

The Big One: Prayers

The Big One protest runs from the 21st to the 24th April 2023. During this time, we will see Parliament Square filled with tens of thousands of people - all calling for action from the government and those in authority, to tackle the environmental and climate crisis. Many of those joining the witness will be people of faith.

Christian Climate Action is coordinating a series of acts of prayer, worship, and pilgrimage during the weekend. We are sending an open invitation for all to join in – there will be charities, Church congregations, knitting groups, choirs, families, and friends.

For more information: christianclimateaction.org/the-big-one

In preparation for this prophetic action at this critical time, we invite Christians to pray for the earth, for climate action and for the wellbeing of all peoples. This collection of prayers can be a starting point to be used in advance of and during The Big One weekend. They guide us through themes of appreciating Creation, being aware of it's destruction and moving into action.

These prayers have been compiled by members of Christian Climate Action. Some poems are accompanied by Bible verses, which can be reflected on alongside the poem.

**Christian
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Naming

- inspired by a Padraig O Tuama blessing

In the name of the Creator, and the Redeemer, and of the Companion
In the name of the bee, and the butterfly and the breeze,
In the name of blossom, birdsong and all of the trees
In the name of truth, and all of the beauty surrounds us
In the name of love for our fellow human beings, love for all living things, and love for this beautiful planet that we call home
In the name of all these things
We reject our failure to think of others
We reject ignoring the implications for the global south
We reject careless indifference
We reject maximised profit for the few

But in this gathering dark – we remember the flame of hope
We remember what is possible
We remember love

Therefore, we cry out for Justice.
We cry out in hope, knowing there are possibilities that we cannot yet see
We cry out in love

And Lord – may we always journey with you
In the beautiful name of Jesus
Amen.

(Contributed by Mark Francis, Christian Climate Action)

Wonder

Sometimes we look around and everything looks beautiful - especially on a sunny spring day, especially if we're in a park or garden, or by a river or the coast. God wills that the world should be a place of beauty. Yet we know that at present the world is a place of sin and suffering arising from our human waywardness. If we look more closely we know we will see evidences of pain and harm, of brutality and ugliness. Can a sense of wonder help us to respond?

Now is the sky blue!
Now is the verge blowsy
with lady's lace and buttercups,
and tousle headed grasses.
The dog rose in the hedge
the sheep beyond.
The burbling refrain of the curlew,
the acrobatic swerve of the swift.
All is now, and now, and now!

But tomorrow, next week, next year?
Merciful God will they still be there?
Will our apathy,
our slowness to act,
our aversion to change
allowed all this
to be threatened,
diminished, and
evicted from life?

Have mercy.
But not just mercy –

rather prod us, prompt us,
push us into action.
Renew our hearts and minds,
reverse our expectations
so that we change the future
and once more
be restorers of creation.
Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14*

Hope

God wills that the world should be a place of beauty and peace - and the world is full of signs and stories showing us how we can part of such a world.

All that is holy!

Amongst the woods and forests,
between oaks and cedars,
God's name is holy.
In the seas and oceans,
with whales and sea urchins,
God's name is holy.

Across the moors and meadows,
with curlews and plovers,
God's name is holy.
By riverbanks and streams,
following eels and kingfishers,
God's name is holy .

High up on mountain peaks and glaciers,
sheltering in cwms and gullies,
God's name is holy.
Gathered in barns and hives,
buzzing with bees and bats,
God's name is holy .

Hidden under stones and snuck into crevices,
lying low with lizards and spiders,
God's name is holy .

In all corners of the world
and where ever life exists,
God's name is holy!
Amen.

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this? Job 12:7-9

Living God,
when we neglect to see the beauty around us,
open our eyes.
When we neglect to hear the music around us,
open our ears.
When we neglect to feel your presence,
awaken our senses.
When we neglect to receive your love,
open our hearts.
Living God,
re-inspire us with your Spirit,
so that in us too your name is holy.

Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

Awareness

Listen; attune your ears – what do you hear?

The excited chatter of children,
and the chatter of jackdaws,
wind rustling the leaves,
and feet tapping the road.

Or the drone of cars – too much!

Or the whine of planes – too many!

