
Prayer guide for the care of creation



March 2012

“How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures . . . May the Lord rejoice in his works!

(Psalm 104.24, 31)

“He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. He will defend the afflicted among the people, and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor.”

(Psalm 72. 2-4)

“God could do his work on earth without us, but he chooses not to because he wants it to be a team effort. Does that mean that if you and I don’t make ourselves available to him, then some things might just not get done?
I wonder.”

(Selwyn Hughes)



Thursday 1st March

This June world leaders will meet at Rio for an Earth Summit which will define the world's response for years to come to the twin challenges of climate change and resource depletion. To secure the earth's future we need laws to protect it. What we need above all is an international crime of Ecocide. On St. Valentine's Day the Earth Community Trust launched a campaign of "Love Letters to the Earth" to enable us all to join in the campaign to press world leaders to create new laws to protect the earth.

www.eradicatingecocide.com and
www.lovelettertotheearth.com

Friday 2nd March

The Soil Association annual conference takes place today at the RHS Halls, London on the two themes of "Facing the Future: exploring scientific and technical progress in organic and low-carbon farming" and "Good Food for All: debating food, public health and social justice". According to Oliver Schutter of the FAO: "Keeping blindly on the track of industrial agriculture is clearly unsustainable." The conference explores the changes needed in food, farming, public health and nutrition.

Tickets £90 for SA members, £120 for others. See www.soilassociation.org

Saturday 3rd March

"Water: Global Challenges for the 21st century" is the title of a Christian conference today at Redcliffe College, Gloucester in partnership with the John Ray Initiative and Tearfund. In a world where water resources increasingly become a trigger point for conflict, how should Christians engage in the challenges of development, sanitation, climate change and political and social unrest? What does the Bible have to say? What is our Christian mandate in caring for global neighbours at the sharp end of water-related problems? What might the solutions be? For more details, go to: www.redcliffe.org/environment-conference-2012
Cost: £32 including lunch and refreshments.

Sunday 4th March

Lord, we lift into your hands the witness of Christian thinkers, teachers, scientists and communicators on the environment and your created world. We thank you for those who have created beauty, fruitfulness and order. We pray for our generation, that we

there will be an increasing demand for recycled carpet waste.

Saturday 31st March

Earth Hour takes place today at 8.30 p.m. when millions of people around the world turn off their lights for one hour. Earth Hour is about people coming together to celebrate this wonderful planet that we all share and to focus on ways in which we might help in protecting it. To find how to get involved, go to: www.earthhour.org

Sources:

"The Third Industrial Revolution" by Jeremy Rifkin
CIWEM Business News
Green Futures
Living Earth
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by email (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Picture on front cover: Magnolia Star Wars taken at Caerhays Castle in 2006, by Philip Clarkson Webb

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Food production and consumption accounts for about one-third of EU greenhouse gas emissions while one-third of cancer and cardiovascular diseases are caused by poor nutrition. “It’s not enough just to tell people to choose healthier foods or reduce their carbon footprint. What we need is a complete re-engineering of the food system. The LiveWell project brings together people from all segments of the food chain, from production to retailing to consumption. Everyone has a part to play in supporting a healthier, sustainable diet.”

Wednesday 28th March

A new report from DEFRA has revealed that 58.8% of all household waste is not being recycled. This 14 million tonne waste mountain, equivalent to 264 kg. per person, contains high calorific material that can be turned into Refuse-derived or Solid Recovered Fuel by tried and tested technologies.

The Solid Recovered Fuel process bales the fuel, wraps it in plastic film to keep out the moisture and binds it with plastic baling wire. A Macpresse machine can bale and wrap 45 bales an hour, each bale weighing 1.4 tonnes on average. SRF can help

save on use of fossil fuels and so reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Thursday 29th March

The European Commission looks likely to approve a Europe-wide ban on plastic carrier bags, but some believe that a ban could do more harm than good. Environmental consultant Julia Hales would prefer a charging structure, as practised in Wales.

“People may think that paper bags are better, but they take as much oil to make as plastic bags, they are 6 times heavier and take up 10 times more space. Sarah Widdowson of AEA comments: “If plastic bags are banned, what will people use as bin liners? And what are the alternatives? Cloth bags need to be used many times before they have a lower environmental impact – it’s far from black and white.”

