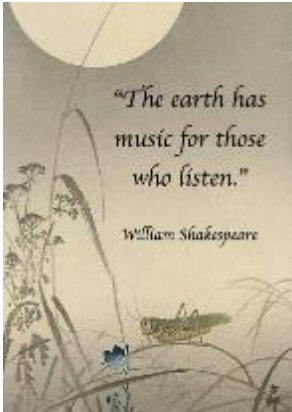




# JAEI

## March 2024 Environmental Prayer Diary

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



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| <p><b>Friday</b></p>   | <p><b>1</b></p> |    |
| <p><b>Saturday</b></p> | <p><b>2</b></p> | <p><b><i>A quarter of the world's mammals and one fifth of the world's plants are under threat of extinction.</i></b></p> <p>Lord we thank you for this beautiful world with its amazing variety of animals and plants.</p> <p>Please help us to understand your world more - to appreciate the beauty of nature.</p> <p>Encourage us to make wildlife conservation areas in our churchyards, gardens, parks and farms and to take part in local nature surveys.</p> <p>Help us to support wildlife conservation charities with our money and our words.</p> <p>May we never forget that we are stewards of your creation and that we hold it in trust for future generations.</p> <p>Amen</p>   |
| <p><b>Sunday</b></p>   | <p><b>3</b></p> | <p><b>Third Sunday in Lent</b></p> <p><i>“All of you who are thirsty, come to the water! Whoever has no money, come, buy food and eat! Without money, at no cost, buy wine and milk!”</i></p> <p>This invitation to come and feast may seem counter-intuitive to those of us in the middle of the Lenten wilderness. The invitation to feast may seem ill-timed to those of us in the struggle to heal God’s creation. It’s time to work, not party! It’s time to engage - write letters, attend webinars, study, teach, and join demonstrations (and indeed it is). The invitation to feast may seem a bit pollyannaish to many of us who are tired, broke, and bereft of hopefulness. This invitation comes to us when we are smack dab in the middle of our wilderness journey. We have gone too far to turn back, and our destination is still too far away to see. We are vulnerable, tired, and we’re not sure if we have anything left to spend.</p> <p>And yet, to those of us who are tired, thirsty, and despairing, the invitation comes nonetheless. It’s in the wilderness where we need the invitation the</p> |

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|                      |                 | <p>most. It's in the middle, when we are running on empty, that the invitation can have its greatest power to keep us going forward.</p> <p>Did you notice that the word doesn't say everything is free? It still costs! But the funds are not ours. We may be broke, but God's Spirit tucks enough grace, hope, and love into our hands so that everyone, anyone, all of us can get what need to taste the abundant feast that is the beloved community of God's kingdom.</p> <p>More often than I like to admit, though I do my best to hide it, I worry that we won't have enough to make it all the way to where we need to be. That can wear me out. But then we fellow travellers gather together as siblings and we hear the invitation from our God who promises resurrection after death. The audacious invitation proclaims that our faith is not one cowed by scarcity. We celebrate abundance.</p> <p>Seeing each other's faces, holding each other's hands, carrying each other's loads when they get too heavy, and sharing hope, grace, and love when one runs out, we move forward-trusting and tasting, together.</p> <p>Come, join the feast. "</p> <p><b>Paul Heins</b><br/> <a href="https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aid">https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aid</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Monday</b></p> | <p><b>4</b></p> | <p><b>World Wildlife Day (3 March)</b></p> <p>Billions of people, in developed and developing nations, benefit daily from the use of wild species for food, energy, materials, medicine, recreation, inspiration and many other vital contributions to human well-being.</p> <p>The accelerating global biodiversity crisis, with a million species of plants and animals facing extinction, threatens these contributions to people.</p> <div data-bbox="1098 1176 1474 1346" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>World Wildlife Day (WWD) is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that their conservation provides to people. At the same time, the Day reminds us of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species, which have wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts. Given these various negative effects, <a href="#">Sustainable Development Goal 15</a> focuses on halting biodiversity loss.</p> <p>The illegal wildlife trade (IWT) is organised crime on a global scale, devastating wildlife and pushing some of the world's most iconic species like elephants and rhinos towards extinction.</p> <p>This criminal trade is estimated to be worth up to \$20 billion annually as poachers and traffickers illegally trade wildlife and wildlife body parts, such as rhino horn, ivory, pangolin scales or lion and tiger parts, among many others. This illegal trade is a major threat to global biodiversity and human health, and is linked to money laundering, corruption and extreme violence, as well as the</p> |

