

## Additional Prayers

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Website: [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk)

Picture on front cover: Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) by J.A.

Christian Ecology Link Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales. Registered address: 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA21 3ER. Company Registration No. 2445198 Registered Charity No. 328744. tel: +44 (0) 1524 36241 [info@christian-ecology.org.uk](mailto:info@christian-ecology.org.uk)

# Prayer guide for the care of creation



## April 2009

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3. 16-17)

(The Greek for “world” in this context is “Cosmos”)

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up ... ‘Listen to what the unjust judge says: And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.’ (Luke. 18. 1-8)

“ . . . and if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 18.19)

### Wednesday 1st April.

On this "Fossil Fools Day" CEL supporters are joining others assembling at 12.30 in London for two days of action against the carbon trading culture which threatens to dominate climate talks up to Copenhagen next December.

"First the city traders speculated with our homes, jobs and money – with disastrous results. Now they are speculating with our climate and

the very future of life on earth. By creating a system of carbon pollution licences, fossil fuel companies and trading firms have found a way to keep on churning out global warming gases while reaping huge windfall profits. Control is being handed to the same people and systems that caused the financial collapse. The workable and fair alternatives are not getting a look-in." Christians will be supporting the action by prayer and presence.

Contacts:

[ruth@sjarman.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:ruth@sjarman.wanadoo.co.uk) or ring 01252 849904 or 07970 907784.

### Thursday 2nd April

The Copenhagen International Scientific Congress on Climate Change, with delegates from 80

countries, ended with six key messages:

The worst-case IPCC scenario (or even worse) is now being realised. The climate system is already moving beyond the natural variability within which our society developed.

Recent observations show that societies are highly vulnerable to even modest levels of climate change, with poor countries and communities particularly at risk

Delay in initiating effective action significantly increases the long-term social and economic costs of adaptation and mitigation.

An effective, well-funded adaptation safety net is required for the people least capable of coping with climate change impacts.

There is no excuse for inaction. A wide range of benefits flow from a concerted effort to alter our energy economy, including sustainable energy job growth, reductions in health and economic costs of climate change and the restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services.

We need to reduce inertia in social and economic systems, build on growing public desire for governments to act on climate change, remove

[www.thanetearth.com](http://www.thanetearth.com) or ring Fresca Group on 01892 832595.

### Wednesday 29th April

The Government currently has over 100 policies that impact on carbon emissions but, in the words of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee, "a confusing framework that cannot be said to promote effective action on climate change."

The scheme of "Tradable Energy Quotas" (TEQs) devised by David Fleming aims to do just that. Each individual is given a free entitlement of electronic TEQs units, while organisations including the government would have to buy their units at auctions. The total number of units corresponds to the national carbon budget, which decreases year on year. Each unit allows the purchase of a set quantity of fuel or electricity according to its carbon intensity. Surplus units can be traded, and the proceeds can be used for local environmental solutions or in any way desired by the seller.

### Thursday 30th April

Energy use is currently a form of "rationing by price" (ie the richest get whatever is in short supply), so creating massive inequity. The purpose of TEQs is to share out fairly our shrinking energy/carbon budget, while allowing maximum freedom of choice over energy use. TEQs encourage constructive interaction between households, businesses, local authorities, transport providers etc. The scheme is explicitly designed to stimulate a common purpose. We cannot go on blaming the government or industry without taking personal responsibility. For more information visit [www.teqs.net](http://www.teqs.net) or read Shaun Chamberlin's new book "The Transition Timeline" (Green Books)

Sources: The Ecologist  
New Scientist  
Positive News  
Resurgence  
[www.edie.net](http://www.edie.net)

## Saturday 25th April

"The Bible and Ecology: Why Christians Care for the Earth" is the title of today's ecumenical conference at St. Mary's Church, Barcombe near Lewes with main speakers Dr Edward Echlin, Revd Keith Innes and Joyce Dent from Andover CEL group. Enquiries and bookings to Helen Swyer [at helen.swyer@diochi.org.uk](mailto:helen.swyer@diochi.org.uk) or ring her on 01273 421021. Cost £3, concessions £1.50. Bring lunch.