Friday 30th March

Britain’s first carpet recycling plant has been opened at Upton in the Wirral and will serve the North and Midlands. All reprocessed materials will be used in the cement and asphalt industries and the operators, Econpro WDS, say they are permitted use bitumen-backed carpet tiles for the construction sector. As landfill costs are set to rise,

may hand on to our successors a world better for our having lived in it.

Monday 5th March

Hardly a day passes without some public figure declaring that to solve our economic problems we need more growth – ignoring the fact that the problems were caused by excessive growth, when banks grew too big to fail. So they had to be bailed out with public money, and the consequences of that we see in the social unrest spreading across Europe. According to Nick Reeves of CIWEM “The human economy has become so big that it has altered the atmospheric composition of the planet, triggered dangerous climate change and precipitated mass extinctions . . . While politicians believe that ‘big’ means more power and wealth, they will have to face the fact that whatever grows beyond limits begins to suffer from the irrepressible problem of unmanageable proportions.”

Tuesday 5th March

Reeves wonders whether the green movement as exemplified in WWF, FoE and Greenpeace has lost its way. Their response to humanity’s impact on the environment is that we should reduce consumption and move away

from oil, meat and imported foods. Fair enough.

“Yet most of the world is trying to increase its consumption of resources, while we in the West import ever more cheap goods from emerging economies like China and India. So tackling consumption is only part of the solution.

Population times Consumption equals Impact. So green NGOs should call for smaller families everywhere and for fully-funded family planning. To do so is in the interests of us all, of future generations and of biodiversity. It is the easiest, cheapest and most effective contribution to a sustainable world.”

Wednesday 7th March

In “The Meat Crisis” edited by Joyce d’Silva and John Webster the evidence is set out for animal-produced methane-fuelled climate change. UK production of meat and dairy products gives rise to 60 million tonnes a year of CO2 equivalent emissions amounting to 8% of UK consumption-attributed greenhouse gas emissions. The authors present the issues of animal welfare and the human health consequence of intensive livestock production, and outline the policies needed to reduce

emissions. Jonathon Porritt in the final chapter recommends a new advisory science body which puts human health at the top of its agenda.

Thursday 8th March

A new Anglo-French agreement has paved the way for the construction of more pressurised water nuclear reactors despite evidence from the Fukushima disaster that the escape of pressurised water poses unacceptable risks.

Thorium-fuelled molten salt reactors are being developed by the Chinese Academy of Sciences which operate at atmospheric pressure, so that if the molten fuel contents spill out, the reactor becomes inactive. This technology was presented at the House of Lords last year by the Weinberg Foundation. Its advantages include:

- 1) Thorium is easier to obtain than uranium, available for thousands of years and useable without isotope separation and enrichment;
- 2) The fuel is molten rather than solid, so neutron damage is minimal, there is little waste and fewer disposal problems;
- 3) There is little risk of nuclear proliferation, while thorium

reactors can be used on a small scale if needed.

Friday 9th March

A central feature of the "Third Industrial Revolution" described by Jeremy Rifkin in his book of that name is the move towards distributed energy. He asks: "Does the US commit itself to a centralised supergrid and a one-way flow of renewable energy to end users, or does it move towards a distributed smart grid that allows thousands of local communities to generate their own energy and distribute electricity to a national power grid?" The same question faces all developed nations in the wake of the Fukushima disaster and the increasing risk of nuclear proliferation.

Saturday 10th March

"Treasures in the Field – Spiritual Capital and Sustainable Living" is the title of today's CEL conference taking place from 11 to 5 at St. Michael's Church, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8PD. The main speakers are Jonathon Porritt and Professor Tim Gorringe with workshops on economics, eco-activism, consumerism, farming and food, low-carbon living and sustainability through democracy. Cost £15, members £10. For enquiries

rainfall would be a good start to safeguarding this precious resource for the future."