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|                       |                 | <p>trafficking of drugs and weapons. Wildlife crime poses an international threat to our nature, health and security</p> <p><i>United for Wildlife</i> was founded by Prince William and The Royal Foundation in 2014 to protect endangered species from this abhorrent trade. At its core, United for Wildlife fosters global collaboration in the private sector to stop the trafficking of wildlife products. It does this through two Taskforces: a Financial Taskforce and a Transport Taskforce. These Taskforces bring together some of the world's largest businesses in the transport and financial sectors to break the chains of the illegal wildlife trade.</p> <p>Countries all over the world are making a collective effort to tackle the issue and the regional expansion of the Taskforces is key to this success. There are currently five regional chapters including Southern Africa, East Africa, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia and Australasia, and the Middle East and North Africa. By sharing knowledge and information across sectors and between countries, <i>United for Wildlife</i> is transforming illegal wildlife trade prevention and the prosecution of those who profit from these crimes. <i>United for Wildlife</i> offers a global solution to end this global problem.</p> <p><b><i>Pray for those who continually put their own lives at risk in combating illegal poaching and trade of wildlife.</i></b></p>  |
| <p><b>Tuesday</b></p> | <p><b>5</b></p> | <p><b>The Christification of the Universe</b></p> <p><i>The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.</i> —John 6:51</p> <p>Jesus the Christ did not talk in this truly shocking way (see John 6:60) so we could worship bread and wine. He came so that we would recognize his presence in all things, not just in the human body of Jesus, not just in the human body of God's people (1 Corinthians 12:12ff), but even in the nurturing elements of the earth, symbolized by the ubiquitous food of bread and wine (1 Corinthians 11:23ff), and therefore to the very edges of creation (Romans 8:19). The mystery that was made personal and specific in Jesus was revealed as the shape of the entire universe. ] What else could the universe be but "the body of God"? Think about it. The Incarnate One is the stand-in for "everything in heaven and everything on earth" (Ephesians 1:10). This is not a competing religious statement as much as a highly symbolic metaphysical plan "from the beginning," "from the foundation of the world" (see Ephesians 1).</p> <p>God is not just saving people; God is saving all of creation. It is all "Real Presence." We could call it the primordial "Christification" or anointing of the universe at Creation. This is not pantheism (God is everything), but panentheism (God is <i>in</i> everything!). Such a central message of cosmic incarnation was never seriously taught in the Western, overly individualistic church, except by a few like Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), and Bonaventure (1221-1274). It was much more common in the Eastern Church, especially in early scholars and mystics like Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, and Symeon the New Theologian.</p> |




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|                         |                 | <p>Inspired by the more contemporary mystic scientist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Franciscan sister and scientist Ilia Delio writes:</p> <p>Christ invests himself organically within all creation, immersing himself in things, in the heart of matter, and thus unifying the world. The universe is physically impregnated to the very core of its matter by the influence of his superhuman nature. Everything is physically “christified,” gathered up by the incarnate Word as nourishment that assimilates, transforms, and divinizes.</p> <p>From the way we treat the planet, other humans, and sometimes even ourselves, it seems we don’t understand or really believe this. When you <i>don’t</i> recognize that the Christ Mystery is universal, that God is present in—and is saving—all of creation, you can choose what you respect and what you disrespect, what you love and what you hate. The full Gospel takes away from you any power to decide and discriminate where God is and where God isn’t. The old Baltimore Catechism answered the sixteenth question, “Where is God?” quite clearly: “God is everywhere.” But we never really believed it!</p> <p><b>Gateway to Silence:</b><br/> Brother Sun, Sister Moon, help me see God in all things.</p> <p><b>From Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations</b><br/> <a href="http://www.cac.org">www.cac.org</a></p> |
| <p><b>Wednesday</b></p> | <p><b>6</b></p> | <p><b>Reflection</b></p> <p>“Access to water is a human right. Water is the basis of all life. The unique role water plays in human life is reflected in the key role water has been given in texts and rituals in most religions all over the world. In our Christian interpretation, water signifies life cleansing and sanctity, but also compassion and generosity.</p> <p>In our times water is a scarce resource for more than a thousand-million people. The nations of the world have agreed to cut hunger in half between 2000 and 2015. If this goal is to be achieved we have to make lasting improvements in the water situation in the world around us. We all share a responsibility to find the solutions.”</p> <p><b>Archbishop Anders Wejryd of Uppsala, Church of Sweden</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Thursday</b></p>  | <p><b>7</b></p> | <p><b>Encyclical Letter <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> of Pope Francis on the Fraternity and Social Friendship</b></p> <p><b>Chapter Three - Envisaging and engendering an open world</b></p> <p><b>Liberty, equality and fraternity</b></p> <p>103. Fraternity is born not only of a climate of respect for individual liberties, or even of a certain administratively guaranteed equality. Fraternity necessarily calls for something greater, which in turn enhances freedom and equality. What happens when fraternity is not consciously cultivated, when there is a lack of political will to promote it through education in fraternity, through dialogue and through the recognition of the values of reciprocity and mutual enrichment? Liberty becomes nothing more than a condition for living as we will, completely free to choose to whom or what we will belong, or</p> <div data-bbox="1225 1514 1489 1688" data-label="Image"> </div>   |

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|                        |                 | <p>simply to possess or exploit. This shallow understanding has little to do with the richness of a liberty directed above all to love.</p> <p>104. Nor is equality achieved by an abstract proclamation that “all men and women are equal”. Instead, it is the result of the conscious and careful cultivation of fraternity. Those capable only of being “associates” create closed worlds. Within that framework, what place is there for those who are not part of one’s group of associates, yet long for a better life for themselves and their families?</p> <p>105. Individualism does not make us more free, more equal, more fraternal. The mere sum of individual interests is not capable of generating a better world for the whole human family. Nor can it save us from the many ills that are now increasingly globalized. Radical individualism is a virus that is extremely difficult to eliminate, for it is clever. It makes us believe that everything consists in giving free rein to our own ambitions, as if by pursuing ever greater ambitions and creating safety nets we would somehow be serving the common good.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully consider how this is affecting our own Country</i></b></p> |
| <p><b>Friday</b></p>   | <p><b>8</b></p> | <p><b>Water Creed</b></p> <p>We believe in God who has created and is creating and who breathes life and purpose into all of creation.</p> <p>We believe in Jesus, Son of God, Living Water, Bread of Life, Our Way and Truth, Light and Love.</p> <p>We believe in the Spirit who danced over the waters at the dawn of creation and who calls us to join in that dance of joy with the whole of creation today!</p> <p>We believe water is a precious gift for the benefit of all, not a commodity for the benefit of the few.</p> <p>We believe water teaches us to thirst for justice, peace, reconciliation, love and hope.</p>    |
| <p><b>Saturday</b></p> | <p><b>9</b></p> | <p>“This is suicidal... our home is the biosphere. That's a very thin layer of air, water and land where all life exists. It's fixed, it can't grow, and yet we cling to this idea that the economy can grow forever ... and it must. Well, it can't!”</p> <p><b><i>David Suzuki</i></b></p>   |



