



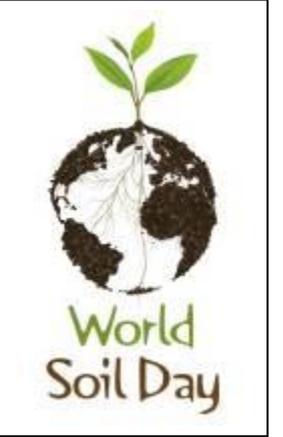
**JAEI**

# December 2018 Environmental Prayer Diary



*(The purpose of this Prayer Diary is to provide subjects for your reflection and prayer as the Spirit moves you)*

<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p>The strength of the rising sun, the strength of the swelling sea, the strength of the high mountains, the strength of the fertile plains, the strength of the everlasting river flowing in us and through us this day, the strength of the river of God flowing in us and through us this day.</p> <p><i>John Philip Newell (Sounds of the Eternal)</i> <i>Photo - Karin Baard</i></p>	
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Advent Reflection</b> <b>Awaiting Renewal: Let the Waters Flow</b></p> <p><i>Isaiah 35:6-7: "For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.</i></p> <p>The passage from the prophet Isaiah speaks of a day when God will redeem God's people from exile and bring them home again to Mt. Zion. Notice that not only will the people rejoice and be glad but the land will rejoice as well! Dry land and wilderness will show signs of gladness, singing and blossoming. Flowers will grow and refreshing waters will break forth in dry places, and there will be streams of water in places that were once severely dry and barren.</p> <p>In July of 2015, I had the awesome opportunity to see a portion of the wilderness land of Alaska and to see the mighty glaciers of Tracy Arm a fjord near Juneau. As the cruise ship inched its way into the fjord, I looked up into the mountains and to my surprise I saw streams of flowing water gushing from the mountain! Never did I expect to see water flowing so beautifully, peacefully, and freely in the Alaskan wilderness. During this season of Advent, let us seek to allow the life -giving water of God to flow freely in our lives and let us in turn care for earthly waters so that they too, may continue to flow freely</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> God of Ever Flowing Streams, Flow into our dry places and refresh us as we begin this season of advent. May we be reminded of your great love and care for all humankind and may we go and do likewise as we love and care for all the waters that cover the earth. Amen</p> <p><b>Betty Tom</b> <i>First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Vernon, NY. <a href="http://presbyearthcare.org">http://presbyearthcare.org</a></i></p>	

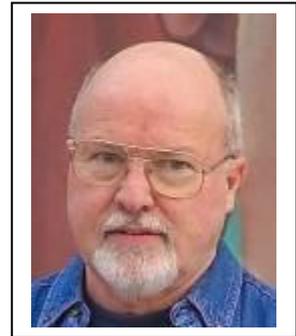
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>Pray that a spirit of peace, harmony, co-operation, integrity, empathy and justice will cover the COP24 Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland which begins in earnest today</p>	
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p>Perhaps Advent is a good time to review our priorities.</p> <p>“What is it about Christmas that requires us to consume and waste with such abandon?” If it’s true that a stable is a suitable birthplace for our God, and that even princes only need three gifts, why do we eat, drink and spend as if we were celebrating the birth of the free-market economy?</p> <p>So -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drop the idea that the cost of your presents has any relation to the value you place on your friendships: be generous to the planet and give thoughtful presents, with the receipt so that they can be returned.</li> <li>2. Video-Skype your distant relatives and plan to see them properly another time.</li> <li>3. Make a pact with your friends to keep all gifts below a strict affordable. Better still make your gifts and wrapping paper out of recycled materials.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>World Soil Day</b>  <b>2018 theme – “Be the Solution to Soil Pollution”</b></p> <p>This, often over-looked, annual awareness day aims to raise awareness of the importance of soil quality for human well-being, food security and ecosystems</p> <p>Soil is the top layer of the earth, the layer which everyone is familiar with, but not everyone knows much about.</p> <p>We all depend on soil, so the more that that is understood of it, the better the human race thrives, from beautiful gardens to crops that produce our food.</p> <p>Today, spend some time looking at and feeling the soil in your garden. See how healthy the soil in your garden and place of worship is and think of ways you can improve it –could you start a compost heap or create an earthworm farm? And certainly, it is time to give thanks for this miracle substance! .....</p>	
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>Today hold COP24 up in your prayers. As with all Conferences (and this one in particular.... ) tempers will flare and argument will be rife!</p> <p>Prayer that our Creator’s presence will be tangibly present to bring calm and understanding into all discussions.</p>	

