

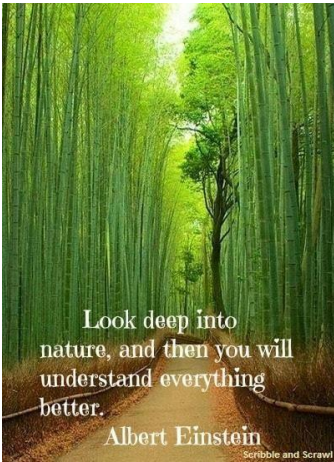




JAEI

December 2023 Environmental Prayer Diary

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

<p>Friday</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>COP28</p> <p>Archbishop Welby delivered a video message to the Global Leaders Faith Summit being held in Abu Dhabi on 5th & 6th November ahead of COP 28.</p> <p>Archbishop Justin reflected on the injustice of climate change, stressing how it negatively impacts on those “who have done the least to cause the problem” and increases the suffering of those “who already live in poverty and insecurity”.</p> <p>Drawing on some of his recent conversations around the world he said, “Time and time again I heard stories of people whose lives have been devastated by flooding in Bangladesh, cyclones in North America, rising sea levels in the Pacific Islands, famine in Madagascar, drought in South Sudan.”</p> <p>The Archbishop pushed for progress in three specific areas. He said, “There is much more to be done, domestically and internationally. From commitment to phasing out fossil fuels and developing technology that can deliver clean energy, to delivering on the 100\$ billion climate finance promised, and agreeing on a Loss and Damage Fund.”</p> <p>The Church of England has committed to carbon neutrality by 2030; completely de-investing in fossil fuels, and in 2022 it held a landmark conference of Bishops from 165 countries to develop climate policy.</p> <p>Video transcript</p> <p>“In 2022, Bishops from around the Anglican Communion gathered together in London for the Lambeth Conference. Together we spoke of the challenges millions of Christians are facing around the world. Time and time again I heard stories of people whose lives have been devastated by flooding in Bangladesh, cyclones in North America, rising sea levels in the Pacific Islands, famine in Madagascar, drought in South Sudan.</p> <p>From different corners of the world, the stories are - quite literally - flooding in of the consequences of the abuse of our planet – consequences that are being borne by our brothers and sisters who have done the least to cause the problem.</p> <p>From the beginning of the Christian and Jewish scriptures, we are tasked with caring for God’s creation.</p> <p>Christians believe that God has called us to care for the climate and for our neighbour, to seek the welfare of the poor and bring about justice. A crisis borne of injustice, which causes such suffering to those who already live in poverty and insecurity, and which threatens God’s own Earth, is one that demands our attention and our action.”</p> <p><i>Pray that COP28 will deliver on their promises in a God-lead way.</i></p>
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<p>Saturday</p>	<p>2</p>	 <p>Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. Albert Einstein <small>Scribble and Scrawl</small></p>
<p>Sunday</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>First Week of Advent</p> <p>All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.</p> <p>Author Unknown</p>
<p>Monday</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>International Cheetah Day</p> <p><i>Did you know</i> that the oldest known cheetah ancestor came from a fossil found in the depths of the Silberberg Grotto in South Africa's Sterkfontein caves? Scientists believe the animal lived over three million years ago and we re larger but less speedy than our modern-day zippy cats.</p>  <p>Today, Cheetahs face extinction pressure from climate change, habitat and prey reduction, illegal trade, human conflict, and low levels of genetic variation are all impacting their survival.</p> <p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for all involved in cheetah conservation • that illegal trade in wildlife species is brought to an end.
<p>Tuesday</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>World Soil Day</p> <p><i>“Nature has endowed the earth with glorious wonders and vast resources that man may use for his own ends. Regardless of our tastes or our way of living, there are none that present more variations to tax our imagination than the soil, and certainly none so important to our ancestors, to ourselves, and to our children.”</i> Charles Kellogg</p>  <p>World Soil Day aims to create awareness about the importance of the soil and stop people from damaging the planet due to ignorance.</p> <p>Soil is the thin layer of material covering the earth's surface and is formed from the weathering of rocks. It is made up mainly of mineral particles, organic materials, air, water and living organisms all of which interact slowly yet constantly. Soil is vital for both people and the planet – it is an important source of food and medicine, it filters</p>

and purifies our water, reduces flooding and plays a crucial role in the fight against climate change and 95% of our food comes from it. This fragment of our earth competes, sometimes unsuccessfully, with all other human activities such as urbanisation, unethical and bad agricultural practices, overgrazing, deforestation, pesticides and excess fertiliser use. It takes more than 1,000 years to grow about 1cm of topsoil!