Saturday 24th March

LOAF stands for food Locally-sourced, Organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded. CEL is asking churches to follow these principles when planning any communal meal, such as at a Harvest Festival, Alpha supper or a picnic on Environment Sunday. LOAF placemats can be downloaded at the CEL website. Local food in your area can be found at www.bigbarn.co.uk, organic food at www.gardenorganic.org.uk, animal-friendly food at www.ciwf.org.uk and fairly-traded products at www.traidcraft.co.uk

Sunday 25th March

Lord, you know how often we fail as caretakers for your creation. Show us how to protect, not just the plants and animals, but the soil, air and water by which we live, so that there can be no excuse for those who exploit or pollute them for their own profit or convenience. Help us to cherish these necessities for our survival, and guide those in authority to ensure that the human spirit is not starved in pursuit of material comfort and wealth.

Monday 26th March

"Why should food manufacturers take loss of biodiversity seriously?" asks Andrew Kuyk of the Food and Drink Federation.

His answer: "Because we rely on the interaction of myriads of plants, animals and micro-organisms. 'Ecosystem services' (pollination, water purification and storage of CO2) are not within our capabilities. Without them our food system becomes less diverse and less resilient. They provide a genetic reserve which we will need to draw on to cope with the challenges of a changing climate. Furthermore we have no way of knowing which species we can 'afford' to squander, or what the unintended consequences might be of allowing small but vital parts of larger systems to be lost. In the words of John Mitchell "You don't know what you've got until it's gone."

Tuesday 27th March

WWF and Friends of Europe have launched a project called "LiveWell for low impact living in Europe" (LIFE) to define a healthy and sustainable diet which both improves the health of Europe's citizens and helps cut greenhouse gas emissions.

energy potential. Alongside energy saving measures, marine renewables will have a critical role to play in reducing our climate emissions as we phase out polluting fossil fuels and nuclear power.”

Wednesday 21st March

The Energy Technologies Institute has announced a £25 million demonstration of a platform for offshore floating wind turbines which could open up new areas for wind power and bring down the costs of electricity generation. The so-called Wave Hub where the test will be sited is a grid-connected socket on the seabed off the north Cornwall coast. ETI said: “We will be working with Wave Hub to see if it could host the offshore floating platform. We shall need local marine engineering skills and support facilities as well as the right water and wind conditions.”

Thursday 22nd March

Today is UN World Water Day when people everywhere focus on the crucial importance of freshwater to all living creation and the need to manage it sustainably. The Ecumenical Water Network has published a kit of bible studies,

worship resources and activities available on its website:

www.water.oi Koumene.org

Posters and other resources are available at:

www.unweather.org/worldwaterday/campaign.html

Friday 23rd March.

The South-East and parts of the Midlands are now officially in drought, as a result of two successive dry winters. Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman has said: “It is not just the responsibility of government, water companies and businesses to act against drought. We are asking for the help of everyone by urging them to use less water and to start now.”

Water companies at high risk of drought have pledged to act to reduce water wastage and increase leakage detection as well as engage their customers to use water wisely. The Institution of Civil Engineers

comments: “If we are to avoid the spectre of drought becoming an annual event, we must focus on preventative measures before it gets to drought stage. Introducing demand management measures, improving interconnectivity between water companies and better and more imaginative ways of storing winter

ring 0845 459 8460 or email:

bookings@christian-ecology.org.uk

Sunday 11th March

O God, who set before us the great hope that your Kingdom shall come on earth and taught us to pray for its coming: give us grace to discern the signs of its dawning and to work for the perfect day when the whole world shall reflect your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Percy Dearmer)

Monday 12th March

Today sees the launch of Climate Week, which aims to showcase the positive steps being taken to combat climate change and to inspire many more. So far 922 events are registered on the website www.climateweek.com including school assemblies and workshops, workshops for accountants and financial advisers, workshops for farmers and landowners and pub quizzes.

Tuesday 13th March

Jeremy Rifkin believes that, for younger people, politics is less about right versus left and more about centralised and authoritarian versus distributed and collaborative. “The generations where sociability has

been largely formed by the Internet are more likely to divide into those who use top-down, enclosed and proprietary thinking and those who use lateral, transparent and open thinking.” He notes that 80% of new employment in the EU has been generated in small firms of less than 250 employees. “If these businesses collaborate in embedded commercial networks across continents, the long-term multiplier effect could eclipse the economic gains made by the centralised hierarchical organisations that dominated earlier industrial revolutions.”