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| <p><b>Sunday</b></p> | <p><b>10</b></p> | <p><b>Fourth Sunday in Lent</b></p> <p>“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” - <i>2 Corinthians 5:17</i></p> <p>There is a new creation - every day. God is doing a new thing, day after day, moment to moment. And God is inviting us to be part of it, to participate in the ongoing evolution, ongoing creation of the universe. The newer translations of 2 Corinthians 5:17 remind us that we are connected to the rest of creation: our renewal is connected to the renewal of all creation.</p> <p>The familiar story of the Good Samaritan reminds us that part of the newness God calls us to embody is new relationships. We are called to love.</p> <p>Who is our neighbour? Not only the people we love, and feel connected to, Jesus says, but people we've thought of as different, or enemies. Franciscan sister and scientist Ilia Delio reminds us that the French Jesuit palaeontologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote “[Love- energy] is the most universal, the most tremendous, and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces. . . . The physical structure of the universe is love.” Delio comments: “Teilhard’s insights on love-energy as the core energy of evolution provide a new basis to understand cosmic nature. If being is intrinsically relational, then nothing exists independently or autonomously. Rather, “to be” is “to be with.” [Teilhard de Chardin, <i>Human Energy</i>, 72, quoted in Ilia Delio, <i>The Unbearable Wholeness of Being</i>.]</p> <p>We are with creation - the trees, the birds, the insects, the animals, the fungi are also our neighbours. When we love them as we are called to love our neighbours, we understand that we are part of a creation community in which all creation is part of our neighbourhood. And as we embody the love-energy of God in our relationships with other humans, and all creation, we participate in God’s making all things new, including us.</p> <p>We're part of the blessing of God's new creation; The world may not see it, but we know it's true. For God in Christ Jesus has given salvation; The old life is gone! God makes everything new! “</p> <p><b>Rev. Dr. Susan Gilbert Zencka</b><br/> <a href="https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aid">https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aid</a></p> |
| <p><b>Monday</b></p> | <p><b>11</b></p> | <p><b>Isaiah 43:1-2</b></p> <p><b>Israel’s Only Savior</b></p> <p>But now, this is what the LORD says—<br/> he who created you, Jacob,<br/> he who formed you, Israel:<br/> “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;<br/> I have summoned you by name; you are mine.<br/> <sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters,<br/> I will be with you;<br/> and when you pass through the rivers,<br/> they will not sweep over you.<br/> When you walk through the fire,<br/> you will not be burned;<br/> the flames will not set you ablaze.</p>  |



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| <p><b>Tuesday</b></p>   | <p><b>12</b></p> | <p>God of all creation, as we look at the environment, your divine power and immense love are ever present. We thank you for the beautiful creation and abundant resources you have provided your children. We ask for your help in revealing how we can be better stewards of your creation. Help us to use only the resources we need, never being selfish by taking more than necessary. Please give us the opportunity to appropriately share our wealth with those who are less fortunate instead of disposing of our surplus. Help us to remember that the environment is home to all life and that we must take up the responsibility to ensure all life is respected. We thank you for this day and ask for your blessing on this journey. <b>Amen</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Wednesday</b></p> | <p><b>13</b></p> | <div data-bbox="726 571 1209 1041" data-label="Image"> </div>  |
| <p><b>Thursday</b></p>  | <p><b>14</b></p> | <p><b>International Day of Action for Rivers</b></p> <p>The severity of the pollution of South Africa’s rivers has a huge impact on the country’s economy, environment and people, as does the lack of maintenance of water infrastructure.</p> <p>Acid mine drainage accounts for much of the contaminants contributing to polluted rivers across the country with E-coli bacteria doing its fair share of harm. Add to this pollution agricultural pesticides and fertilizers as well as domestic pollution and run-off, all combine to make a very serious issue affecting both health economic development nationwide.</p> <p>This serves as a stark reminder of the state of water quality in South African rivers, highlighting the need for urgent action to address the issue of water pollution. It is a call to action for all citizens to come together and take steps to improve the health of our rivers in the country.</p> <div data-bbox="1189 1176 1497 1451" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="459 1774 986 1944" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>This statistic is a stark reminder of the severity of water pollution in South Africa. It highlights the fact that the majority of the country’s drinking water sources are in a precarious state, and that urgent action is needed to protect them. It serves as</p> |