Friday

7

### Creation is the Primary Cathedral

Creation itself - not ritual or spaces constructed by human hands - was Francis' primary cathedral. It is no accident that the majority of Jesus' stories and metaphors are based on human and natural observations, not classroom theology. It is not unimportant that both Jesus and Francis were peripatetic teachers - talking while walking - and on the road of the world. In our own time, major teachers like Thomas Berry and Teilhard de Chardin have rediscovered this natural and universal theology.



The Gospel transforms us by putting us in touch with that which is much more constant and satisfying, literally the “ground of our being,” and has much more “reality” to it than theological concepts or the mere ritualization of reality. Daily cosmic events in the sky and on the earth are the Reality above our heads and beneath our feet every minute of our lives: a continuous sacrament. I find that a preoccupation with religious rituals tends to increase the more we remain untouched by Reality Itself - to which the best rituals can only point.

Jesus himself commonly points to things like the red sky, a hen, lilies, the fig tree, a donkey caught in a pit, the birds of the air, the grass in the field, the temple animals that he released from their cages, and on and on. He was clearly looking at the seemingly “nonreligious” world, ordinary things all around him, and appeared to do most of his teaching out of doors. Francis said, “Wherever we are, wherever we go, we bring our cell and our soul with us. Our Brother Body is our cell and our soul is the hermit living in the cell. If our soul does not live in peace and solitude within this moving cell, of what avail is it to live in a man-made cell?”

Both Jesus and Francis knew that everything created was a message about the nature of God. Nature was not empty of divinity. Seeing nature as secular or merely functional created much of the loneliness and seeming meaninglessness in our contemporary worldview.

In the five-day Men's Rites of Passage - that was a focus of my work for fifteen years - so many men felt that prayers and rituals inside of human-scale buildings were rather domesticated and controlled. They often perceived that the salvation offered inside these artificial constructs was also “small” and churchy. Almost without exception, the greatest breakthroughs for our men occurred during extended times of silence in nature, where the human and the merely verbal were not in control, or during rituals that were raw and earthy. Remember that good ritual, like art itself, merely imitates nature.

#### **Gateway to Silence:**

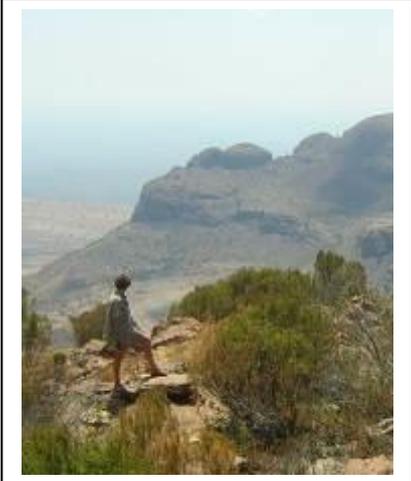
Praised be You, my Lord, through all your creatures. —Francis of Assisi

*From Richard Rohr's daily meditations*

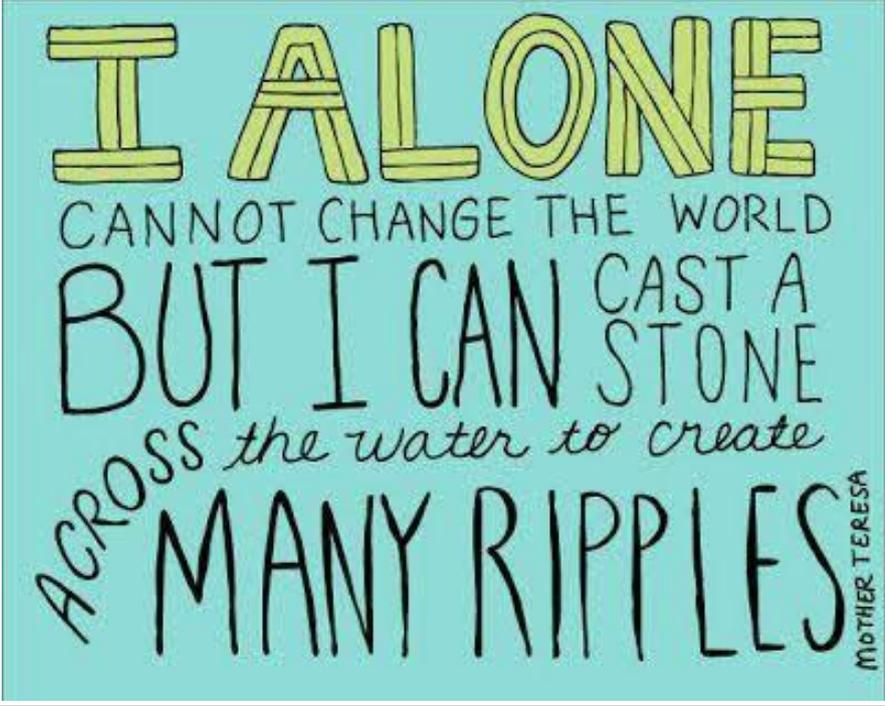
[www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org)