Wednesday 14th March

4,000 London homeowners have been provided with an energy makeover to make their homes more energy-efficient, so cutting carbon emissions and saving an estimated £4 million off their energy bills. A further 55,000 home makeovers will be delivered by May and are offered both to privately-owned and rented properties. The £7.8 million RE:NEW programme is funded by the Mayor of London with all 32 London boroughs and is delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust. Boris Johnson said: “I want to help Londoners tackle the cold and cope better with rising

fuel bills. Retrofitting activity is now taking place on an unprecedented scale and is stimulating thousands of jobs in the burgeoning green economy.”

Thursday 15th March

Sainsbury's has already switched 100 of its stores to CO2 refrigeration, which is less environmentally damaging than using HFC and HCFC gases. It plans to convert another 135 stores by 2014 as part of its drive to cut its carbon footprint by 30% by 2020 against a 2005 baseline. Store designer David Sheehan said: “When we began converting to CO2, there was a severe shortage of expertise in the engineering community. However, the work we have carried out with our refrigeration suppliers to re-train engineers has been so successful that we are now able to convert our estate much more quickly.”

Friday 16th March

The Anaerobic Digestion & Biogas Association (ADBA) has launched a free consultancy service for farmers and landowners. Its chief executive explains: “Farming is crucial to supporting the British economy and providing the food we need. Today's farmers face a tough economic

climate made more challenging by soaring energy, fertiliser and transport costs. Anaerobic Digestion not only helps farmers reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by reducing dependence on commercial fertilisers and traditional transport fuels and energy consumption. It also helps to keep farmers farming. This free service will give farmers, growers and land managers a better understanding of what is involved, giving them the confidence to invest the time and money needed to develop a project proposal for funding.”

Saturday 17th March

This afternoon between 2.30 and 4.30 at St. George's Church, Bloomsbury WC1, a Diocese of London conference called “Route around the World: Climate Action for Resilience, Renewal and Hope” will hear how communities suffering from environmental stress and disaster are gaining resilience and building a better future. There are presentations and displays from Christian Aid, Tearfund, CAFOD, Progressio and the Angola London & Mozambique Association. RSVP to Brian Cuthbertson on 020 7932 1229.

Sunday 18th March

Lord, we pray that all your people, whether they be ministers, scientists or lay people, may be given the strength and courage to witness clearly to the need to care for the world that you created. May they speak out freely on the changes in lifestyle that are now needed to protect your creation.

Monday 19th March

A report from the Energy & Climate Change Committee on “The Future of Marine Renewables in the UK” concludes that Britain could become a leading exporter of wave and tidal power equipment if the government were to adopt a more “visionary approach” to the development of marine renewables. The industry has the potential to supply 20% of current energy demand, cut carbon emissions and offer a more reliable and predictable source of energy than other renewables. The Committee's chairman, Tim Yeo MP, said: “We are extremely well placed to lead the world in wave and tidal technologies, which could bring significant benefits in manufacturing and jobs as well as an abundant supply of reliable low-carbon electricity.” But “there are a number of potential obstacles that

could hinder the development of marine renewables including investor confidence, policy certainty, public-private risk sharing, grid connections and training.” The Renewable Energy Association commented: “The report rightfully recognises to need to expand our skills base at university level to unlock the huge potential for green jobs and growth in marine renewables.”

WWF called on the Government to avoid repeating the mistake made in the 1980s when the UK, through over-caution, lost its leadership in wind power development. “The recent Offshore Valuation Report has shown that the UK seas could generate an amount of electricity six times our current consumption levels and make the UK a net exporter of renewable electricity as well as an industrial leader in the field.”

Tuesday 20th March

The Scottish Government has granted permission for Aquamarine Power to connect two wave energy converters to the National Grid, each with a capacity of 800 KW – enough to supply renewable electricity to more than 1,000 homes. WWF commented: “This marks an exciting first step towards realising our huge marine