



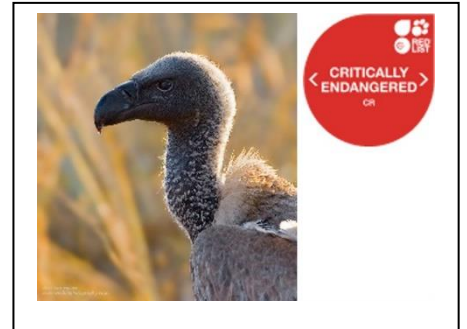
# JAEI

## September 2023 Environmental Prayer Diary Season of Creation

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

<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p>1</p>	<p><b>2023 Season of Creation Prayer</b></p> <p>Creator of All, From your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came into being.</p> <p>On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.</p> <p>You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.</p> <p>We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.</p> <p>Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation. Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.</p> <p>Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.</p> <p>Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.</p> <p>In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. Amen.</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p>2</p>	<p><b>International Vulture Day</b></p> <p><b><i>Vultures in Peril</i></b></p> <p>Vultures are a characteristic and important part of Africa's ecosystems. As obligate scavengers, they play an important role in preventing the spread of disease, by quickly removing decomposing carcasses from the environment. Recent decades have seen an alarming decline in Africa's vulture populations, with three of South Africa's eight vulture species (including the once-prolific White-backed Vulture) now regarded as globally Critically Endangered.</p>

The reasons for the decline of Africa's vultures are numerous and complex. Poachers kill great numbers of vultures by intentionally lacing poached animal carcasses with poison. Vultures are also vulnerable to secondary poisoning by the veterinary drug diclofenac, or unintentional lead poisoning through the ingestion of fragments of lead ammunition. Other threats include electrocution and/or collisions with power infrastructure, declining food availability, habitat loss and harvesting for belief-based use.



### Vulture Safe Zones

One of the actions suggested by the MsAP (Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures) at a Convention in Manila way back in 2017, is the creation of so-called Vulture Safe Zones, where owners of large tracts of land commit to managing their properties in ways that will provide safe havens for existing vulture populations. Importantly, this approach encourages positive action for vultures, focusing less on prohibition and negative messaging, and more on sound environmental practices that could provide the landowner with reputational and economic benefits.









In a southern African context, a Vulture Safe Zone has been defined as “an appropriately sized geographic area in which targeted conservation measures are undertaken to address the key threats relevant to the vulture species present. VSZ are developed in southern Africa as an approach to complement national and international efforts to reduce the impact of existing and emerging threats to stabilise and promote recovery of existing vulture populations.”


The reasons for vulture declines in Africa are varied and complex, and the application of Vulture Safe Zones should be adapted to reflect this complexity. The campaign focuses on private property owners within the borders of South Africa, who will be asked to sign a pledge in which they undertake to manage their properties in a vulture-friendly manner.

One of the biggest challenges facing vulture conservation in South Africa (as is the case elsewhere in Africa) is the fact that vultures cover enormous distances, often in one day, with no regard for country borders. Any attempt at conservation will have to be cognisant of the fact that a vulture protected in one region may not benefit from such protection in another. It is therefore vital that cross-border collaboration be promoted, as had been done between Lesotho and South Africa for the benefit of the Bearded Vulture. The establishment of Vulture Safe Zones is a practical, grassroots level approach that could be implemented in all countries to safeguard nesting sites and minimise threats around sites within the SADC region.


Presently Tswalu Kalahari Reserve (Northern Cape Province), Zululand Vulture Safe Zone and Lapalala Wilderness have been declared Vulture Safe Zones.