## Sunday 26th April

Lord of creation, the life we possess is your gift. Teach us to value it and to use it wisely and responsibly, for we have but one life to live, one life in which to serve your Church, to advance your Kingdom and to be of help to others. Show us your purposes for our life and fire us to act. (Frank Colquhoun)

## Monday 27th April

Andrew Simms in a Schumacher lecture points out that small islands often survive extreme climates, economic isolation and natural limits by developing resilient local economies based on sharing and co-

operation, not unlimited growth fed by individualistic beggar-thy-neighbour competition. The Transition Town movement has been called Britain's fastest-growing social experiment as it seeks to harness local talents in a variety of ways to release us from oil dependency, develop local resilience and strengthen local economies. For details, go to:

[www.transitiontowns.org.uk](http://www.transitiontowns.org.uk)

## Tuesday 28th April

Importing out-of-season fruit & vegetables from warmer countries costs much in food miles and carbon emissions. Thanet Earth, when finished next year, will be Britain's biggest glasshouse complex, spanning 220 acres and increasing UK salad production by 15%. Seven power stations, using Combined Heat & Power, besides keeping the seven huge greenhouses warm, will generate enough electricity to supply 50,000 homes. The CO2 emitted on-site will be pumped back into the greenhouses to help the plants grow. Peppers and cucumbers will be picked continuously from February to October. Eight varieties of tomatoes will be harvested every day throughout the year. Website:

subsidies, reduce the influence of vested interests that increase emissions and reduce resilience, enable innovative leadership in government, the private and civil society, and engage society in the transition to practices that foster sustainability.

## Friday 3rd April

Since the Copenhagen meetings, there have been the following announcements:

The Government has prematurely closed its low-carbon building programme which gave grants for renewable energies including wind, solar and biomass;

Shell plans no further investment in wind, solar and hydropower, but will continue to invest in biofuels that do not use food-based crops;

A survey by HSBC puts Britain near the bottom of the international league for the proportion of its economic rescue package devoted to green measures, but right at the top of the league for the proportion of its GDP spent on bailing out banks;

The European Commission has put out to public auction 86 environmental

projects ranging from protecting biodiversity to combating desertification, "because of budgetary constraints".

"Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad" said the Greeks. See also the book "Collapse" by Jared Diamond.

## Saturday 4th April

"Greening Faiths" is the title of a conference today at The Warehouse, Cumberland Road, Reading, which will draw together local people of many different faiths to highlight the environmental crisis and to suggest how faith communities can work together to address it. Speakers include a Sikh, a Muslim, a Hindu and the Oxford Diocese Environmental Adviser Rev. Ian James. To book a place, email [jane@strongertogether.co.uk](mailto:jane@strongertogether.co.uk) or ring 0118 958 4849.

## Sunday 5th April

Father, we thank you for raising up scientists, prophets and teachers to give us clear warning of the dangers we face if we fail to stop consuming the resources that, once gone, are

gone for ever. Turn us away from our worship of money and self-gratification. Help us to remember what your dear Son suffered on the Cross to save us from our sins. May Christians everywhere take up our crosses and follow Him. Amen.

### Monday 6th April

Drs. Chris Jones and Vicky Pope of the Met Office Hadley Centre told the Copenhagen conference of scientists that up to 40% of the Amazon rainforest will be lost if temperature rises are restricted to 20C, which most climatologists regard as the least that can be expected by 2050. A 40 rise, which they regard as the most likely increase this century unless greenhouse gases are greatly reduced, would kill off 85% of the forest. This would cause irreversible damage to global weather patterns.

### Tuesday 7th April

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and Natural England, both key Government advisory bodies, argue that 10% of the £10 billion budget for road building should be re-allocated towards 40 new green parks, half a

million street trees, 1.5 million sq. metres of green roofs and 1,000 miles of safe greenways for cyclists and pedestrians. "This change of emphasis would help recovery from the economic recession while helping to tackle carbon emissions – with the added benefit of improving quality of life for those living in our towns and cities."