A healthy soil is more than just “dirt” it is a living, dynamic ecosystem, teeming with microscopic and other life. Soil is a vital stock cupboard – not just for carbon, but for the food we depend on.

Ultimately, a better understanding of the link between soil life and ecosystem function and the impact of human interventions will reduce our negative impact on the soil.

Soil biodiversity (the life below ground,) is essential for most of the ecosystem services provided by soils, which benefit soil species and its multiple interactions (biotic and abiotic) in the environment. A wide range of soil organisms, from unicellular and microscopic forms, to invertebrates such as nematodes, insect larvae and earthworms, arthropods and their larval stages, to mammals, reptiles, and amphibians that spend considerable parts of their lives below ground.



In addition, there is a great diversity of algae and fungi, as well as a wide variety of symbiotic associations between soil microorganisms and algae, fungi, mosses, lichens, plant roots, and invertebrates. These organisms are part of a vast food web that ensures the cycling of energy and nutrients from microscopic forms through the soil's megafauna to organisms that live on top of the soil.

The chances are that we as individuals don't think about soil very often - even if we classify ourselves as “eco-minded”. We generally think more about the water, air, trees and animals before we think about soil, and whilst we are not full-scale commercial farmers, there is a huge amount that we can do in our everyday lives to protect our soil.


Here are a few pointers:



- Don't use pesticides in the garden! Pesticides don't only kill the critters that are “bugging” you, it gets into the soil and destroys the essential micro-life forms that are critical to good soil health.
- Limit your use of fertilisers and weed killers to the absolute minimum! – use organic compost and natural weed control.
- Prevent soil erosion -even in our gardens.
- Reduce Food Waste - the food we buy at the supermarket impacts the entire food supply system. One of the easiest ways we can support the soil is by limiting the amount of food that ends up in on the rubbish dump.
- Eat a Diverse Diet - by eating different types of foods, we can help create demand for a wide variety of agricultural products, which is better for soil.
- Keep a compost pile – composting can return nutrients in food back to nature.
- Plant indigenous! This can go a long way in restoring the soil and natural processes.

Each of us can raising awareness amongst our peers – both of the importance of soil and how it is currently at risk – it is crucial to bring soil health into the wider environmental debate. Until now, many of us have underestimated the richness and vitality of this unseen subterranean world.

Soil is a natural antidepressant. The smell of *Mycobacterium vaccae*, a microorganism found in the soil, compost and leaf mould, has indeed been found to stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. So, getting your hands dirty in the garden is good for you!

Now go outside and get digging!

<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Encyclical Letter <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> of Pope Francis on the Fraternity and Social Friendship</p> <p>Chapter Three - Envisaging and engendering an open world</p>  <p><i>Open societies that integrate everyone</i></p> <p>97. Some peripheries are close to us, in city centres or within our families. Hence there is an aspect of universal openness in love that is existential rather than geographical. It has to do with our daily efforts to expand our circle of friends, to reach those who, even though they are close to me, I do not naturally consider a part of my circle of interests. Every brother or sister in need, when abandoned or ignored by the society in which I live, becomes an existential foreigner, even though born in the same country. They may be citizens with full rights, yet they are treated like foreigners in their own country. Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting.</p> <p>98. I would like to mention some of those “hidden exiles” who are treated as foreign bodies in society.[76] Many persons with disabilities “feel that they exist without belonging and without participating”. Much still prevents them from being fully enfranchised. Our concern should be not only to care for them but to ensure their “active participation in the civil and ecclesial community. That is a demanding and even tiring process, yet one that will gradually contribute to the formation of consciences capable of acknowledging each individual as a unique and unrepeatable person”. I think, too, of “the elderly who, also due to their disability, are sometimes considered a burden”. Yet each of them is able to offer “a unique contribution to the common good through their remarkable life stories”. Let me repeat: we need to have “the courage to give a voice to those who are discriminated against due to their disability, because sadly, in some countries even today, people find it hard to acknowledge them as persons of equal dignity”.[77]</p> <p><i>Prayerfully consider how this is affecting our own Country</i></p>
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>Revelation 5:11-14</p> <p>¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they were saying:</p> <p>“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!”</p> <p>¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:</p> <p>“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!”</p> <p>¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.</p>