***Pray for all involved in vulture conservation.***

<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>A Prayer for Trees ...</b></p> <p>Creator God, Out of chaos you brought order. Out of nothingness you brought life. In the middle of all life stands the tree.</p> <p>Trees provide the air that nurtures all your creation. Birds make them their homes. Cats climb them for protection. Trees recycle life that has come before.</p>  <p>Bless the trees of this world, loving God. Remind us to serve as their caregivers and protectors. Give them long limbs and long life. The gift of their breath is as special to us as the breath of the Holy Spirit. Amen.</p>		
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Arbor Week 2023 – (29 August to 4 September)</b></p> <p>South Africa celebrates Arbor Week in the first week of September annually. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, as the custodian of forestry in South Africa, is responsible for the campaign.</p>  <p>September is also heritage month and as we celebrate Arbor Week, the department also focuses on the country's champion trees which include some of the oldest, largest and culturally significant trees. These include the Sophia Town Oak Tree and the Sagole Baobab Tree in Limpopo, which are part of our heritage.</p> <p>National Arbor Week is an opportune time to call on all South Africans to plant indigenous trees as a practical and symbolic gesture of sustainable environmental management.</p> <p>The Trees of the Year for 2023 are:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="448 1469 1485 1756"> <tr> <td data-bbox="448 1469 986 1756">  <p>Common tree: <b>Buddleja Saligna</b>, Olive Sagewood</p> </td> <td data-bbox="986 1469 1485 1756">  <p>Rare (Uncommon tree): <b>Bolusanthus speciosus</b>, Tree-wisteria</p> </td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give thanks for the awesome beauty, variety and diversity of plants in our Country.</li> <li>• Pray for forgiveness when we have taken this beauty for granted and pray that each one of us will utilize and care for this resource wisely.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action - Plant a tree this week! ..... show you care!</b></p>	 <p>Common tree: <b>Buddleja Saligna</b>, Olive Sagewood</p>	 <p>Rare (Uncommon tree): <b>Bolusanthus speciosus</b>, Tree-wisteria</p>
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<p>Tuesday</p>	<p>5</p>	<p><b>Season of Creation - 1 September-4 October</b>  <b>2023 Theme - “Let Justice and Peace Flow.”</b></p>  <p>The world humans have known, enjoyed and celebrated is changing rapidly beyond repair. Biodiversity is being lost at a rate not seen since the last mass extinction. The hope of keeping average temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius is fading. The futures of young people are threatened by the cascading impacts of the loss of biodiversity and a changing climate. Industrialization, colonization and the extraction and consumption of resources have created great wealth, unequally distributed. We are presently more aware than ever of the link between fossil fuels, and violence and war.</p> <p>The urgency grows and we must make visible peace with Earth and on Earth, at the same time that justice calls us to repentance and a change of attitude and actions. Instead of despair, hope can be created if we work together as the People of God. By the Creator’s infinite love and mercy, streams We must call for justice at all levels, and by all the means we have, not only for humans but for all Creation. Justice, allied with peace, calls us to repent of our ecological sins and to change our attitudes and actions. Righteousness demands that we live in peace, not conflict with our human neighbours, and building right relationships with all of Creation.</p> <p>Our individual actions during the Season of Creation are important. We must also recognise that, for a mighty movement of justice, individual actions are not enough. Justice also includes paying historic debts. At a global level, nations with power and wealth have a duty to deal justly and honestly with communities that suffer most from the climate and ecological crises.</p> <p>Global South nations, working together for more than 30 years, have just managed to win a victory at COP27 in making wealthier nations realize their moral duty to provide for financing for loss and damage. The recent decisions at COP15 to preserve biodiversity are also hopeful and required similar perseverance. These victories have been achieved by those with less power working together. Together we can be a mighty river of justice and peace, that brings new life to Earth and future generations, a river that can move the mountains of injustice.</p> <p>As an ecumenical family, we can engage in these actions and contribute to ensure that the web of life is preserved and cared for. Through prayer, practical advocacy and sustainable actions, this 2023 Season of Creation can prophetically renew our ecumenical unity and care for our common home. May we journey together in communion as the people of God to let justice and peace flow!</p> <p>Prophet Amos cries out: <i>“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”</i> (Amos 5: 24) and so we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out</p>
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		<p>with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.</p> <p>As the people of God, we must work together on behalf of all Creation, as part of that mighty river of peace and justice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The symbol for 2023 is a Mighty River</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>“Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19)</i></b></p> <p>Prophet Isaiah proclaims: “Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43: 19) Biodiversity is being lost at a rate not seen since the last mass extinction. The futures of young people are threatened by the cascading impacts of the loss of biodiversity and a changing climate.</p> <p>The urgency grows and we must make visible peace with Earth and on Earth, at the same time that justice calls us to repentance and a change of attitude and actions. As we join the river of justice and peace with others then hope is created instead of despair.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><b>Download the Season of Creation Manuals from the JAEI website</b></a></p>
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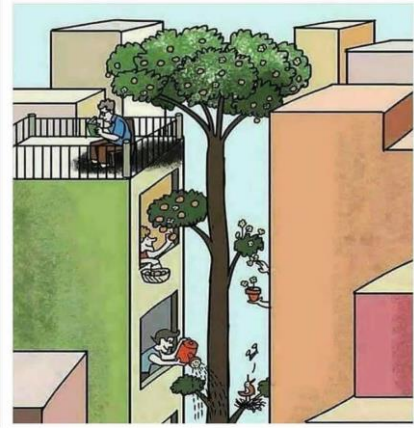
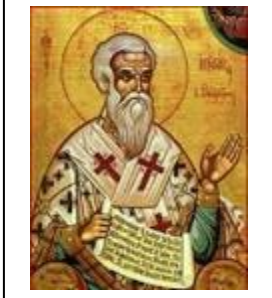
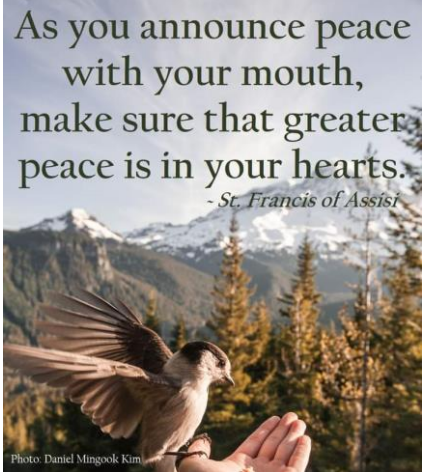
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	
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<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies</b></p> <p>2023 Theme: Clean Air Day' campaign theme as <b>“Clean up our air to look after your mind this Clean Air Day”</b>.</p> <p>This theme draws attention to the growing evidence base that shows air pollution can impact our mind and brain health.</p> <div data-bbox="1067 1617 1498 1765" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Air pollution is the largest contributor to the burden of disease from the environment and is one of the main avoidable causes of death and disease globally. 99% of the world's population is now breathing polluted air, warns WHO. 7 million people die each year due to air pollution, with 90% of them in low- and middle-income countries.</p> <p>Air pollution knows no national borders and is all pervasive. Moreover, it is strongly correlated to other global crisis such as climate change, biodiversity</p>
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		<p>loss, other forms of pollution, social and gender parity as well as economic development.</p> <p>Some air pollutants, such as black carbon, methane and ground-level ozone, are also short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) and are responsible for a significant portion of air pollution-related deaths, as well as impacts on crops and hence food security. Climate change is inextricably linked to air pollution, wherein one cannot be resolved without addressing the other, an integrated approach to tackle both could result in significant co-benefits. By 2050, we can <a href="#">halve global crop losses</a> from these pollutants by reducing methane emissions, an ingredient in the formation of tropospheric ozone, an important greenhouse gas and air pollutant, which would <a href="#">potentially save</a> between \$4 to \$33 billion USD.</p> <p>The need to raise awareness about the problem, impact and solutions for air pollution; collection and sharing of data, research and best practices as well as strengthening international and regional cooperation for efficient implementation has never been greater.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully consider ways you can contribute to reducing air pollution.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p>Father of Creation, God of Compassion, You created a world of wonder, of possibility and potential. You declared it to be good. For this we give thanks. To you be praise, honour and glory.</p> <p>Father of Creation, God of Compassion, In this time of climate breakdown, wake us from our slumber, Equip us afresh to be the justice-shaped people of God.</p> <p>Father of Creation, God of Compassion, In this time of climate breakdown, wake us from our slumber, Equip us afresh to our priestly and prophetic calling.</p> <p>That we would speak truth in a culture of denial, That we would enact hope in a culture of despair, That we would face what will be with love-filled action,</p> <p>That in humanity's darkest hour you would enliven us so We would bandage the wounds of those caught beneath the wheels of climate injustice, That in humanity's darkest hour we would have the courage to drive a spoke into the wheel of climate injustice itself.</p> <p>Father of Creation, God of Compassion, You created a world of wonder, of possibility and potential. You declared it to be good.</p> <p>In our grief, In our mourning, We give thanks. To you be praise, honour and glory.</p>