Look; focus your vision – what do you see?

a lacework of branches against the sky,
and curvaceous clouds,
tawny shades of fallen leaves,
and the tight curl of a snail shell.

Or traffic crawling bumper to bumper – too much

Or discarded tatters of plastic – too many!

Stretch; bare your skin – what do you feel?

The warm caress of the sun,
the chilly nip of the breeze,
the prickle of grass,
the textured bark of a tree

Or the rasp of exhaust in your throat – too much!

Or the scratch of particulates in your eyes – too many!

Sniff; breathe deeply – what do you smell?

The aroma of fresh coffee,
and the zest of orange juice,
the fragrance of the last rose,
and the warmth of ground spices.

Or the reek of petrol – too much!

Or the sting of pesticides – too many!

Savour; let it linger on your tongue – what do you taste?

The fresh acidity of an apple,
and the earthy satisfaction of bread,
the squashy sweetness of banana,
and the melting delight of chocolate.

Or the fake sweetness of green wash – too much!

Or the gall of climate injustice- too many !

Merciful God,

bring us to our senses.

Help us rebuild a world

of right experiences.

Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

*Taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed are those who trust in
God! Psalm 34:8*

Panic

Being aware of what is happening can overwhelm us. If it's the goodness and beauty that overwhelms we can become ecstatic. But if it is fear and horror, it can be a cause of panic. In either the invitation is to share our feelings with God.

Stop the world!

I want to get off!

I can't cope with climate anxiety,
with the knowledge that we are still
polluting the atmosphere with CO2.

Stop the world!

I want to get off!

I can't cope with the politics
that we continue to ignore –
that let the rich grow richer & the poor poorer.

Stop the world!

I want to get off!

I can't cope with the cycle of hate and war,
with our conviction that being tough
will bring peace and reconciliation.

Stop the world!

I want to get off!

I can't cope with the pursuit of profit
that says 'I'm worth it'
whilst resolutely destroying our world.

Stop the world!

I want to get off!

I can't cope with myopia
that can't see the spread of global suffering
because we are safe in our wealth.

Eternal God,

Give me some hope to aim for,
courage to continue,
and peace to regain strength.
Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will surely help you; I will uphold you with My right hand of righteousness. Isaiah 41:10

Regret

Honest awareness of what is happening in the world may prompt us to consider the part we have been or are playing, and to reassess our response.

Far away and near at hand

The floods were far away
Now there near at hand.
How long before I wet my feet
and take a stand?

The heat was far away.
Now it's close to home.
How long before I own the fact
and finally begin to act?

Hurricanes were tropical.
Now they're topical.
How long before I feel my guilt
and understand the world we've built?

Our climate is changing –
Far away and near at hand.
Holy God, redeem our failings
and strengthen our resolve:
far away and near at hand.
How long O Lord?
How many heat waves?
How many droughts?
How many floods?
How many lost coast lines?

How many before we admit our error?
Before we recognise the crisis?

How many lost penguins?
How many missing polar bears?
How many extinct butterflies?
How many disappearing swifts?
How many before we admit our error?
Before we recognise the crisis?

How many car journeys?
How many air miles?
How many beef steaks?
How many tonnes of cement?
How many before we admit our error?
Before we recognise the crisis?

Creator God, we admit our error
and recognise the crises we have caused.
Grant us the wisdom and determination to make amends:
To change the way we live,
To change the way we see things,
To have care for the future. Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

Realisation

Regret can lead either to despair - there is no hope - or lament which is an expression of grief that leave the way open for new beginnings.

Love and cherish not some of the earth but all;
Not just your back yard, but mine too;
Not just your local wood but the rainforests too;
Not just your home town but the favelas too.

Love and cherish not some creatures but all;
Not just pandas and tigers, but the vulture and bat too;
Not just bees but wasps and spiders too;
Not just elephants but slugs and snails too.

Love and cherish not some landscapes but all;
Not just meadows but peat bogs too;
Not just ancient woodlands but hedgerows too
Not just national parks but grass verges too.

Love and cherish not some people but all;
Not just city bankers but street cleaners too;
Not just business leaders but refugees too;
Not just home owners but travellers too.

