**JAEI ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER**

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***Why should we celebrate the Season of Creation?*** The Season of Creation offers worshipers an opportunity to turn their full attention toward God the Creator and toward their relationship with the whole creation.

Winter is behind us, and Spring has sprung! Trees burst forth with blossoms, migrating birds return, days become longer …. and warmer! ….. – so much to give God glory for!!

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| .*“…. As Christians we wish to contribute to resolving the ecological crisis which humanity is presently experiencing. In doing so, we must first rediscover in our own rich spiritual patrimony the deepest motivations for our concern for the care of creation.* | New Picture |
| *We need always to keep in mind that, for believers in Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became man for our sake, “the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us” (*[*Laudato Si’*](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)*, 216). The ecological crisis thus summons us to a profound spiritual conversion: Christians are called to “an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them” (ibid., 217). For “living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (ibid.).**The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation will offer individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live. The celebration of this Day, on the same date as the Orthodox Church, will be a valuable opportunity to bear witness to our growing communion with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. We live at a time when all Christians are faced with the same decisive challenges, to which we must respond together, in order to be more credible and effective. It is my hope that this Day will in some way also involve other Churches and ecclesial Communities, and be celebrated in union with similar initiatives of the World Council of Churches. “ -* Pope Francis***September 1*** was proclaimed as a day of prayer for creation by the Orthodox Church in 1989, and many other Christian churches have joined since then, such as the Anglican Church in 2012 (Anglican Consultative Council) and the Catholic Church most recently in 2015.**Join the rest of the World to pray for Creation today!** |

***Hot off the press!***



There is a new Season of Creation – Book 4 to use in your celebrations!

Download the book at

<http://www.greenanglicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Season-of-Creation-Four.pdf>

***Enjoy!***

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| **With September comes a whole host of other significant environmental days/celebrations.****Here is a brief snippet about each of them:** |



***1 September* – World Vulture Day**

**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *Give thanks for the beauty and important part that these majestic birds play in our eco-systems.*

Vultures are an ecologically vital group of birds that face a range of threats in many areas that they occur. Populations of many species are under pressure and some species are facing extinction.

***1st week in September* - Arbor Week**

**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *Give thanks for the incredible beauty, variety and diversity of plants in our Country. Pray for forgiveness when we have taken this beauty for granted and pray that each one of us will utilize this resource wisely.*

As sources of building material, food, medicine, and simple scenic beauty, trees play a vital role in the health and well-being of our communities.

The 2016 trees are:

* ***Common tree*** - Common Wild Fig (Gewone Wildevy) *Ficus thonningii (Grows into a VERY big tree – be careful where you plant it if you do!)*
* ***Rare trees*** - Common Bush-cherry (Gewone Witbos) *Maerua cafra and B*ead-bean Tree (Knoppiesboontjieboom) *Maerua angolensi*s

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| New Picture | New Picture (1) | New Picture (2) |
| *Common Wild Fig (Gewone Wildevy) Ficus thonningii* | *Common Bush-cherry (Gewone Witbos) Maerua cafra* | *Bead-bean Tree (Knoppiesboontjieboom) Maerua angolensis* |

***Ficus thonningii*** is a fast-growing evergreen tree 6-21 m, with a rounded to spreading dense crown. A tree for warmer regions - it has shiny, dark green leaves that provide dense shade and bears small, reddish figs that attract birds. It is one of the strangler figs, so-called for their habit of ‘strangling’ other plants as their roots and stems struggle to find nourishment and light in their original jungle habitat.

This tree can be a very good source of dry season livestock fodder, because it produces highly nutritious foliage in large amounts all year around. Parts of the plant edible for livestock include, leaves, twigs and barks, and their nutritional value varies with season.

***Maerua cafra*** is very variable and can occur as a low bush on the dunes or in dry places, but also grows as a tree up to 9m. where conditions are favourable. It is a common plant in the bushveld regions, wooded grassland and along the forest margins, also occurring in rocky areas. It is widely distributed along the eastern side of South Africa from Humansdorp in the south and is also found in Gauteng and the Northern Province towards Zimbabwe. The slender stamens give the scented flowers a spider-like appearance during its flowering period - August to October. Flowers are followed by oval, plum-like fruit in October - December.