<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p>	<p>“No matter how much one may love the world as a whole, one can live fully in it only by living responsibly in some small part of it. Where we live and who we live there with define the terms of our relationship to the world and to humanity. We thus come again to the paradox that one can become whole only by the responsible acceptance of one's partiality.”</p> <p><b>Wendell Berry</b></p> 
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p>Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, Founded on the covenant of your love.</p> <p>Loving God, Lord of heaven and earth, this earth, our home belongs to you. Give us grace to love it as you do. Give us courage to give ourselves, as you do, for the good of all people and all of your creation. Strengthen us to stand, as you do, with the vulnerable poor.</p>
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>We Invite Creation</b></p> <p><b>V.</b> We invite creation to worship with us.  <b>R.</b> We invite the skies to thunder God's word,  Deep space to rumble and ring,  The stars to celebrate light  And planet Earth to sing.</p> <p><b>V.</b> We invite the forest to worship with us.  <b>R.</b> We invite wild apes to swing through the trees,  Soft ferns to glisten and wave,  Green frogs to glow in the night  And ev'ning bats to praise.</p> <p><b>V.</b> We invite the oceans to worship with us.  <b>R.</b> We invite young seals to dance in the waves,  Old whales to trumpet their spray,  Electric eels to rejoice  And manta rays to pray.</p> <p><b>V.</b> We invite small creatures to worship with us,  <b>R.</b> We invite shy skinks to sing under rocks,  All timid beetles and ants,  To raise their voices below  And fairy wrens to dance.</p> <p><b>V.</b> We invite creation to worship with us.  <b>R.</b> We invite the God who celebrates life  To quake and quiver below,  To join the cheering of Earth  And take a cosmic bow.</p> <p><b>Words: © Norman Habel 1969</b></p> 