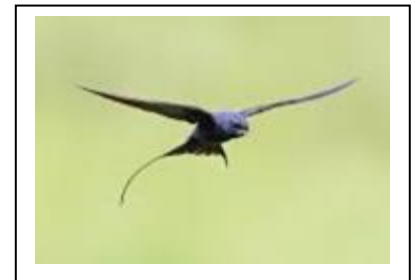
<p>Friday</p>	<p>8</p>	
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>Oh how beautiful are your ways, O God, the works of your creation. Raise our consciousness to know and feel deeply in our hearts our connectedness to all that is.</p> <p>Instil in us the gift of being co-creators and sustainers of life. Teach us new and unsuspected ways of living so that current and future generations can walk humbly in beauty, love all compassionately, and live justly in solidarity with all creation.</p> <p>Loving and gracious God, give us the courage to seek this transformation of self and society and the strength to see it through. Amen</p>
<p>Sunday</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Second Week of Advent</p> <p>God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.</p> <p>Amen.</p> <p>Author Unknown</p>
<p>Monday</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>International Mountain Day 2023</p> <p>2023 theme: Restoring mountain ecosystems</p> <p>This theme was selected to fully include mountains in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, co-led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and the UN Environment Programme.</p> <p>Mountains cover around 27 percent of the Earth's land surface and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. As the water towers of the world, they supply freshwater to an estimated half of humanity. Mountains are home to an extraordinary range of plants and animals, and to many culturally diverse communities with different languages and traditions. From</p> 

climate regulation and water provisioning services, to soil maintenance and conservation, mountains are key to our lives and livelihoods.

In South Africa, the mountains found on the high central plateau of South Africa, and the inland areas of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (the topography varying from rolling hillsides and the escarpment itself), are part of the Grassland Biome and is one of the most at-risk South African biomes, with 40-60% irreversibly modified, and less than 3% formally protected.

The Grassland Biome are one of South Africa's most biodiverse biomes (only second to the fynbos in terms of plant biodiversity) with 3 370 plant species. Contrary to popular belief, the grasslands biome does not contain only grass species. In fact, only one in six plant species in the grassland biome are grasses. The remainder are bulbous plants and forbs that include arum lilies, orchids, red-hot pokers, aloes, watsonias, gladioli and ground orchids. Trees are absent or very sparse. Birds also love this biome

As mountain grasslands dwindle, so too does the biodiversity they sustain. Grassland mammals like Oribi and grey rhebok, rough-haired golden mole and Sloggett's rat have experienced population declines, while grassland bird species (like the Drakensberg Prinia, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Drakensberg Rockjumper and Drakensberg Siskin) have been particularly hard hit, as has the critically endangered Blue Swallow of the Mpumalanga escarpment. 13 of the 93 species of threatened reptiles and amphibians in South Africa occur in the grassland biome. 11 of these are endemic to the biome, such as the yellow-bellied house snake, sun gazer lizard and Drakensberg river frog.



Grasslands play a vital role in ecosystem processes and great collectors of rainwater in South Africa. They reduce runoff and thus erosion, hold the water as ground water, or in wetlands, and release it slowly throughout the year. This sponge effect ensures that rivers run throughout the year, even in the dry season. Ensuring a steady supply of water is critical to human survival and to economic development.

Over the last century, exotic timber plantations have destroyed much of the mountainous grasslands and continue to do so today. Livestock over-grazing and unnatural fire regimes (burning too often at the wrong time of year) also threaten the biome as do invasive alien plants.

Grasslands are vast biodiverse areas and vital for the sustainability of human wellbeing and ultimately, it comes down to changing the way we think about our precious grasslands and do everything we can to help them thrive. As humans we often forget that we are just another cog in a big natural wheel that is turning.