Leaves of *Maerua cafra* are browsed by game and ground roots have been used as chicory substitute. When the fruit ripens it remains green, but becomes soft and strongly sweet smelling and is relished by many different bird species.

***Maerua angolensis*** is a 10m tall, occasionally deciduous tree of the caper family, often growing on termite mounds and in thickets fringing seasonal watercourses. Though never common, it is widespread in tropical Africa and arid regions, being absent from high-rainfall regions.

The tree has a rounded crown and smooth grey bark flaking to reveal yellowish-orange patches. The fragrant, pincushion-like flowers are without petals and are produced in abundance at the beginning of the rainy season.

***So, grab a shovel and plant a tree for Arbor Week, an environmental campaign to promote a more beautiful South Africa and celebrate God’s Awesome Creation!***

***16 September* - International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer**

**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *See “Season of Creation – Book 1” Pages 30 – 35 for information, Liturgical, and prayer suggestions for “Climate Change”*

This invisible layer in the atmosphere protects the Earth from harmful ultra-violet rays from the sun. Should these ultra-violet rays reach Earth by passing through the thinning ozone layer, skin cancer and damage to crops will increase. Ozone depleting substances such as chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs), hydro-fluoro-carbons, methyl bromide, to mention a few, are pollutants used all over the world. By observing this day, we are reminded of the necessity to live in ways that do not contribute to the depletion of this vital and essential layer of atmosphere that shields the Earth. It also gives individuals and organisations time to reflect on what progress has taken place to combat this environmental threat.

***3rd Week in September* – National Clean-up Week & *20 September* – Recycling Day**

**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *See “Season of Creation – Book 1” Pages 18 - 23 for information, Liturgical, and prayer suggestions regarding “Need not Greed”*
* *Organise a Clean-up day in your Community.*
* *Set up a recycling centre at your Church*
* *Hold a recycle craft day for the children. (if you need help with ideas – contact Noeleen at* *noeleen@jaei.org.za**)*

During this week all South Africans are urged to do something towards cleaning their local community. The focus of an individual clean-up may vary and will depend on issues pertaining to a particular community.

Recycling Day South Africa encourages South Africans to recycle at home, school and at work and buy products made with recycled material. This day occurs during National Clean-Up Week and aims to increase awareness by educating the community about the social, environmental and economic benefits of recycling

***21 September* – International Peace Day**

**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *Pray for unity within all the Peoples of South Africa – that each may see themselves as part of God’s Creation and live in harmony with it.*

The marking of this day is intended to have the entire world observe a day of peace and non-violence and all organisations and individuals are encouraged to observe this day in an appropriate manner. Conflict and tensions amongst people in South Africa, is unfortunately, still prevalent. This day reminds us of our continuing need to work together and put our differences

***22 September* – World Rhino Day**



**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *Pray for all those involved in rhino conservation – for strength and endurance. Pray for those involved in the heinous act of poaching – that their hearts may turn to love of these creatures and away from their illicit dealings.*

Rhino horns, unlike those of other horned mammals (which have a bony core), only consist of keratin. Rhinoceros horns are currently used mainly in traditional Asian medicines. Sadly, few people realize the challenges facing those on the frontlines trying to protect our precious rhinos – including, having inadequate resources and thousands of kilometres to patrol, with little to no idea of where the poachers plan to hit next. World Rhino Day celebrates all five species of rhino and works to eliminate the demand for rhino horn by highlighting efforts to debunk the medicinal myths about rhino horn. South Africa is home to the White and Black Rhino.

***24 September* – Heritage Day**

**OUR RESPONSE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

* *Pray for unity within all the Peoples of South Africa – that each may be seen as a Child of God and respect and care for all creatures*

 Natural and cultural heritage include monuments, architectural works, sculpture and painting, structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and groups of buildings. Also included are sites of outstanding universal value from an historical, aesthetic, and ethnological point of view to geological and physiographic formations and natural sites. Of the 981 cultural and natural properties forming part of the World Heritage List, which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value, eight can be found in South Africa alone. The need to acknowledge this rich and varied cultural heritage

**There is *SO* much happening in Season of Creation Month – September**

***SO*** much to celebrate, ***SO*** much to give thanks to an Awesome, Generous God, but also a time to look at our contribution to its destruction …. Where ***WE*** need to change - our lifestyles, our consuming patterns, our neglect, our apathy …..