<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b><i>A Morning Prayer during Season of Creation.</i></b></p> <p>In our tilling and keeping, gladden our hearts to know that we participate with your Holy Spirit to renew the face of your Earth, and safeguard a home for all. In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. Amen.</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p>Everybody benefits when nature thrives</p> 
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p>“We recognize a tree by its fruit, and we ought to be able to recognize a Christian by his action. The fruit of faith should be evident in our lives, for being a Christian is more than making sound professions of faith. It should reveal itself in practical and visible ways. Indeed it is better to keep quiet about our beliefs, and live them out, than to talk eloquently about what we believe, but fail to live by it.”</p> <p><b><i>Ignatius of Antioch</i></b></p> 
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p>Heavenly Father, we ask you to stir our hearts into action. As global temperatures increase, inspire us with ways, we can make a difference in our homes, church congregations, communities, and the world around us. We pray for your prompting where we can do more to love our neighbour. Amen</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p>As you announce peace with your mouth, make sure that greater peace is in your hearts.</p> <p>- St. Francis of Assisi</p>  <p><small>Photo: Daniel Mingoak Kim</small></p>

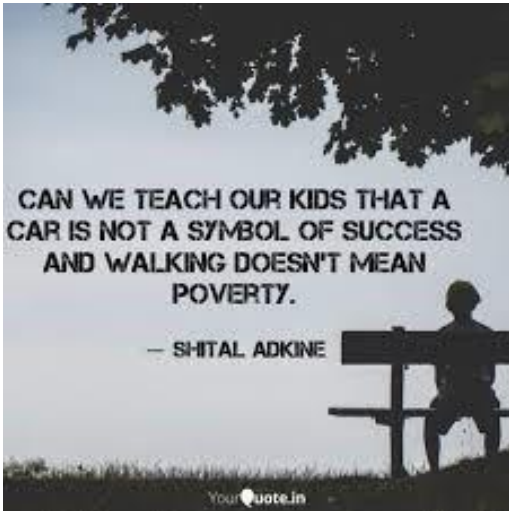
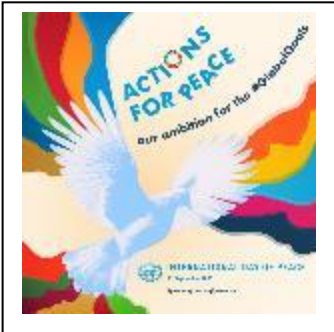