<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>SDG Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pray that this goal will be achieved</i></p>	
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p>	<p>The Bible teaches us that God created the world and us for His glory. It only makes sense then that all of Creation should join together in singing God’s praise. And there is certainly no better time to lift our voices with the rest of Creation than during this season when we pause to remember that “<i>God so loved the world He gave His only Son.</i>” (John 3:16) We may not understand how, or even accept that it is true, but nature does, in fact, offer praise to its Maker. If we are wise, we will do the same. And if we truly realize what’s going on it will be a joyful song we sing. So let’s not rest content with just heaven and nature singing, let’s all do our part as well!.</p> <p><i>Let Heaven and Nature sing!</i></p>	
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p>“The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.”</p> <p><i>Wendell Berry</i></p>	
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>International Mountain Day</b></p> <p><b>2018 theme: “MountainsMatter”</b></p> <p>Even though they are mentioned in the 2030 Agenda, mountains are still often forgotten. Considering the crucial role they play in providing key ecosystem goods and services to the planet and their vulnerability in the face of climate change, we need to step up and raise attention to mountains.</p> <p><b>#MountainsMatter for Water</b> as mountains are the world’s ‘water towers’, providing between 60 and 80 percent of all freshwater resources for our planet. However, all available records indicate that glaciers in mountain ranges around the world are retreating and disappearing due to climate change. At least 600 glaciers have disappeared completely over the past decades, affecting water supplies relied on by billions living downstream.</p> <p><b>#MountainsMatter for Tourism</b> as mountain destinations attract around 15-20</p>	