For if we do not, we are all diminished.
If we do not we shall all suffer
from droughts and floods,
rising sea levels and declining water supplies,
from infectious diseases and resistant bacteria.

We are one world, one family,

one eco system, one interdependent
and interwoven creation.

God, our creator, redeemer and sustainer,
Bring us to our senses!
Now!

Compassionate God, you know our hearts and share our sorrows.
We are hurt by the despoiling of the living Earth, which we love.
We are angry at the loss we contemplate.
We long for words of comfort, yet find them hard to hear.
Turn our grief to active love
Turn our anger to energy for repair of the world
Turn our guilt to solidarity
and by your forgiveness make us whole with all creation.
Amen

(Contributed by Andii Bowsher, Green Christians)

*O Lord, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures. Here is the ocean, vast and wide, teeming with life of every kind, both large and small.
Psalm 104:24-25*

Action

From the first chapters of Genesis, we realise that God created humans to be active participants in the wellbeing of the earth.

We stand at a tipping point, O God,
teetering between life and death:
Shall we fall or rise?
“Chose life!”

Shall we retreat into our shells, bury our heads in the sand:
Or shall we step forth into a new age of sustainability?
“Chose life!”

Shall we ignore the science, hide ourselves in the trappings of consumerism:
Or shall we openly embrace renewable lifestyles?
“Chose life!”

Shall we pointlessly mourn the loss of polar bears and elephants, bees and butterflies:
Or shall we live our lives so that all may live?
“Chose life!”

Shall we fly to the ends of the earth while ice sheets melt:
Or value the future by enjoying what is local?
“Chose life!”
Shall we disregard floods and droughts, storms and heat waves, as seasonal blips:
Or acknowledge them as already-present signs of climate change?
“Chose life!”

Shall we close our ears to cries of help from farmers and islanders as their lands disappear:
Or shall we join voices in calling for justice?
“Chose life!”

Holy God,
Prompt us and urge us, encourage and propel us,
to now change our life styles so that all may have life and live!
Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, so that you and your descendants may live. Deuteronomy 30:19

Perspective

Loving God, we strive to follow your ways
of righteousness and justice in the world.
Yet we feel small and inept, and lay before you our dilemma.

Will you stand by if humanity continues to ignore your ways, following
a path instead that leads to self destruction?
Will you stand by if 5000 choose not to follow the crowd? For the sake
of the few, will you protect us all from self destruction?
Lord have mercy.

But loving God, Will you stand by if only 500 choose not to follow the
crowd?
For the sake of the few, will you protect us all from self destruction?
Lord have mercy.

But loving God, Will you stand by if only 50 choose not to follow the
crowd?
For the sake of the few, will you protect us all from self destruction?
Lord have mercy.

Loving God, strengthen our resolve to do what is right,
to stand up for the marginalised,
to safeguard creation and protect life
- even when we feel small and ineffective.

Give us the confidence to share our concerns
and our hopes for the planet,
so that we can encourage and welcome others
to follow the path of righteousness and justice.
Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)

*“Behold, God is my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
For the Lord God is my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation.” Isaiah 12:2*

Persistence

As we get ready for 'The Big One' let us remember the many stories of God's that show the collective strength of small and insignificant people and the power of persistence.

The Waves

The gentle to and fro of the wave,
back and forth,
soothing,
gently rocking,
Loving God, calm us, and
move us as peace-makers.

The persistence of the wave,
never stopping,
never quitting,
gradually wearing down all resistance
Loving God, sustain us, and
make us a force for good.

The power of the wave,
building up,
growing in size,
acquiring energy as it moves
Loving God, strengthen us, and
harness our energy to do what is right.

The breaker, poised but still moving,
ready to break –
to break out, to break up,
to break forth

Loving God, contain us, and
prepare us to spill out into the world.

The crest of the wave, exploding,
releasing energy
that breaks down barriers
and undermines obstructions
Loving God, free us, and
use us to reform the structures of the world.

Storm wave, tidal wave,
tsunami,
that brokers no discussion,
that overwhelms all
Loving God, override us,
and free the world from its own vices.
Amen.

(Contributed by Judith Russenberger, Christian Climate Action)