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|                      |                  | <p>a call to action for all South Africans to take steps to reduce water pollution and protect their water sources.</p> <p>Each and everyone of us need to take the necessary steps to protect our rivers from pollution, and this begins in our homes and gardens.</p> <p>Steps to take include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't waste precious water</li> <li>• Don't use pesticides and use fertilizers sparingly and with extreme caution</li> <li>• Don't dispose of oil (of any kind) or any toxic substance (including prescription medication) down the drain.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Friday</b></p> | <p><b>15</b></p> | <p><b>Celebrating Spiders</b></p> <p>Sadly South Africa does not have a special day (as they do in the US on 14 March), to celebrate our arachnid friends, but we shall do so anyway!</p> <p>Southern Africa has well over 2,200 known species of spiders with very few that are of medical importance. Most 'spider bites' are not spider bites but wounds caused by infections and other invertebrates. There has never been a fatal spider bite in Southern Africa.</p> <p>The name Arachnida, the class to which spiders belong, is derived from the Greek word Arachne which means "spider" The legend of the Greek girl Arachne who could weave very beautifully is also part of it. Arachne challenged Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom, to a weaving contest. When Athena saw how beautiful the tapestry was that Arachne produced, she became furious and tore it apart. Arachne was so unhappy about this that she tried to hang herself, but Athena decided to spare her life and changed her into a spider, damning her to spinning forever.</p>  <p>As with so many creatures that are totally misunderstood, urban legends abound. Urban legends are fascinating – from exploding cacti full of spiders to baby spiders emerging from under one's skin!.... These pieces of modern folklore are as creepy as they are entertaining, and provide a wonderful insight into how entirely made-up, far-fetched stories, can be believed and passed on, as long as they sound scary and shocking enough. Of course, they are often told for fun and entertainment, but there are also many people who sincerely believe in some of them and accept them as fact.</p> <p>A big part of their efficiency comes from their tendency to tap into the widespread fears and beliefs of the place and time they exist in. These cultural context elements, which give birth to the urban tales and transpire through them, can be highly specific to one particular location (such as a particularly creepy and mysterious abandoned building in a specific town) or be more vague, and representative of the concerns and anxieties of an entire demographic. The fear of all things foreign and unfamiliar, and of these foreign threats making an unwelcome intrusion in our world of familiarity and perceived safety, for instance, is a recurring theme in urban legends, so we need to keep in mind that the majority of what we hear and read about spiders is totally false. When coming across a scary spider story, one should thus always assume,</p> |



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|                        |                  | <p>unless there is factual confirmation by an <b>arachnologist</b> (not just any "expert"), that it never happened, or that it is, at least, wildly distorted and exaggerated.</p> <p>So, do yourself and spiders a favour – view spiders as part of God’s incredible Creation – valuable and beautiful! Change your mindset today!</p> <p><i>(Read some of these weird urban legends in The Spider Club News: <a href="#">September 2023</a> – Volume 39, No. 3: page 24.</i></p> <p><b>With acknowledgement and thanks to the Spider Club of Southern Africa</b><br/> <i>The Spider Club of Southern Africa is a non-profit environmental interest group providing a fun, responsible, social learning experience, centered on spiders, their relatives and nature in general. Their aim is to encourage and develop an interest in arachnids, including spiders, scorpions, solifuges, whip-spiders, harvestmen and pseudo-scorpions, and to promote this interest and the study of these animals by all suitable means.</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Saturday</b></p> | <p><b>16</b></p> | <p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> week of March - National Water Week &amp; - World Water Day (22 March)</b></p> <p>2024 Theme- <b>Leveraging Water for Peace</b></p> <p><a href="#">Water can be a tool for peace</a> when communities and countries cooperate over this precious shared resource. But water can also spark and intensify conflict when access is denied and usage unfairly shared. When water is scarce or polluted, or when people have unequal or no access, tensions can rise.</p>  <p>Access to drinking water is a human right. There is an urgent need to work together to protect and conserve our most precious resource. Cooperation on water paves the way for cooperation on all shared challenges. We must use water as a tool to create a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.</p> <p>Water is under growing pressure and water-related impacts of climate change are worsening and a growing global population is placing increasing demand on a finite resource. Within many countries, people’s access to safe drinking water is unevenly and unfairly distributed. Between countries, the widespread lack of transboundary cooperation on shared water resources poses a risk to the quality and quantity of water supplies and therefore threatens social and international stability. Water often plays a role in conflict.</p> <p>Working together on water across borders and sectors will accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing food security, sustaining healthy livelihoods and ecosystems, helping to build resilience to climate change, contributing to disaster risk reduction, providing renewable energy, supporting cities and industry, and fostering regional integration and peace.</p> <p>South Africa is a water scarce country and ranks as one of the 30 driest countries in the world with an average rainfall of about 40% less than the annual world average rainfall. Although Johannesburg’s source of water – Vaal Dam - was more than 100% full early in 2023, by November the level had</p> |