***We can all help by limiting our carbon and ecological footprints!
Prayerfully consider what you can do***

<p>Tuesday</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>“For one week, walk outside daily and pay close attention to each element of our planet. On the first day, appreciate the warmth of the sun. On the second, feel the ground beneath your feet. On the third, examine rain clouds or bodies of water. On the fourth, count as many stars as you can. On the fifth, feed birds on a park bench. And on the sixth day, try to find as many animals in your neighbourhood as possible – a bird or a *squirrel can be fun to follow. Fostering appreciation and awareness for all of God’s creations will bring us closer to spiritual grounding on earth.”</p> <p>Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch <i>Co-editor of the Eco-bible</i></p> <p>(*We’re not going to find squirrels here in Johannesburg, but we do have plenty of birds!)</p>
<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>The Birth of Christ in Us Is What Matters</p> <p><i>Make ready for the Christ, Whose smile, like lightning, Sets free the song of everlasting glory That now sleeps, in your paper flesh, like dynamite.</i></p> <p>—Thomas Merton, “The Victory”</p> <p>Anglican mystic and author Evelyn Underhill (1875–1941) shares her perspective on the importance of Jesus’ incarnation and this season in the church’s life:</p> <p>The Christmas Mystery has two parts: the Nativity and the Epiphany. A deep instinct made the Church separate these two feasts. In the first we commemorate God’s humble entrance into human life, the emergence and birth of the Holy, and in the second its manifestation to the world, the revelation of the Supernatural made in that life. And the two phases concern our inner lives very closely too. The first only happens in order that the second may happen, and the second cannot happen without the first. Christ is a Light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the Glory of His people Israel. Think of what the Gentile was when these words were written—an absolute outsider. All cosy religious exclusiveness falls before that thought. The Light of the world is not the sanctuary lamp in your favourite church. . . .</p> <p><i>Underhill continues by exploring what it means for Christ to be born in our lives and souls:</i></p> <p>Beholding His Glory is only half our job. In our souls too the mysteries must be brought forth; we are not really Christians till that has been done. “The Eternal Birth,” says [Meister] Eckhart, “must take place in <i>you</i>.” [1] And another mystic says human nature is like a stable inhabited by the ox of passion and the ass of prejudice; animals which take up a lot of room and which I suppose most of us are feeding on the quiet. And it is there between them, pushing them out, that Christ must be born and in their very manger He must be laid—and they will be the first to fall on their knees before Him. Sometimes Christians seem far nearer to those animals than to Christ in His simple poverty, self-abandoned to God.</p> <p>The birth of Christ in our souls is for a purpose beyond ourselves: it is because His manifestation in the world must be through us. Every Christian is, as it were, part of the dust-laden air which shall radiate the glowing Epiphany of</p>




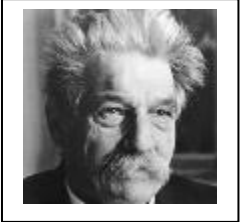

		<p>God, catch and reflect His golden Light. <i>Ye are the light of the world</i>—but only because you are enkindled, made radiant by the One Light of the World. And being kindled, we have got to get on with it, be useful. As Christ said in one of His ironical flashes, “Do not light a candle in order to stick it under the bed!” [Mark 4:21] . . .</p> <p>When you don’t see any startling marks of your own religious condition or your usefulness to God, think of the Baby in the stable and the little Boy in the streets of Nazareth. The very life was there which was to change the whole history of the human race.</p> <p>From Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations www.cac.org</p>
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>Do you hear what I hear?</p> <p>Said the night wind to the little lamb Do you see what I see? (Do you see what I see?) Way up in the sky, little lamb Do you see what I see? (Do you see what I see?) A star, a star, dancing in the night With a tail as big as a kite With a tail as big as a kite</p> <p>Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy Do you hear what I hear? (Do you hear what I hear?) Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy Do you hear what I hear? (Do you hear what I hear?)</p> <p>A song, a song high above the trees With a voice as big as the sea With a voice as big as the sea</p> <p>Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king Do you know what I know? (Do you know what I know?) In your palace warm, mighty king Do you know what I know? (Do you know what I know?)</p> <p>A Child, a Child shivers in the cold Let us bring him silver and gold Let us bring him silver and gold</p> <p>Said the king to the people everywhere Listen to what I say! (Listen to what I say!) Pray for peace, people, everywhere Listen to what I say! (Listen to what I say!) The Child, the Child sleeping in the night He will bring us goodness and light He will bring us goodness and light</p> <p>Lyrics by Bing Crosby Listen</p>





