

'Let the earth be glad' Psalm 96

Recent scientific study of trees in forests has revealed some remarkable facts. Trees are like human families! Tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and even warn each other of impending dangers. Trees are not 'things', they are 'beings'. What we are now discovering by scientific research, St Francis in the thirteenth century discerned by intuition. He spoke of Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Sister Water, and he preached to the birds. St Francis was drawing on Psalm 96's celebration of Nature as a living feeling Being.

'Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad. Let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy. They will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth.'

*Psalm 96.11-13*

'Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the mountains sing together for joy: let them sing before the Lord'

*Psalm 96. 7-9*

Voices from the past and voices in the present are calling us to review our estimate of the Natural World, valuing its sensitivities and respecting it as a living Being - open to the giving and receiving of care. In such a world, Leaves speak to us, and our Minster Chapter House prayer makes sense.

Gracious God, 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

## January

### Daily prayer

Father of lights, thank you that you are unchanging unlike shifting shadows. We see your many gifts spread throughout the whole of creation.

As the light starts to lengthen and days to stretch out, enlighten us and the whole of humanity to recognise the needs of our changing environment, alerting us to what needs to be done at this time of crisis.

### *Intercessions for the month*

Week beginning 4 Jan We ask God at the beginning of a new year to bless our own commitment to protect the planet, especially in Veganuary by what we eat, asking how our diet affects the natural world, e.g. Can we eat food that produces fewer emissions?

Week beginning 11 Jan We pray that disappointment at the decision in November's COP30 not to mention reducing the use of fossil fuels may lead to determined action, rather than bitterness.

Week beginning 18 Jan After some major countries chose to stay away from COP30, some of whom say 'Net zero is a con', we pray that new groupings of nations will move forward anyway. We give thanks for the many businesses and energy providers that are committed to sustainability.

Week beginning 25 Jan In the Minster we pray for the quarterly Creation Service planned for Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>; for those appointing a new gardener to continue the sustainable development of our grounds; for the meeting of SMEAG – the Environmental Action Group – on Wed 28<sup>th</sup>. In the Diocese we pray for Sally Dunleavy, newly appointed Net Zero Support Officer.

## February

### Daily prayer

Creator God, we thank you for the intricate, wonderful and mysterious workings and connections existing within the natural world. Where there is arrogance and disregard for the environment, may there be an increasing recognition of our vulnerability, and a humility that recognises our own intimate connection with the earth, and of the need to protect its wellbeing.

### *Intercessions for the month*

Week beginning 1 Feb We pray all this month for world peace - for a world where 'swords are turned into ploughshares'. Pray that it may be possible for the energy, money and brainpower used in wars to be directed to caring for the planet.

Week beginning 8 Feb We pray for those suffering from war and from climate change, where the need to survive takes all their energy. Ask for God to bless people rebuilding homes, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches and infrastructure, destroyed by war.

Week beginning 15/2 In this week of Ash Wednesday, we confess those times when our commitment to a sustainable future has wavered; also, when humanity's search for power has destroyed good people.

Week beginning 22 Feb Pray for the Minster's partnership with *A Rocha*, as the Minster builds on its Silver award to go for Gold. Also, for SMEAG, the Minster's Environmental Action Group, in the lead role they in our community. And for our cooperation with Green Southwell and other local groups..

## March

### Daily prayer:

Thank you, God, for all the love, energy and goodness that spills out from you to cover the earth. As springtime unfolds bringing signs of growth and new life, may we wake up to the ways in which we can generate new life. Help us discover ways to bless and heal the environment, enabling it to flourish and not diminish, to be restored and not destroyed through our neglect, blindness and lack of concern.

### *Intercessions for the month*

Week beginning 1 March As days continue to lengthen, pray for local farmers as they sow spring crops. Also for research at Brackenhurst and other universities into sustainable ways of producing food for the world.

Week beginning 8 March Pray that the economics will change the energy agenda, as solar and wind and small nuclear become competitive with fossil fuel. Pray too for the SMEAG meeting on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>, and for Hugh Middleton its convenor.

Week beginning 15/3 The week of Mothering Sunday we pray for mothers (& fathers!) in what they tell their children about enjoying and enhancing this wonderful planet, and how to avoid wasting its resources.

Week beginning 22 March World Water Day is this week. Pray for countries where climate change has reduced water supplies, leading to conflict, e.g. Ethiopia/ Sudan/ Egypt and in Israel/Palestine.

Week beginning 29 March This Holy Week we pray that Christians will reflect that 'God so loved the **world** that he gave his Son' – new life not only for humanity, but also for the whole of Creation. Pray that our commitment to Him extends to commitment to God's precious earth.

## 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*

### Signposts for Action

*January – Veguary; consider eating plant-based foods*  
*Jan 24 – 25 UK's Big Garden Birdwatch*  
*Feb 1 – World Wetlands Day = celebrate wetlands*  
*March 9-15 Plastic Count Day: note how much plastic you use*  
*March 18 – Global Recycling Day*  
*March 22 World Water Day – note how much water you waste!*  
*March 21 to April 6 - Great British Spring Clean*  
*March 30 - International Day of Zero Waste*



**Prayers for the  
Integrity of Creation  
January – March 2026**