

## **Pause for Prayer – Caring for Creation**

For the next fortnight, world leaders will gather for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP26, to attempt to build a global consensus on climate action and justice. Today, we will take some time to pray for them as they meet these challenges and to consider our own responsibilities.

We will begin by hearing some bible readings about our responsibility to God's creation.

### **A reading from the Book of Genesis:**

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

### **Psalm 24**

*A Psalm of David. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and those who dwell therein.'*

God gave us dominion over the earth but not in order to use or misuse it at any cost. We have destroyed many areas of our planet to suit our own needs. The earth belongs to God and he will hold us responsible for how we care for it.

As Christians, we are called to play our part in shaping a better future. We are called to love one another, care for our neighbours and care for God's creation. Cop26 is an opportunity for us all to dedicate our attentions on the actions that we can take, collectively and individually.

So we pray:

**Loving God, We praise your name with all you have created. You are present in the whole universe, and in the smallest of creatures. We acknowledge the responsibilities you have placed upon us as stewards of your creation.**

**May the Holy Spirit inspire all political leaders at COP26 as they seek to embrace the changes needed to foster a more sustainable society. Instil in them the courage and gentleness to implement fairer solutions for the poorest and most vulnerable, and commit their nations to the care of Our Common Home.**

**We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.**

We will now take some time to pray for those different groups that are most involved in working to resolve the problems we face and those most affected by them.

To begin with, in a few moments of quiet, we pray for those leaders meeting in Glasgow from this weekend. We ask that they will be ambitious and bold, that they remember the commitments they have already made and hold those who are failing to take steps to meet this challenge to account. We pray that they may be courageous when making difficult and complex decisions. We ask that they may be willing to act justly so that those who have contributed little to the problems we are facing, and who have few resources, are not left to shoulder our burden.

We now pray for those most affected by climate change and the damage caused to God's wonderful creation. Lord God, who stills the raging of the sea, give support to those already facing droughts, storms and floods, grant them strength and hope for the future as they try to adapt to the changing climate.

We see the devastating impact that the climate crisis is already having on those living in extreme poverty. We pray that this injustice will not be ignored and that more will be done to protect those left vulnerable.

In a period of silence, we reflect on the damaging consequences of climate change for the world's poorest and most vulnerable and ask for God's forgiveness for the issues we have brought to bare on them.

Creator God, you hold all knowledge. We praise and thank you for the science that has allowed us to see the damage that is being done to your Creation and has given us a chance to resolve it. We thank you also for the creativity that you have granted to those who are developing ideas and technologies that moderate the impact of climate change. In your mercy, grant revelations to scientists and engineers that they may discover solutions and systems to aid adaptation.

In a moment of quiet, we take some time to pray for those who work to find innovative solutions, that they may be granted strength, motivation and inspiration. We pray that young people may be inspired to follow in their footsteps in order to benefit the whole of humanity.

Lord God, our light and our salvation, we pray for your Church: may we speak and act together as we urgently work towards good stewardship of your creation and your presence in all living things. Embolden us to speak for the voiceless against the injustices of climate change.

In a period of reflection, we pray that the Holy Spirit may awaken our hearts and the hearts of the whole Christian community to our complicity in harming God's creation. May we find in ourselves the selflessness to lead by our example and the strength to speak against injustice wherever we see it. Recognising our own privileges, we consider how we can help to alleviate the suffering of those most acutely affected by climate change and the poverty exacerbated by it.

Finally, we pray for our parish, our local community and ourselves: that through the grace of God we may examine our environmental impact and make choices for the common good.

God, we thank you for the young people in our community and their passion and conviction to care for and protect your World. We pray that their actions and words are taken seriously. Stir up our hearts into action, inspire us with ways we can make a difference in our homes, communities and the world around us.

In a moment of reflection, we consider the part that we ourselves have played in the crisis and resolve to transform our own lives for the sake of God's creation. We ask for His

guidance in our efforts to hand on the Earth to future generations and we ask for His support in supporting and protecting the victims of environmental damage everywhere.

Sometimes it is easy to forget or ignore the full majesty of God's creation. So before our closing prayer, I will read some words from Psalm 104.

*Psalm 104 is read.*

And so to close our time of reflection, we pray:

**God of all life, we give thanks for our Earth, our common home, and ask forgiveness for all of the unreasonable demands we have made on it. Help us to tread lightly and use wisely, valuing the needs of others, and of creation, above our own desires. Challenge us where we need to change our lifestyles, give us courage when we need to speak on behalf of the voiceless and soften us when we stand in judgement of others. In your mercy, help us to work towards the restoration of your world and the protection of all your children. In the name of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**