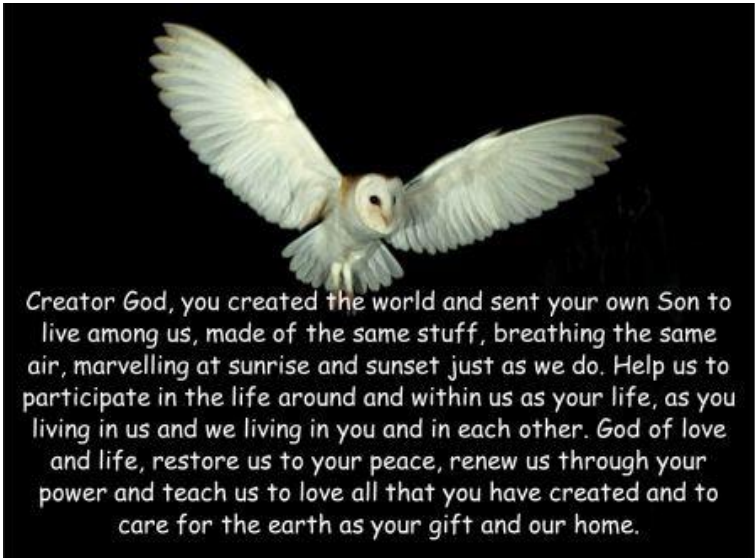
<p>Friday</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>We come to you, Lord, for the hungry of this world, that they might find food to eat. We come to you, Lord, for the thirsty of this world, that they might find water to drink. We come to you, Lord, for the homeless of the world that they might find somewhere to live. We come to you, Living Water, Bread of Life, for whom this earth was but a temporary home, that these, your precious people might find within your mercy and gracious provision an answer to their needs.</p>
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>Day of Reconciliation</p> <p><i>Today, have fun with the children and go and discover Nature Treasures</i></p> <p>Go outside for a walk or play in your backyard. Any amount of outdoor space will do, and if you have to stay indoors you can look for pieces of nature even inside the house (fruit, pets, flowers, plants...)</p> <p>Wonder about and pay attention to your surroundings. Remember that God is with you. After a while, notice what you see that you think is beautiful or interesting. Get closer to your nature finding and look at it closely. If you can, touch, smell, and perhaps (if it's safe) even taste it. Become quiet and notice what you feel inside your body as you look at it. How does it make you feel? How does God feel when He looks at it? Together with God, wonder what it might say to you if it could talk. What may God say to you through it?</p> <p>Maybe you want to bring your nature treasure home with you and place it in a special place for you. Or you can draw it at home if you cannot bring it with you.</p> <p>The youngest members of the family will enjoy making special toilet roll binoculars for their treasure hunt and use a magnifying glass as they listen, look and wonder closely.</p> <p><i>Enjoy your time together</i></p>
<p>Sunday</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>Third Week of Advent</p> <p>Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.</p> <p><i>Author Unknown</i></p>
<p>Monday</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>“Everything around us, including the delicate balance in nature that makes life on Earth possible, makes it clear: Our world didn’t “just happen.” Our world was designed, and even today Earth is guided and protected by God.”</p> <p><i>Lawrence O. Richards</i> <i>Author and Theologian</i></p>



<p>Tuesday</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>In this your beautiful but fragile world, bless those who dedicate their lives to its care, who within their hearts have a passion to protect its oceans, forests, plants and creatures, who are stewards of this world that is our home; this world, created by your hand, given life by your breath, - a precious place. This, your gift to us; its waters refreshing, its soil providing, its air sustaining. In this your beautiful but fragile world, bless those who dedicate their lives to its care.</p>
<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>20</p>	
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>Advent and Ecological Conversion</p> <p>In Isaiah 40:3-5 we read A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.”</p> <p>We are called to conversion, to a change of heart, in preparation for Christmas. Part of that conversion includes a change of heart in our relationships with the earth, in our relationships with the creatures of the world, and of course in our relationships with each other and the enduring presence of the Creator-Spirit within creation.</p> <p>Pope Francis is very clear that we cannot save the planet without conversion (LS 216-221). He talks explicitly about the call to interior conversion and communal conversion. The conversion required during Advent in preparation for Christmas must include an ecological conversion that calls each one of us to protect and nurture the integrity of God’s Creation. Being a Christian in the 21st century carries with it a commitment to care for God’s creation, not as optional, but as something essential to Christian faith to day.</p> <p>Prayer – (After Bruce Sanguin)</p> <p>O Holy One, we are a sleepy lot, slow to stir to the calling of the cosmos, deaf to the cries of the Earth and the forgotten ones, human and other-than- human. “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,” cries the prophet, and end this slumber that blocks out pain, and with it, wonder. Our hope, O Holy One, is found in eyes wide open, in small gestures of compassion, and in alertness to your coming, again and again. So we await to be set on fire with hope, and gospel passion for the earth.</p> <p>https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/2018/11/26/eci-reflection-advent-and-ecological-conversion/</p>