<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p>O God, we pray for justice and fairness for those worst hit by our changing climate. We know people living in extreme poverty around the world are worst hit by the climate crisis but have done the least to contribute to it. They also have the fewest resources to implement change. We ask for your mercy O Lord and repent when our blind consumerism has led to the destruction of our common home. Amen.</p>
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>3rd Week in September – National Clean-up Week &amp; 20 September – Recycling Day</b></p> <p><b>World Clean-up Day</b> is a global social action program aimed at combating the global solid waste problem. Coinciding with the global event is the annual <b>Clean-up and Recycle SA Week</b> supported and endorsed by the local plastics industry, the various packaging and retail streams and retailers.</p>  <p>The aim of this week is to increase an awareness of the social, environmental and economic benefits of recycling. During this time, communities are encouraged to clean-up the areas where they work, live and play by collecting the litter and ensuring that it gets recycled responsibly.</p> <p>When it comes to recycling - many of us might not understand exactly why, how or where.... When a material is used to make something, it's important that it breaks down organically, can be reused, or recycled into something else, otherwise, that material only serves one purpose before it ends up in a landfill long-term where it will not break down. Landfill sites can negatively impact our environment in many ways such as emitting greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming and ultimately, climate change. Non-recycled waste can contribute to air pollution, water pollution, and put animal lives and human lives at risk. Alternatively, if we recycle, we can significantly reduce the amount of pollution our waste creates.</p> <p><b>How to recycle at home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate your waste – keep wet (waste) and dry (recyclables) apart</li> <li>• Find out which recyclables are accepted for recycling in your community - a school, drop-off site, buy-back centre or curb-side collection, Waste Reclaimers or by the Municipality</li> <li>• Educate your household – post a list of the things that are recycled somewhere visible until you and your family get into the habit</li> <li>• Set up a holding area for your recyclables – it could be a box or clearly marked bins. Once you have collected enough recyclable materials, plan a trip to your nearest drop-off site (saves fuel!!) or support your curb-side collection or *Waste Reclaimers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Special Notes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean the recyclables if heavily soiled e.g. foodstuff</li> <li>• Flatten the plastic bottles, cartons, cardboard boxes and cans to reduce volume</li> <li>• A plastics identification code appears on the product to identify packaging plastics</li> </ul>

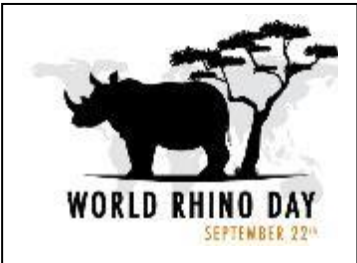
*\*African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) is a membership-based democratic organisation of reclaimers working with reclaimers in residential areas and landfills. We sort, collect and sell recyclable materials. Currently we have a membership of over 5500 reclaimers in and around the City of Johannesburg. We represent and defend the interests of reclaimers and ensure <https://www.africanreclaimers.org> that they are able to partake fully as members of society in the recycling economy and in looking after the environment.*