### Wednesday 8th April

In the past 5 years, London councils alone have chopped down almost 40,000 street trees. Healthy mature trees are being felled by risk-averse insurers and councils on the mere suspicion that they may affect nearby properties through subsidence, or fall on people. Yet a London Assembly report found that only 1% of tree removals were justified. Despite the key role that trees play in combating climate change and creating pleasant environments, they are constantly under threat. Commented Polly Higgins of the consultancy EnAct International: "If Nature is a hindrance, we get rid of it, destroy it. If it has utility, we abuse it. We do not accept the killing of humans, but what of the life-support systems of the earth?"

on wood. Cooking demonstrations help to spread the message. For more details visit: [www.bvco.org.uk](http://www.bvco.org.uk)

### Wednesday 22nd April

Government figures have revealed that there is a huge stockpile of ozone-depleting CFCs and HCFCs contained in building insulation installed before 2004, with a global-warming potential of 340 million tonnes of CO2 – more than half the total UK emissions per year. DEFRA has commissioned research on the problem, but the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency says that no-one is taking the problem seriously. It is disturbing to note that this type of insulation continued in use long after the dangers of CFCs were highlighted by scientists. Is there a parallel with today's lack of response to the scientific evidence that has emerged from the recent Copenhagen conference?

### Thursday 23rd April

DIY Streets is a project aiming to develop low-cost ways of reclaiming the streets for local communities – planting trees, altering pavements and painting roads – anything to slow

down the cars. Eleven roads were selected for the pilot study which was funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. Already the results can be measured in reduced pollution and increased physical activity, particularly among children who can play outside more safely. Neighbours stop to say hello more often! Peter Lipman of Sustrans hopes these results will encourage others nationwide. See [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

### Friday 24th April

UK customers spend £712 million a year on illegal wood products - £11.96 per person. Despite the eco-labelling and certification schemes, every weekend people buy tables, chairs, cabinets and blinds made from illegally-logged timber linked, in many cases, to conflict, corruption and abuse of human rights. Snooker tables made of ramin (listed by CITES as vulnerable), floor tiles of merbau (linked to serious ecological abuses), luxury yacht decking of Burmese teak – all these are advertised on websites. If consumers can say no to factory-farmed chicken or sweatshop-produced clothing, surely they can say no to forest products that endanger the very survival of our planet.

Other councils are seeking similar ways of by-passing the indifference, or worse, of traditional high street banks. For details of the Birmingham scheme visit: [www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk) or ring Birmingham City Council on 0121 303 1111.

### Sunday 19th April

O God of earth and altar,  
Bow down and hear our cry,  
Our earthly leaders falter,  
Our people drift and die.  
The walls of gold entomb us,  
The swords of scorn divide;  
Take not thy thunder from us,  
But take away our pride.

G.K. Chesterton

### Monday 20th April

Farmed salmon are devastating wild fish stocks. It requires 3-4 tonnes of wild fish to make pelleted feed to produce 1 tonne of salmon. Jimmie Hepburn of Aquavision is rearing carp on his Devon farm. "People think I'm crazy" he says "because I farm a fish that isn't even eaten in the UK." Carp will eat almost anything. They don't

need super-clean water (unlike salmon), they don't produce much pollution and they don't need as much food. Feeding time involves shovelling manure into the ponds from local organic farms, so fertilising the plants and algae that provide their natural food. This is supplemented with organic grain and topped up with mealworms bred using wheat bran and scraps from a local veggie box scheme. Aquavision is a consultancy which encourages people to raise fish as food in their back gardens or garages, using ponds and tanks. For details go to:

[www.aquavisiononline.com](http://www.aquavisiononline.com)

### Tuesday 21st April

Carbon offsetting has come in for much criticism, but some of its projects bring real benefits. In the dry south-west of Madagascar, the wood needed for cooking resulted in the deforestation of 500 hectares of local forest a year. Now, new solar and fuel-efficient stoves funded by donations to Blue Ventures Carbon Offsetting are reducing fuel consumption by 50-60%, cutting down on the indoor air pollution responsible for 1.6 million deaths a year in developing countries and saving the villagers the money spent

Could it be that the razing of the Amazon is in essence arboricide of the highest order?"

### Thursday 9th April

Article 1 of the new Rights for Nature chapter of the constitution of Ecuador reads: "Nature . . . has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and processes. Every person, community or nationality will be able to demand recognition of rights for Nature before the public bodies." This gives everyone the legal power to enforce the right of natural ecosystems to exist and flourish and to require governments to remedy any violations. Is it not time, asks Polly Higgins, to demand a Universal Declaration of Planetary Rights as a first step towards protecting nature against errant and selfish human behaviour? For more details of the proposal, visit: [www.treeshaverightstoo.com](http://www.treeshaverightstoo.com)

### Friday 10th April Good Friday

Lord Jesus, as we dwell on your great love for humankind in treading the path of the Cross for our sakes, help us to take up our own crosses in the struggle to protect your beautiful

world. Give us strength of purpose and the courage to go on, even when the path ahead seems beset with difficulties.