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|                      |                  | <p>dropped to 68%. However, the water crisis of November 2023 was not related to the dam levels, but rather the overall decay in the quality and state of water infrastructure – it is at risk of total collapse in some areas. droughts. alleged corruption, which has affected the functioning of municipalities and municipal treatment plants .... and load-shedding at affected water pump stations certainly hasn't helped!</p> <p><i>Johannesburg and its surrounds were affected by severe water cuts during the latter part of 2023 (and will continue to do so.) Water interruptions have been happening for years but have been scaled up dramatically in recent months. Due to the deteriorating situation, a new initiative – “water-shifting” has been proposed. The proposal has echoes of “load-shedding” which is an all too familiar feature for us all.</i></p> <p>Johannesburg residents are urged to observe <b>Level 1 Water Restrictions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All consumers are prohibited from watering and irrigating their gardens between 06:00 - 18:00 during 1 September and 31 March; and between 08:00 - 16h00 during 1 April and 31 August</li> <li>• All consumers are prohibited from using a hosepipe to clean paved areas and driveways with municipal water.</li> </ul> <p>The overall precarious water situation indeed demands extra water-saving measures by everyone. Practical steps would be to observe the water restrictions and continuously check that there are no leaks – either seen or hidden – at home; turning the taps off while doing personal ablutions; using a bucket rather than a hosepipe to wash cars; and avoiding flushing the toilet unnecessarily; watering the garden in the cool of the evening to avoid evaporation; and planting indigenous water-wise plants. If possible, installation of water harvesting tanks would be a welcome step in the right direction as well.</p> <p>Water scarcity will have dire consequences for families and communities. The conservation of water resources must be a top priority for us all!</p> <p><b><i>Pray for all affected by water scarcity – not only in South Africa, but throughout the world.</i></b></p> |
| <p><b>Sunday</b></p> | <p><b>17</b></p> | <p><b>Fifth Sunday in Lent</b></p> <p>“ The scene where Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with nard and wipes them with her hair has always struck me as uncomfortably intimate. It seems an odd thing to do at a dinner party!</p> <p>I feel the others in attendance must have felt the same way I do as we don’t hear much from them. They are all seemingly dumbstruck. Except for Judas, who feels he must express a self-righteous outrage at Mary’s actions, criticizing her and acting as if he suddenly cares about the poor.</p> <p>Jesus’ response to him is more than just an off the cuff remark. I feel it is a call to action. He says, “You will always have the poor with you, but you won’t always have me.” In this scene, Mary is showing love to one who meant the world to her. But how do we show love to the world today? If we are to be Jesus’s hands and feet in this world, we must listen for the weeping around us</p>   |

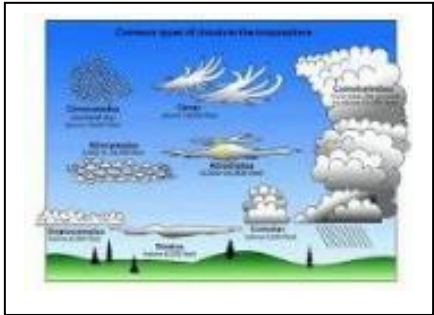
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|                       |                  | <p>whether it be the oceans filling with plastic waste or endangered species slowly disappearing or people living in poverty and oppression, victims of inequality and violence. We must find ways to help the poor and all those in need who are still with us every day.</p> <p>Mary’s action, while strangely intimate, filled the house with the scent of perfume. That was probably an improvement over sweaty bodies and dirty feet! What can we do today to improve conditions and lessen the suffering of God’s creation? How are we called to change the world for the better?</p> <p>Showing love is always an intimate act. But it doesn’t have to be uncomfortable or awkward. Showing love is what we are called to do for all of God’s creation. How will you show your love today? ”</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Loving God, Help us to hear your call. Help us to step up and, like Mary, proudly and unashamedly show our love for your creation. Help us to find ways to make your world a better place for all your creatures as we act as your hands and feet in the world. “</p> <p><b>Nancy Jones</b><br/> <a href="https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-">https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-</a></p>                            |
| <p><b>Monday</b></p>  | <p><b>18</b></p> | <p><b>Global Recycling Day</b></p> <p>South Africans generate 122 million tonnes of waste per year, and only 10% of this is recycled or recovered for other uses, while 90% is landfilled or dumped illegally. A huge amount of recyclable waste ends up in our rivers and oceans, on our beaches, and in rapidly filling landfills. Our resources are dwindling as the human population continues to grow (due to hit 9 billion by 2050 – maybe sooner!), crippling the sustainability of the planet and putting extreme pressure on the environment.</p> <p>Recycling conserves our Earth’s irreplaceable natural resources and also helps mitigate the environmentally damaging process of mining or harvesting new and as-yet-unused materials. Recycling also has a bigger positive impact than saving the environment – it inspires job creation through the collection, separation and reprocessing of recyclable materials. It decreases the amount of waste disposed of at landfills and other waste management sites, preventing negative health, safety and environmental impact.</p> <p>Unfortunately, not everything can be recycled, and it is important to ask your recycler what they are able to take.</p> <p><b>Ensure you are recycling responsibly!</b></p> |
| <p><b>Tuesday</b></p> | <p><b>19</b></p> | <p>We pray for all those who suffer as a result of our waste, greed and indifference,<br/> And we pray that the day would come when everyone has enough food and clean water.<br/> Help us to respect the rights of all people and all species<br/> And help us to willingly share your gifts<br/> Today and always. Amen</p>   |