**..... Now, go and do your bit!**

<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>Grieving the Trees</b></p> <p><i>Love and grief go hand in hand. Sometimes it is the deep grief we feel during loss that awakens us to the depth and sincerity of our love. As we witness the many ways the earth has been exploited and damaged beyond repair (particularly in our lifetimes), we must grieve and commit to show our love through conscious action. The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas expresses her grief through prayer:</i></p>  <p>In times like these, our prayer may need to be expressive and embodied, visceral and vocal. How else can we pray with our immense anger and grief? How else can we pray about ecocide, about the death that humanity is unleashing upon Mother Earth and upon ourselves? How else can we break through our inertia and despair, so that we don't shut down and go numb? . . . .</p> <p>I've taken to praying outdoors. I go outside, feel the good earth beneath my feet and the wind on my face, and I sing to the trees—to oak and beech, hemlock and pines. Making up the words and music as I go along, I sing my grief to the trees that are going down, and my grief for so much more—for what we have lost and are losing, and for what we are likely to lose. I sing my outrage about these beautiful old trees being cut to the roots, their bodies chipped to bits and hauled away to sell. I sing my fury about the predicament we're in as a species. I sing my protest of the political and corporate powers-that-be that drive forward relentlessly with business as usual, razing forests, drilling for more oil and fracked gas, digging for more coal, expanding pipeline construction, and opening up public lands and waters to endless exploitation, as if Earth were their private business and they were conducting a liquidation sale. I sing out my shame to the trees, my repentance and apology for the part I have played in Earth's destruction and for the part my ancestors played when they stole land and chopped down the original forests of the Native peoples who lived here. I sing my praise for the beauty of trees and my resolve not to let a day go by that I don't celebrate the precious living world of which we are so blessedly a part. I'm not finished until I sing my determination to renew action for trees and for all of God's Creation. . . .</p> <p>So our prayer may be noisy and expressive, or it may be very quiet. It may be the kind of prayer that depends on listening in stillness and silence with complete attention: listening to the crickets as they pulse at night, listening to the rain as it falls, listening to our breath as we breathe God in and breathe God out, listening to the inner voice of love that is always sounding in our</p>
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		<p>heart. A discipline of contemplative prayer or meditation can set us free from the frantic churn of thoughts and feelings and enable our spirit to rest and roam in a vaster, wilder space.</p> <p><b>From Richard Rohr's daily meditations</b>  <a href="http://www.cac.org">www.cac.org</a></p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>Car Free Day (22 September)</b></p> 
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>International Peace Day</b></p> <p>This year's theme is <b>Actions for Peace: Our Ambition for the #GlobalGoals</b>. It is a call to action that recognizes our individual and collective responsibility to foster peace. Fostering peace contributes to the realization of the <a href="#">Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</a> and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will create a culture of peace for all.</p>  <p>United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, "Peace is needed today more than ever. War and conflict are unleashing devastation, poverty, and hunger, and driving tens of millions of people from their homes. Climate chaos is all around. And even peaceful countries are gripped by gaping inequalities and political polarization."</p> <p>2023 marks the mid-point in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2023 observance of the International Day of Peace coincides with the <a href="#">SDG summit</a> (18 – 19 September) to mark the mid-point milestone.</p>  <p>The SDGs aim to bring us closer to having more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, free from fear and violence. But without the buy-in and contribution of a wide range of actors including the 1.2 billion young people alive, the goals will not be achieved. We invite you to join the United Nations' call to take action for peace: fight inequality, drive action on climate change, and promote and protect human rights.</p>

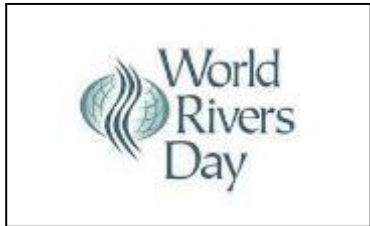
		<p>2023 is also the 75th anniversaries of both the <a href="#">Universal Declaration of Human Rights</a> and the <a href="#">Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide</a>. IDP 2023 encourages all youth to be ambitious in their engagement as positive and constructive social agents, to join the movement to reach the SDGs and contribute to building sustainable peace. Together we can help to lead our world towards a greener, more equitable, just, and secure future for all.</p> <p><i>Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, Founded on the covenant of your love. Amen</i></p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>World Rhino Day</b>  <b>A New Poaching Problem in South Africa</b></p> <p><i>Concerns are rising as trends show the poaching threat is moving to other areas inside and outside the country, placing rhinos in peril across southern Africa.</i></p> <p>A total of 448 rhinos were poached for their horns in South Africa in 2022 decreased slightly from the previous year. in 2022.</p> <p>South Africa accounts for about a third of the total black rhino population on the African continent and is also home to the world’s largest population of white rhinos</p> <p>Besides its large rhino population, a variety of factors has made Kruger National Park a target of poachers since the current poaching crisis began in 2008. Kruger’s expansive size makes it challenging to protect all areas and the high number of staff needed increases the likelihood of internal corruption that may enable poaching. Kruger also shares a border with Mozambique and is surrounded by poor, heavily populated local communities who are targeted by transnational criminal syndicates to do the dirty work needed to keep rhino horn on the black market.</p> <p>More recently though, poaching syndicates have increasingly shifted to other state, provincial and private reserves. This could be because of the significant population declines reported for black and white rhinos in Kruger . Fewer rhinos make poaching more difficult. That, combined with ongoing anti-poaching efforts, targeted investigations to address internal corruption and wide-scale dehorning in the Greater Kruger area, has led poachers to shift to hunting in other regions.</p> <p>Wildlife poaching, including for rhino horn, is controlled globally by large criminal syndicates. Poachers often change their methods in response to law enforcement efforts. The province of KwaZulu-Natal was badly impacted - the Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park was specifically targeted. Private reserves country-wide have also felt the poaching pressure. The movement of poaching activities is expected to continue and the Eastern Cape appears to be the next target. Poaching of rhinos is not isolated to one country but rather a regional issue that impacts multiple countries and the rhino population as a whole.</p> <p>The rise in poaching across southern Africa indicates that criminal networks have shifted activities across the region where rhinos can be found. Sharing of information and protection resources must be coordinated across borders to reverse these population declines before it is too late.</p> <p>South Africa reported that 132 arrests were made during 2022 for rhino poaching. A recent focus on money laundering and international cooperation with other law</p>