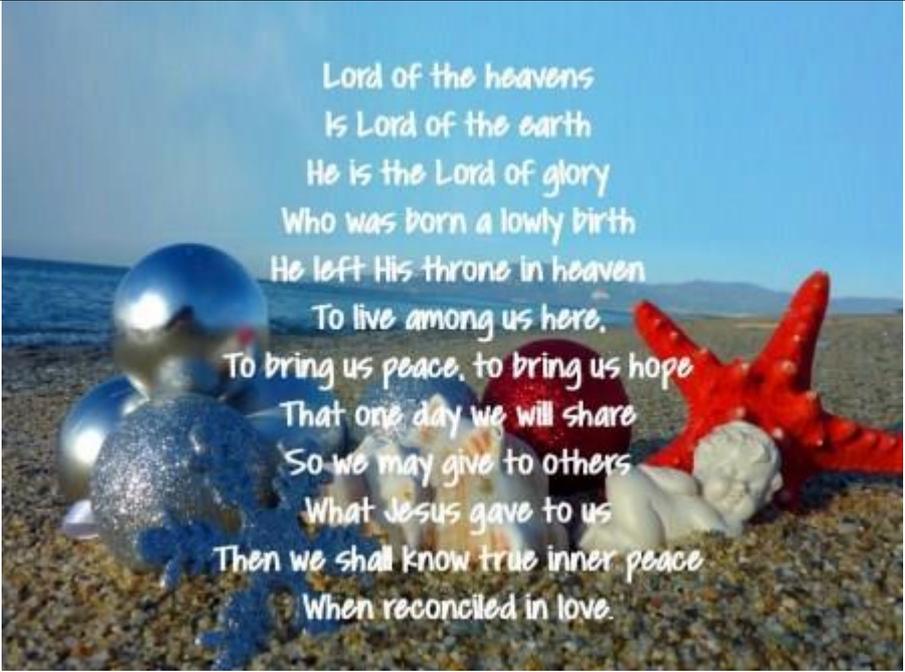
		<p>percent of global tourism and are areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage. Although mountain tourism has the potential to foster economic development in remote and isolated regions, many mountain communities are still not benefiting and live in poverty.</p> <p><b>#MountainsMatter for Food</b> as they are important centres of agricultural biodiversity and are home to many of the foods that come to our table, such as rice, potatoes, quinoa, tomatoes and barley. Yet, they are home to some of the hungriest peoples in the world with a high vulnerability to food shortages and malnutrition, and climate change is affecting mountain agriculture.</p> <p><b>#MountainsMatter for Biodiversity</b> as half of the world’s biodiversity hotspots are concentrated in mountains and mountains support approximately one-quarter of terrestrial biological diversity.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fao.org/international-mountain-day/2018-theme/en/">http://www.fao.org/international-mountain-day/2018-theme/en/</a></p> <p><b>Prayer:</b></p> <p>O Divine Spirit,  Spirit of wind and water,  of mountain and majesty,  of all creatures great and small:</p> <p>Hear our prayer of thanksgiving  for the world that we take for granted,  for your gracious gifts that we do not earn,  for the daily blessings that we do not merit;</p> <p>Hear our prayer of confession  as we acknowledge our self-absorption,  our short-sightedness;  our failure to care for all creation;</p> <p>Hear our prayer of supplication  for the mountains, and those who love them;  for the mountains, and those who live in them;  for the mountains, and those who work to preserve and protect them;</p> <p>Bring us to that day when  the rivers will clap their hands  and the mountains will sing together for joy.  Amen.</p> <p><b>Mary Jane Hitt,</b>  <i>Pastor, Providence United Presbyterian Church  Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA,</i></p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p>“We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature — trees, flowers, grass — grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence.... We need silence to be able to touch souls.”</p> <p><b>Mother Teresa</b></p>



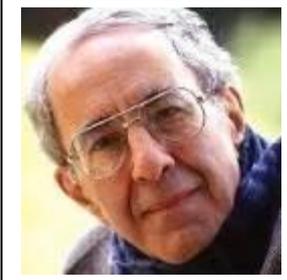
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	 <p>When you're in a dark place sometimes you tend to think you've been buried.</p> <p>Perhaps you've been planted.</p> <p>Bloom.</p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p>The COP24 Conference ends today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pray for the safety of all COP24 delegations as they return home.</li> <li>• Pray that agreements reached may be adhered to and honored for the benefit of Our Common Home</li> </ul>  <p>COP24 · KATOWICE 2018 UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b></p> <p><b><i>Pope Francis - Laudato Si</i></b></p> <p>35. In assessing the environmental impact of any project, concern is usually shown for its effects on soil, water and air, yet few careful studies are made of its impact on biodiversity, as if the loss of species or animals and plant groups were of little importance. Highways, new plantations, the fencing-off of certain areas, the damming of water sources, and similar developments, crowd out natural habitats and, at times, break them up in such a way that animal populations can no longer migrate or roam freely. As a result, some species face extinction. Alternatives exist which at least lessen the impact of these projects, like the creation of biological corridors, but few countries demonstrate such concern and foresight. Frequently, when certain species are exploited commercially, little attention is paid to studying their reproductive patterns in order to prevent their depletion and the consequent imbalance of the ecosystem.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully</i></b> reflect on this</p>
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p>You are above me O God; You are beneath; You are in air; You are in earth; You are beside me; You are within. O God of heaven, you have made your home on earth in the broken body of Creation. Kindle within me a love for you in all things.</p>

<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p>17</p>	<p>“Education, if it means anything, should not take people away from the land, but instil in them even more respect for it, because educated people are in a position to understand what is being lost. The future of the planet concerns all of us, and all of us should do what we can to protect it. As I told the foresters, and the women, you don't need a diploma to plant a tree.”</p>	
		<p><b>Wangari Maathai</b>  <i>Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Environmentalist and author</i></p>	
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p>18</p>	<p>"Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies."</p>	
		<p><b>Psalm 148:1-4</b></p>	
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p>19</p>		
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p>20</p>	<p>“You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself.”</p>	
		<p><b>Nelson Mandela</b></p>	
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p>21</p>	<p>Lord, teach us to value our possessions rightly, so that we never think more of them than of the people around us. Make us ready to use them freely for the good of others and to share them generously without grudging. Thank you for the beautiful things that we enjoy possessing. May our enjoyment be wholesome and may we hold lightly to all we own, for the sake of Him who became poor that we might be eternally rich.</p>	