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| <p><b>Wednesday</b></p> | <p><b>20</b></p> | <p><b>International Day of Happiness</b></p> <p>Since 2013, the United Nations General Assembly has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. The UN recognizes that happiness is a fundamental human goal and calls for “a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes the happiness and well-being of all peoples.” It serves to remind us that being happy is a human right and worth celebrating</p> <p>Unfortunately, emotions like anger and sadness are increasingly becoming a default way to be for so many of us, so here’s a day to cheer up and appreciate the good things and silver linings in life. So, if you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands! and then you are invited to celebrate this day to the fullest – preferably in nature. Spending time in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety, improve your mood, and boost feelings of happiness and wellbeing.</p> <p><b><i>Plan to spend some time in nature this week – your own quiet time with our Creator.</i></b></p>   |
| <p><b>Thursday</b></p>  | <p><b>21</b></p> | <p><b>International Day of Forests and Trees</b></p> <p>2024 Theme: <b><i>“Forests and innovation”</i></b></p> <p>Forests are critical to the health of the planet. They sequester carbon, regulate global temperatures and freshwater flows, recharge groundwater, anchor fertile soil and act as flood barriers and therefore they play a critical role in sustainable development, from combating soil erosion in agricultural fields to mitigating the effects of climate change. The lack of clean water and clean air can result in adverse social and economic impacts on communities and economies.</p> <p>Even before people started harvesting them, indigenous, evergreen forests were something of a rarity in South Africa. Today, the Knysna Forests - the country's largest forest complex - covers only about 568 square kilometres. Timber plantations are by no means natural forests, however, farmed trees perform similar ecosystem services. They also remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store the carbon in their leaves, roots and wood. This carbon remains stored in products that are made from wood. And just like natural forests, they release oxygen and offer a wealth of recreation opportunities.</p> <p>While pests and diseases pose obvious threats, other pressures like fire, theft and physical damage can pose an even greater hazard. Bear in mind that it takes between 10-25 years for plantation trees to grow, and many more years for indigenous trees to reach sustainable heights. Damage to mature trees can have significant economic impact.</p> |



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|                      |                  | <p>Climate change is resulting in climatic extremes not seen before in South Africa. This can result in increased risk of fires, which are exacerbated by extreme weather conditions.</p> <p>As a result, the industry has invested billions of Rands in fire prevention and management. From high-tech detection systems, to cutting-edge firefighting equipment and the best training programmes, no corners have been cut when it comes to fires. There is also strict fire legislation, which sets out fire prevention steps that the industry must adhere to.</p> <p>Much research into innovative fire prevention and fire management is the central focus of all dealing with forests.</p> <p>We can play our own small part in forest protection in ensuring that we are not instrumental in starting any fires in forested areas, and also ensuring that we don't "import" wood infected with disease or alien critters into these areas. The shot-hole borer is a prime example here.</p>   |
| <p><b>Friday</b></p> | <p><b>22</b></p> | <p><b>World Meteorological Day (23 March)</b></p> <p>2024 Theme: <b><i>“Understanding Clouds.”</i></b></p> <p>Sometimes we look up at the clouds and find recognisable shapes – it may be a sailboat, a spear of broccoli or perhaps a Tyrannosaurus rex! The term for this leisurely sleuthing activity is <i>nephelococcygia</i>, which is a word that comes from the Greek <i>nephelo</i>, meaning clouds, and <i>kokkyx</i>, meaning cuckoo.</p> <p>One of the most interesting features of Earth, as seen from space, however, is the ever-changing distribution of clouds. They are as natural as anything we encounter in our daily lives. As they float above us, we hardly give their presence a second thought. And yet, clouds have an enormous influence on Earth's energy balance, climate, and weather.</p> <p>Clouds are the key regulator of the planet's average temperature. Some clouds contribute to cooling because they reflect some of the Sun's energy - called solar energy or shortwave radiation - back to space.</p> <p>Clouds are a key factor influencing local weather as well as the Earth's climate system. They affect the overall temperature or energy balance of the Earth and play a large role in controlling the planet's long-term climate. We need accurate data on clouds to understand their impact over time.</p> <p>Clouds form when the invisible water vapor in the air condenses into visible water droplets or ice crystals. For this to happen, the parcel of air must be saturated, i.e. unable to hold all the water it contains in vapor form, so it starts to condense into a liquid or solid form.</p> <p><b><i>When did you go outside and quietly consider the clouds and be alone with God? ...perhaps today will be a good day for that .....</i></b></p> |







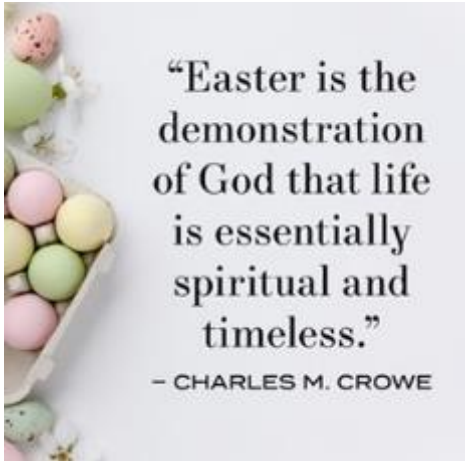
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| <p><b>Saturday</b></p> | <p><b>23</b></p> | <p><b>Earth Hour</b></p> <p>Earth Hour is a movement to help our future and encourage urgent change around the world. Every single day, we contribute to our planet heating up by using or wasting electricity! In recent years the Earth Hour movement has seen entire streets, buildings, landmarks and city skylines go dark to take part! This symbolic event draws attention to the issues of climate change and global warming.</p> <p>Climate change and global warming cause all wildlife to face extreme challenges, such as losing their habitats and facing more extreme weather conditions. This could lead to animals and plants going extinct ... and this includes us, so we need to do our bit to protect the planet, as there's no planet B!</p> <p><b><i>Will you with or without Eskom's help – take part in Earth Hour this year and turn off your power between 20:30 and 21:30 on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March?</i></b></p>   |
| <p><b>Sunday</b></p>   | <p><b>24</b></p> | <p><b>Palm Sunday</b></p> <p>“ I can imagine how excited Jesus' followers must have been that first Palm Sunday...Celebration is a simple statement of spiritual truth. I don't believe any of the disciples had fully allowed the euphoria of that first Palm Sunday parade to blind them to the harsh reality that they faced on a daily basis.</p> <p>Sometimes – especially right in the middle of struggle, uncertainty, tension, and stress – it's a good thing simply to celebrate, regardless of the circumstances... There's no denying how difficult it is to maintain optimism and hope in the face of tough times. But Jesus is our anticipation and our expectation, and so we're not exhibiting a simplistic, pie-in-the-sky hope for the future when we celebrate. The Christian celebration, as exemplified by our Palm Sunday worship services, expresses a statement of a spiritual truth.</p> <p>A recent survey of 10,000 people between the ages of 16 and 25 across 10 countries, led by Bath University in collaboration with five universities, found that young people are experiencing deep anxiety over the current trajectory of climate change. Nearly 60% of those surveyed said they felt worried or extremely worried for the future of the planet, and over half of respondents think humanity is doomed as a result. (Roger Harrabin for BBC, Climate change: Young people very worried – survey, Sept. 14, 2021) This is a terrible burden for our young people to bear and yet, they seem to be the ones who truly acknowledge the long-term future impacts of the decisions we adults make today and every day.</p> <p>We do not want our children to live in distress for the future of the earth, as they watch destruction of our resources unfold. Let us not leave them to feel abandoned and betrayed by global decision-makers. We need to listen and give the world's youth a seat at the table to have a role in making necessary changes to the way we carry on with our daily lives. Yes, this is a time of global distress. But Palm Sunday and the triumphant entrance of Jesus reminds us</p>  |

