety of health problems, particularly for children, the elderly, and people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma. Scientists believe our warm and sunny spring weather may have been a contributing factor. Professor James Lee from the Department of Chemistry and the National Centre for Atmospheric Science said "The problem is being created by the change in chemistry