

Bible reflection on our planet

The theme for the 2024 Season of Creation (1 Sept – 4 Oct) is 'To hope and act with Creation' and the Bible passage to illustrate that is taken from St Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 19-25. We have chosen verse 22 for this quarter's Minster leaflet:

'Up to the present, we know the whole created universe groans in all its parts as if in the pangs of childbirth.'

The Bible tells us that Planet Earth – all that is created, including the human race – is broken, fallen from God's loving purpose, yet longing, groaning for renewal – for New Creation. One aspect of this brokenness, becoming ever more evident in modern times, is that the human race is failing to relate to the Earth as a partner, a gift from God, but rather as a resource to be used. St Francis got it right 800 years ago when he referred to the Earth as our sister and mother in his Canticle of Creation. How can Mother Earth look after us if we do not look after her? Creation's groaning is worsened by the unsustainable exploitation that our consumerism inflicts.

And yet there is hope in the enduring expectation of a better future. The Bible does not see hope as a passive expectant waiting but as a striving, struggling pushing for new life. Just as there is in childbirth, there is a period of intense pain as new life is coming forth. Humanity is part of the cosmic family with an intrinsic vocation and important role to play in the manifestation of the emerging eternal kingdom of God

Prayer Heavenly Father, we remember with shame that we have sometimes abused the high dominion of humankind, so that the song of the earth has been a groan of travail. May we learn from the humility of Christ the Servant King, and worship him in harmony with the whole of Creation. Amen

April

Daily prayer for the month

Heavenly Father,
as we witness the blossoming and brightening of the natural world, you remind us that the earth and everything in it belongs to you and that you value all you have made.

Renew within each of us a deeper love and appreciation of creation in order that we, like you, are motivated to stir things to new growth.

Intercessions for the month

Week 1 As in Easter we celebrate light from darkness and life from death, so we pray to our Loving God to bring great good in the end from the climate crisis.

Week 2 We pray for all whose lives are now being damaged or worsened by climate change, especially those across the world without other resources or backup to enable them to find other ways to live.

Week 3 As sea levels inevitably rise we pray for protection and a way forward for all the millions who live in low lying areas.

Week 4 As many areas become drier and hotter, and weather patterns unpredictable, we pray for those who live there, growing food or herding animals.

Dates in April

15-24 Fashion Awareness Week
22 International Mother Earth Day
22 International Conference on Climate Monitoring
24 Stop Food Waste Day

May

Daily prayer for the month

Father God, we thank you for the way the whole of creation speaks of you and reminds us that we are just part of it. Help us humbly to recognise our responsibility in caring for the planet, receiving and sharing your vision for the world.

Teach each of us to listen and be alert to the earth and what it is trying to say to us in the environmental and climate crisis.

Intercessions for the month

Week 1 As competition for dwindling water and other resources intensifies, we pray for the wisdom and courage everywhere to talk rather than shoot.

Week 2 We pray for all who seek to bring about a coherent and unified global response. Above all in this context we pray for the UN, and those who advise them.

Week 3 We pray for our crucial political, media, and financial leaders. We pray for true and good leaders, and for true and good examples, for wisdom, courage and inspiration.

Week 4 We pray for ourselves, for grace to understand, not to run from our responsibility to care for creation. We pray to know how to see Creation through God's eyes.

Dates in May

1-31 No Mow May
17 Endangered Species Day
20-26 Water Saving Week
20-24 Walk to School Week

June

Daily prayer for the month

God of hope, stir us up to action and open our eyes to new ways of seeing. Lift us out of our apathy and short sightedness to energise and inspire us to work for you, trusting in your desire to restore your struggling creation and all that we have managed to destroy. May our love for you be reflected in our shared concern for the earth and the wellbeing of all its creatures both now and in future generations.

Intercessions for the month

Week 1 However great the consequences of climate change, millions are suffering right now from war and violence. We simply pray for peace.

Week 2 As it is so easy to blame others, and say they must act, we pray in the face of this global hammering for a moral renewal for us all. We pray for a global compassion.

Week 3 We pray for our scientists to make the necessary advances to make global change possible, and economically viable, even optimal.

Week 4 We pray for our teachers and academics, and all who work with or teach young people and children. Enable them to bring hope, and understanding.

Dates in June

3-13 Bonn: UN Climate Change Conference

5 World Environment Day

8-16 Great Big Green Week

16 World Refill Day

28 London: International Conf on climate change

The Southwell Minster Creation Prayer

Gracious God, source of all life,
we praise you for the wonder and diversity
of the natural world, and we thank you
for the genius of the craftsmen who carved
the Chapter House leaves that speak to us still.
Open our hearts and minds to your guiding Spirit
that we may discern together
how best to cherish this good earth
and safeguard its resources.
As we listen to the leaves,
show us how to share in Creation's song
and rediscover our harmony in you,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen



Southwell Minster in partnership with A Rocha UK

Action Points

- Spend some moments each day noticing bird-song and spring's burgeoning
- Consciously read – not skim! - newspaper /online articles about the climate crisis
- Attempt a few more meat-free meals



**Prayers for the
Integrity of Creation
April - June 2024**