### Saturday 11th April

The 1997 UN Watercourses Convention provided a framework for co-operative management of rivers, lakes, wetlands and aquifers that crossed or formed international boundaries, but only 16 nations have ratified it, so making it ineffective. Last month's World Water Forum at Istanbul secured pledges of support from another 14 nations – not enough to bring the Convention into force. The President of Green Cross International said: "As climate change further exacerbates the water crisis, the difficulties and cost of expanding and sustaining water security will rise – potentially very steeply. The risks from failing to act include economic instability, loss of quality of life, reversal of gains in poverty reduction, more frequent disasters and ecological degradation. Therefore we are calling for a swift ratification of the Convention."

## Sunday 12th April Easter Day

Loving Father, give to us all such a vision of Christ's risen glory that we too may trust in his power – that we too may know that nothing can separate us from your loving purposes or finally defeat your will.

So may we rise up from all our distress and despair and take heart again; walk with Christ, the companion of our souls, to whatever lies in store for us, to find at last that faith has its own reward, that we have not missed our way, that the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which seemed lost for ever.

We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Leslie Weatherhead)

## Monday 13th April

A new EU report on the interrelations between soil and climate change declares that properly-managed soils can absorb enormous quantities of carbon from the atmosphere, buying us valuable time to reduce emissions and move towards sustainability. Carbon is lost from soils when grasslands and forests are converted to croplands. Almost 50% of carbon in European soils is sequestered in the peat bogs of Sweden, Finland, Britain

and Ireland, but peatlands equivalent to half of France have already been lost to agriculture, forestry, urbanisation and erosion. Methods of minimising carbon losses include keeping soils covered with permanent vegetation and less intrusive ploughing and use of machinery. These are precisely the practices highlighted in the BBC2 documentary "A Farm for the Future".

## Tuesday 14th April

The Chartered Institute of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM) has questioned Government plans for new "eco-towns" that would also necessitate new transport infrastructure and other basic services. "The UK already has potential eco-towns including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, which have settled and sustainable communities with schools, hospitals and transport." CIWEM believes that a commitment of funding and retro-fitting would make these cities carbon-neutral. "What we face is not a housing crisis per se, but an unsustainably large population living on a small island, using resources at a far greater rate than can be replenished."

## Wednesday 15th April

Senior Government food adviser Professor Tim Lang, in a new book called "Food Policy" aims to help consumers navigate the minefield of shopping for nutritious, ethical and sustainable foods. He believes that the threat to our food from its water footprint is as great as the threat from its carbon footprint. "Huge amounts of water are used as irrigation or fed directly to animals. It is a nightmare. There is immense water stress across huge swathes of the globe." According to WWF, a cup of coffee uses up to 140 litres of water to produce, a pint of milk 550 litres (equal to six full baths) and a hamburger 1,800 litres. More sustainable products include tea, home-grown apples and British seafood such as oysters.

## Thursday 16th April

Bristol University scientists at the Copenhagen conference said that the acidification of our oceans caused by CO2 emissions was threatening the shellfish that form a key link in the marine food chain. They compared the current acidification rate with a giant prehistoric release of greenhouse

gases that caused widespread extinction of deepwater species. The conference also heard that sea levels could rise twice as fast as previously predicted. Coastal areas that are home to one-tenth of the world's population are likely to be flooded.

## Friday 17th April

UK AWARE is the title of Britain's only green lifestyle exhibition, which is open today and tomorrow at London' Olympia. For those seeking a more sustainable lifestyle, this could be the place to find information, advice and (especially for the kids) entertainment. For more information go to: [www.ukaware.org](http://www.ukaware.org)

## Saturday 18th April

As a result of the refusal of many high street banks to supply credit, Birmingham City Council has set up a municipal bank to offer loans, from a fund of £200 million, to businesses and other investors in the city, while investigating ways to stabilise the mortgage market. Essex County Council plans to create a £50 million community bank, pooling funds from the local police and health authorities as well as from the Council itself.