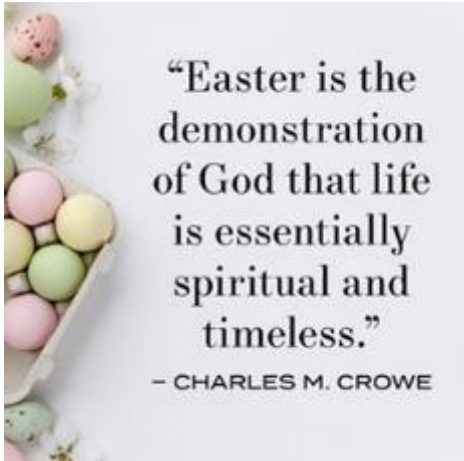
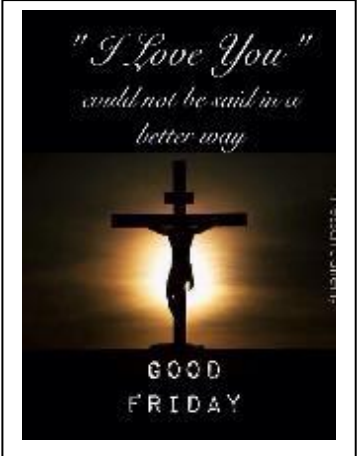


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|                |           | <p>that optimism and hope are important in difficult times. And the face of this optimism and hope may well be that of our collective youthful world citizens. “</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Dear Lord, Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem reminds us of hope in the midst of trying times. Be with our youth as they grow in a world of environmental distress and allow them to be guided as the hope for the planet. Amen.</p> <p><b>Mindy Hidenfelter</b><br/> <a href="https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-">https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-</a></p>  |
| <b>Monday</b>  | <b>25</b> | <p>Almighty God - creator, shaper and sustainer of all life, And loving Father. Thank you for the forgiveness won for us by your Son – the redeemer of all creation.</p> <p>We receive your grace to us, and your love for us as we are.<br/> Change us now into what you would have us be –<br/> Move us to love and care for your world<br/> And make us ready to work for the good of all creation.<br/> Through the love and power of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.<br/> Amen.</p>  |
| <b>Tuesday</b> | <b>26</b> | <p><b>God is love let heaven adore him</b></p> <p>God is Love: let heaven adore him;<br/> God is Love: let earth rejoice;<br/> let creation sing before him,<br/> and exalt him with one voice.<br/> He who laid the earth's foundation,<br/> he who spread the heavens above,<br/> he who breathes through all creation,<br/> he is Love, eternal Love.</p> <p>God is Love: and he enfoldeth<br/> all the world in one embrace;<br/> with unfailing grasp he holdeth<br/> every child of every race.<br/> And when human hearts are breaking<br/> under sorrow's iron rod,<br/> then they find that self-same aching<br/> deep within the heart of God.</p> <p>God is Love: and though with blindness<br/> sin afflicts the souls of men,<br/> God's eternal loving-kindness<br/> holds and guides them even then.<br/> Sin and death and hell shall never<br/> o'er us final triumph gain;<br/> God is Love, so Love for ever<br/> o'er the universe must reign.</p> <p><a href="#">Listen</a></p> |