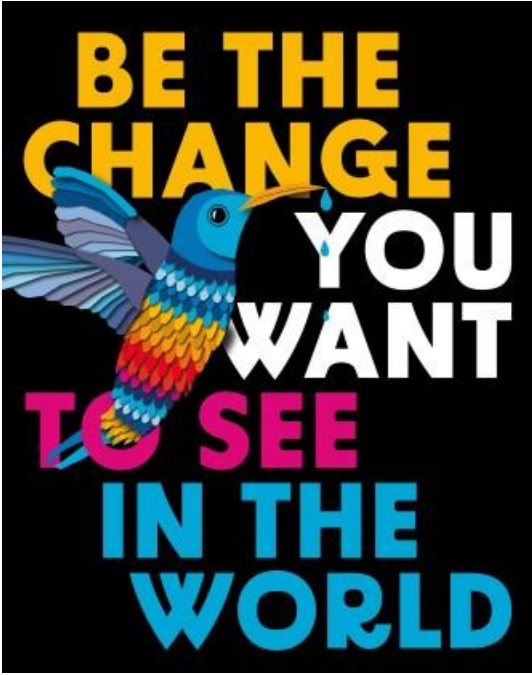
		<p>enforcement authorities saw the arrest of 26 rhino horn traffickers and 13 people for money laundering and bribing of rangers.</p> <p>The arrests are a good first step in the fight against wildlife crime. It is imperative that these suspects are now brought to trial quickly and punitive sentences are secured to ensure they do not go right back to their poaching activities.</p> <p>There are fewer than 27,000 rhinos left in the world today, and without collaborative protection and management, the five rhino species are all at risk of extinction.</p> <p><b>Pray</b> that the Government acts decisively and with urgency and increase capacity at all levels to protect rhinos throughout the country</p>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>23</b>	<p><b>Heritage Day (24 September)</b></p> <p>On this day all South Africans across the spectrum are encouraged to celebrate their culture and the diversity of their beliefs and traditions, in the wider context of a nation that belongs to <b>all</b> its people</p> <p><b>Let us Pray</b> 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</p> 
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>24</b>	<p>May the oppressed people and those who oppress them, free each other  May those who are handicapped, and those who think they are not, help each other  May those who need someone to listen touch the hearts of those who are too busy  May the homeless bring joy to those who open their doors reluctantly  May the lonely heal those who think they are self-sufficient  May the poor melt the hearts of the rich  May seekers for truth give life to those who are satisfied that they have found it  May the dying who do not wish to die be comforted by those who find it hard to live  May the unloved be allowed to unlock the hearts of those who cannot love  May prisoners find true freedom and liberate others from fear  May those who sleep on the streets share their gentleness with those who cannot understand them  May the hungry tear the veil from the eyes of those who do not hunger after justice  May those who live without hope cleanse the hearts of their brothers and sisters who are afraid to live  May the weak confound the strong and save them  May violence be overcome by compassion  May violence be absorbed by men and women of peace  May violence succumb to those who are totally vulnerable  That we may be healed  Amen</p>