<p>Friday</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>“Nature compels us to recognize the fact of mutual dependence, each life necessarily helping the other lives who are linked to it. In the very fibres of our being, we bear within ourselves the fact of the solidarity of life. “</p> <p>Albert Schweitzer</p> 
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>Embrace this world, it is a fragile place in need of healing, where arrogance and self-interest seek to undermine your common good, and those in need take second place to those who have.</p> <p>Embrace this world, wash it in your tears of mercy and love, and bring healing and restoration into its brokenness</p> <p>dear Lord, we pray.</p>
<p>Sunday</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>Fourth Week of Advent</p> <p>All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.</p> <p>Author Unknown</p> <p><i>Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!</i></p>
<p>Monday</p>	<p>25</p>	 <p>As we rejoice and celebrate this wonderful season of Christmas, let us not forget to thank baby Jesus for coming into our lives. Let us together prepare ourselves to welcome him into the homes of our hearts.</p> <p>May you be blessed with a giving spirit, quietness of mind and serenity in heart, and may all beings be blessed with the same gifts</p>

<p>Tuesday</p>	<p>26</p>	
<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>God of Justice, you instructed your people to treat your world with respect and care: Lord, we confess that we have often taken your creation for granted; We have taken what we needed, without respecting the balance of nature; we have pursued a lifestyle which our fragile world cannot sustain. <i>God of Grace, forgive us our greed and teach us restraint.</i></p> <p>God of the Poor, you instructed your people to share your natural resources with those in need: <i>Lord, we confess that we have taken much more than our fair share of this beautiful world;</i> We have allowed our wealth and power to strip the earth bare, leaving nothing for the poor; We have enjoyed cheap goods and convenient lifestyles, made possible by the exploitation of those in need; <i>God of Grace, forgive us our blindness and open our eyes</i></p> <p>God of love, you instructed your people to treat every human being with equal value: Lord, we confess that we have let greed blind us to the needs of other human beings; We have treated your good earth as a commodity, rather than as the home we share; We have let apathy and consumerism blind us to our God-given responsibilities; <i>God of Grace, forgive us our complacency and stir us to action.</i></p> <p>“With eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay.” <i>God of Grace, we thank you for the gift of forgiveness, won for us by your son’s death on the cross;</i> <i>Through him, we gladly claim our glorious freedom, and look forward to the day when all creation will share it with us</i> Amen.</p> <p>Lyndall Bywate <i>(Inspired by Deuteronomy 24:10-21; quote from Romans 8:20-21 NLT)</i></p>
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>“The future of the human race is now at stake.” Rowan Williams, <i>Former Archbishop of Canterbury</i></p>

<p>Friday</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>Breath Prayer Stones</p> <p>Settle down and close your eyes. Take a deep breath in and out. Imagine God blowing His breath of life and love into your nostrils. Take another big deep breath. Then imagine God asking you, “what do you want me to do for you? Silently, in your heart tell God in a word or a few words what you need or hope for. Then use this little prayer and repeat it to the rhythm of your own breath. For example, “God, help me to care for Creation”, “God, show me how I can care for Creation”.</p>  <p>After a while find a smooth rock and paint or draw your breath prayer on the rock. You can again place this prayer stone somewhere special in your room or home, so that it can remind you to pray your prayer again later.</p>
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>30</p>	 <p>Creator God, you created the world and sent your own Son to live among us, made of the same stuff, breathing the same air, marvelling at sunrise and sunset just as we do. Help us to participate in the life around and within us as your life, as you living in us and we living in you and in each other. God of love and life, restore us to your peace, renew us through your power and teach us to love all that you have created and to care for the earth as your gift and our home.</p>
<p>Monday</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>As we look forward to a New Year,the Work of Christmas Begins</p> <p>When the carols have been stilled, When the star-topped tree is taken down, When family and friends are gone home, When we are back to our schedules The work of Christmas begins: To welcome the refugee, To heal a broken planet, To feed the hungry, To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear, To share our gifts, To seek justice and peace for all people, To bring Christ’s light to the world.</p> <p>Michael Dougherty <i>A variation on Howard Thurman’s ‘When the Song of the Angels is Stilled’</i></p>