<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p>Lord of the silences -  speak to me:  in the blowing of the wind;  in the rustling of the grass;  in the sound of the sea;  in the beating of my heart;  in the stirring of my spirit -  speak, Lord.  I am listening.</p> <p><b>Neil Paynter</b>  <i>Readings and Meditations from the Iona Community</i>  <i>"Gathered and Scattered"</i></p>
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>Go, tell it on the mountain</b></p> <p>Go, tell it on the mountain,  Over the hills and everywhere;  Go, tell it on the mountain,  That Jesus Christ is born.</p> <p>While shepherds kept their  watching  O'er silent flocks by night,  Behold, throughout the heavens  There shone a holy light.</p> <p>The shepherds feared and  trembled,  When lo! above the earth  Rang out the angel chorus  That hailed the Savior's birth.</p> <p>Down in a lowly manger  The humble Christ was born,  And God sent us salvation  That blessed Christmas morn.</p> 
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p>Lord God, we turn from a world distraught by confusion and tumult to worship at the cradle of a little Child whose power can yet bring peace to the earth and goodwill to all people. May our worship renew our courage, strengthen our determination and guard our inward peace, that we may move among our fellow-humans as those whose values are firmly based on your love for mankind and on the sure foundation of your throne.</p>

<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	 <p>Lord of the heavens      Is Lord of the earth      He is the Lord of glory      Who was born a lowly birth      He left His throne in heaven      To live among us here,      To bring us peace, to bring us hope      That one day we will share      So we may give to others      What Jesus gave to us      Then we shall know true inner peace      When reconciled in love.</p>
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<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>Lambert the Sheepish Lion</b></p> <p>Lambert was a lion cub that had lived with a flock of sheep from the time he was born. Because of that, he thought he was a sheep. One spring night Lambert and the flock were sleeping peacefully. Suddenly Lambert heard the scary howl of a wolf in the distance. Because Lambert thought he was a sheep, he began to tremble.</p> <p>The howl grew louder, and the wolf came closer and began dragging one of the sheep away. Suddenly Lambert felt a strong feeling inside that he had never felt before. Like lightning, he ran toward the wolf to save the sheep!</p> <p>Just then Lambert realized something. <i>I am not a sheep. I am not the son of a sheep. I am the son of a lion!</i> Lambert thought. When he chased off the wolf and protected the sheep, he knew his true nature.</p> <p>You are a child of God, and He loves you. Before we were born on earth, each one of us was a beloved spirit son or daughter in our Heavenly Father’s family. But many of us don’t realize this. If we know who we are, we can be like the lion and fight off bad things so that we can protect others and not lose our way.</p> <p>Be thankful for the wonderful gifts of the gospel and the plan of salvation. Be thankful that we know who we are so we can be strong - just like Lambert.</p> <p><i>“I am a child of God, and He has sent me here”</i>  <i>“If we know who we are, ... we can protect others and not lose our way. “</i></p> 
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<b>Thursday</b>	<b>27</b>	<p>It is the children of today that will become the rescuers of tomorrow, lead by example and teach your children to value and respect our animal friends and see what wonderful adults they become.</p> <p><b>'Wildlife Warriors'</b></p>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>28</b>	<p>“For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.</p> <p><b>Isaiah 55:12</b></p>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>29</b>	<p>Those who are sensitive to the enormous ecological problem of our age and work hard to take away some of nature's opaqueness fulfill a real ministry, because they allow not only people but also plants and animals [and rivers and rocks] to teach about the cycle of life, to heal the lonely, and to tell of the great love of God.</p> <p><b>Henri Nouwen</b></p> 
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>30</b>	<p>Heavenly Father, as we look to a New Year, we pray for all in positions of leadership, for heads of state, ministers, judges, civil servants and local government officers, that they may act with integrity and wisdom</p> <p>In the justice they administer,  In the mercy they display,  In the wisdom of their policies,  In the integrity of their decisions.</p> <p>This we pray in the Name of your Son, Jesus Christ.</p>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>31</b>	