<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>World Rivers Day (24 September)</b></p> <p>If we placed South African Rivers end-to-end, they would encircle the earth 4 times.</p> <p>The density of South Africa’s river network, as well as the volume of water carried, increases as we move across the country from the arid west to the wetter east. Nine Water Management Areas were established to allow the effective management of rivers and water resources that differ across the country.</p> <p>Unlike their European counterparts, the South African river network is not suited to accommodate large-scale transport but are a rich agriculture resource prone to overuse. With only 9 km of every 100 km of South Africa’s river network consisting of lowland rivers, care must be taken to protect this scarce resource.</p> <p>The health of South Africa’s rivers has worsened over the past few decades both in water quality and ecologically. Rivers are critically important ecosystems which transport freshwater through terrestrial environments providing niche habitats for aquatic vegetation and other life. Rivers provide an array of ecosystem goods and services such as sources of food and water for terrestrial species. In order to maintain aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity it is critical that our rivers remain in adequate ecological state with minimal impacts on hydrology; one of the most important drivers of river health.</p> <p>Our growing population negatively impacts our ever-dwindling surrounding natural environments, including rivers. Construction projects, mining, road laying, and other developments as well as general living can impact our rivers in some way. Rural communities are usually very dependent on rivers for survival in terms of a source of food and water.</p> <p>Our rivers, as well as our wetlands, are the lifeblood that drives the water-food-energy nexus. Feeding our dams with precious water, our river ecosystems carry life into our fields, homes and factories. If we fail to look after our rivers and wetlands, they will no longer be able to look after us.</p> <p>As citizens, we can all do our bit to protect our rivers and indeed our water resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using pesticides or fertilizers with the utmost care or preferably not at all, is extremely important. Many fertilizers and pesticides contain hazardous chemicals which travel through wastewater into our rivers. These can also travel through the soil and contaminate groundwater.</li> <li>• Pick your soaps for biodegradability whenever possible.</li> <li>• Never pour oil (motor oil or cooking oil) onto the street or down a drain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p>Holy God, earth and air and water are your creation, and every living thing belongs to you: have mercy on us as climate change confronts us. Give us the will and the courage to simplify the way we live, to reduce the energy we use, to share the resources you provide, and to bear the cost of change.</p>



<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>Psalm 104:10-17</b></p> <p><sup>10</sup> He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains.</p> <p><sup>11</sup> They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.</p> <p><sup>12</sup> The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches.</p> <p><sup>13</sup> He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.</p> <p><sup>14</sup> He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth: <sup>15</sup> wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts.</p> <p><sup>16</sup> The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.</p> <p><sup>17</sup> There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the junipers.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p>Father of Creation, God of Compassion, You created a world of wonder, Of possibility and potential. You declared it to be good. For this we give thanks. To you be praise, honour and glory.</p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste</b></p> <p>Across the globe today, an estimated 828 million people suffer from hunger, while 3.1 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and a shocking 2.3 billion people were moderately or severely food insecure.</p> <p>While hunger and food security continue to increase, an estimated 13 percent of the world’s food is lost in the supply chain from post-harvest prior to retail, a further 17 percent of food is wasted in households, food services and in retail.</p> <p>Currently, many of the world’s agrifood systems are unsustainable, as they degrade agricultural land, contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and loss of biodiversity and consume groundwater. Food systems are also vulnerable to external climate and other shocks, partly because of the impact on the environment.</p> <p>Reducing food loss and waste can play a key role in the transformation of agrifood systems by increasing the availability of food, contributing to food security, healthy diets, and building resilience. Food loss and food waste</p> <div data-bbox="1141 1330 1490 1688" data-label="Image"> </div>

		<p>reduction also serves as a key climate strategy by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). It can therefore help countries and businesses to raise climate ambition, while conserving and protecting our ecosystems and natural resources upon which the future of food depends.</p> <p>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – specifically SDG 12, target 12.3 – calls for halving per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains. Target 16 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) among other issues, also calls for “halving global food waste by 2030.”</p> <p>Accelerating the pace of actions to reduce Food loss and waste toward meeting the SDG 12.3 target, and the target set by the Global Biodiversity Framework for food waste reduction is a dire necessity to positively impact the pace of agrifood system transformation – with tangible benefits for people and planet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Examine your own food choices and wastage. Consider how best you can mitigate your food wastage.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Plant a small food/herb garden</i></b></li> </ul>
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>30</p>	 <p>The graphic features a vibrant hummingbird with blue, yellow, and red feathers, positioned in the center. The text is arranged around the bird: 'BE THE CHANGE' in large yellow letters at the top, 'YOU WANT TO SEE' in white and pink letters in the middle, and 'IN THE WORLD' in large blue letters at the bottom. A small blue water drop is visible near the bird's beak.</p>