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| <p><b>Wednesday</b></p> | <p><b>27</b></p> | <p>“The fruit of Silence is Prayer,<br/>The fruit of Prayer is Faith,<br/>The fruit of Faith is Love,<br/>The fruit of Love is Service,<br/>The fruit of Service is Peace.”</p> <p><b>Mother Theresa</b></p>    |
| <p><b>Thursday</b></p>  | <p><b>28</b></p> | <p><b>Maundy Thursday</b></p> <p>“ Many of us celebrate special occasions by eating lavish meals and enjoying premium entertainment. We may mark birthdays or anniversaries with an expensive dinner and the concert of a favourite musician. We may even shape the day around what we most want to do, giving ourselves permission to be self-centred for a time. Imagine, then, how we would want to spend our last hours. Jesus, however, spends his Last Supper, not focusing on indulgence, but rather in loving service to others. After explaining that it is his body and blood that sustain us, he takes a basin of water and a towel and washes his disciples’ feet.</p>  <p>He tells them he has set an example for them to follow and that “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” On his last free night, Jesus feeds, cleanses, and teaches. He lifts up others. He serves with love.</p> <p>How do we follow Jesus’ example? How do we mark this special, holy day of Maundy Thursday? How do we spend our ordinary days? To follow Jesus’ example means putting others before our own interests. It means caring first for others’ needs and well-being – not just those close to us, but for people around the world. It means serving with love.</p> <p>And we can’t serve and care for others if we are not also tending to the environment around them. A person’s welfare is linked to the quality of water they have to drink, the safety of the food they have to eat, the freshness of the air they have to breath. If we want to show Christ’s love for others, we have to love the world they inhabit.</p> <p>How do our actions - what we purchase, what we consume, how we live - affect the lives of others? Do our actions prevent or ensure others will have their needs met? How might we, as the old hymn says, “guard human dignity and save human pride” so that “they’ll know we are Christians by our love?”</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Loving God, thank you for your example of service rendered in love. Help us to consider the needs and welfare of other people in all that we do. May your love be so visible in us that we will be known as your disciples. Amen.</p> <p><b>Courtney Bowen</b><br/> <a href="https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-">https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-</a></p> |

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| <p><b>Friday</b></p>   | <p><b>29</b></p> | <p><b>Good Friday</b></p> <p>“ In my childhood, Lent was a time of intentional austerity. We always "gave up" favourite foods, treats and activities, and, in keeping with parochial school custom, had no meat on Friday. But the tide began to turn, not on Easter Sunday, but Good Friday afternoon. After the noon until 3:00 pm worship vigil (which walks the congregation through the agony and sorrow of the Crucifixion), it was time to make Hot Cross Buns. This delicious bread, in the form of spiced and fruit-filled dough baked into individual portions, marked on top with a cross formed of sugar, is a church tradition in England that dates back to the Middle Ages. As the dough is crafted, each ingredient is symbolic of one part of the Gospel narrative: water, for baptism, leaven and flour for Jesus' parable of his Kingdom, bitter orange peel for the gall raised to his lips as he hung on the cross, spices for the rich aromatic oils with which Jesus' mother and companions anointed his body, crosses shaped of sugar to emphasize the joy of redemption, and more. My grandmother, alongside whom I made this bread, had survived the Great Depression as a homeless single mother of a young son. She was grateful for any tiny blessing in life, and never wasted anything ever (as in, never. ever.) We rolled all miniscule dough scraps that remained on the countertop into small spheres and fed them to the backyard birds and squirrels, singing 'one-a-penny, two-a-penny, Hot Cross Buns!.. ( we got to remember it's Holy Week for the creatures, too, not just the people'...)...</p> <p>To this day, Hot Cross Buns on Good Friday remind me of the Gospel promise of a world redeemed, even when hope seems lost, and the knowledge that even in dark times, Light prevails.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> God of all Creation, Give us courage to walk through this day and persist on the journey, knowing the best is yet to come... “</p> <p>Allison Davidson<br/> <a href="https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-">https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-</a></p> |
| <p><b>Saturday</b></p> | <p><b>30</b></p> |  <p>“Easter is the demonstration of God that life is essentially spiritual and timeless.”<br/> - CHARLES M. CROWE</p>  |



Sunday

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## Easter Sunday - The Resurrection of the Lord

We usually hear a gospel story about the risen Jesus on Easter, but the creators of the lectionary include a reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Christians because its fifteen chapter says more about what the resurrection means to us today than any other place in the Bible.

Paul challenged the hierarchical status of bodies held by the upper class by insisting on a resurrection. He challenged the narrow conception of fleshly bodies held by lower status

Christians by insisting on something called a pneuma-soma, a "spirit-body" (again: this is a real body - neither mere flesh nor a disembodied entity). By correcting both factions, and by crafting new theological ground, Paul established the possibility of a unified Christian community - one not roiled by divisive arguments derived largely from conflicts of social status. This new body - the Body of Christ - was the alternative to the Imperial Body of Rome. In this way, resurrection makes possible the Kingdom of God.

The promise we have of embodied life after death has implications for our lives here and now. The Church values everyone equally because all are made in the image of God, saved in Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit. Together we are the Body of Christ, called to love and serve in this world, furthering the Kingdom of God here (we pray and try to live "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"). David Hay comments on 1Corinthians 15:23-28: "Christians live in a world of conflict, widespread opposition to God, and death. They have the assurance, however, that the risen Christ already reigns invisibly as Lord to overcome all the opposing forces, including death. In the end all persons and powers will submit to the sovereignty of God" (*The Discipleship Study Bible*).

One can easily be discouraged trying to counter the deadly impact of climate change throughout the world. In the end, our hope does not come from what we are doing, but from what God has done in Jesus and what God continues to do in our lives and our world.

Easter tells us that God wins in the end, so there will be no end. We seek to further God's will out of gratitude, including as we care for all of creation now. "

**Prayer:** Eternal God, make us instruments of your love-- caring for your creation – and messengers of hope, knowing that Easter brings new life now and forever. Amen.

**Bruce Gillette**

<https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship->

