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October 2020 Environmental Prayer Diary

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

Thursday	1	God of new beginnings, during the coming month, open fresh doors of insight to us in how we can better serve you through the care of your Creation. Make us diligent in changing our lifestyles to help our planet in crisis. Through Jesus name, we ask this. Amen
Friday	2	World Day for Farmed Animals Beyond the animal welfare concern, factory farming does have a considerable environmental impact that we can easily decrease if we reduce our consumption of animal products  Livestock farming contributes to land and water degradation (both surface water and groundwater,) as well as biodiversity loss. Furthermore, nowhere is this impact more apparent than climate change – livestock farming contributes 18% of human produced greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. The most important greenhouse gases from animal agriculture are methane and nitrous oxide. Methane, mainly produced by enteric fermentation and manure storage, is a gas which has an effect on global warming 28 times higher than carbon dioxide. Livestock is doing more to harm the climate than all modes of transportation combined. Reducing consumption of animal products is essential if we are to meet global greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets – which are necessary to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Cutting down on your consumption of meat will help reduce your carbon footprint and also lower the negative effects of your diet on the environment. As a matter of fact, having less fat can also lower the risk of many diseases, including heart attacks, strokes, diabetes and several types of cancer. If you haven't already, join the "Meatless Monday" movement by committing to one day (or more!) of just eating plant based foods and in so doing, help the planet and your health!.  Action: • Commit to the Meatless Monday campaign • Start a vegetable garden if you haven't already done so

Saturday	3	Infinite Presence, Infinite Love <i>When he considered the primordial source of all things, [St. Francis] was filled with even more abundant piety, calling all creatures, no matter how small, by the name of brother and sister, because he knew they had the same source as himself. - Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274)</i> If Christianity would have paid attention to the teachings and example of Jesus and Francis, our planet - "Mother Sister Earth," as Francis called her - would perhaps be much healthier today. But it took until the 21st century for a pope to write an entire encyclical, <i>Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home</i>, making this quite clear and demanding. We have not honoured God's Presence in the elemental, physical world. We made God as small as our own constricted hearts. We just picked and chose, saying, "Oh, God is really only in my group, in baptized people, in moral people, etc." Is there that little of an Infinite God to go around? Do we have to be stingy with God? As Isaiah put it "the arm of God is not too short to save!" (59:1). Why pretend only we deserve God, and not other groups, religions, animals, plants, the elements, Brother Sun, and Sister Moon? It just won't sell any more. God is saving creation and bringing all creatures back where they began - into union with their Creator. God loves everything that God has made! All created things God proclaimed "good" (see Genesis 1:9-31 and Wisdom 11:24-12:1). But we, with our small minds, can't deal with that. We have to whittle God and Love into small parts that our minds can handle and portion out. Human love is conditional and operates out of a scarcity model. There's not enough to go around, just like Andrew said about the boy's five loaves and two small fish (John 6:9). Humans can't conceptualize or even <i>think</i> infinite or eternal concepts. We cannot imagine Infinite Love, Infinite Goodness, or Infinite Mercy. Tertullian, a third century Father of the Church, often called the first Christian theologian, said "enfleshment is the hinge of salvation." We don't come to the God Mystery through concepts or theories but by connecting with <i>what I</i> - with God's immediate, embodied presence which is all around us. I want you to begin to notice that almost all of Jesus' common stories and examples are nature based and relationship based - and never once academic theory! (Fr. Thomas Berry [1914-2009] taught the same way in our time, and I hope to share his work much more in my writings and teachings in the future.) We have not recognized the one Body of Christ in creation. Perhaps we just didn't have the readiness or training. There is first of all the seeing, and then there is the recognizing; the second stage is called contemplation. We cannot afford to be blind any longer. We must learn to see and recognize how broad and deep the Presence is if we are to truly care for our common home. Gateway to Silence: Brother Sun, Sister Moon, help me see God in all things. <i>From Richard Rohr's daily meditations</i> www.cac.org	
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Sunday	4	World Animal Day (St Francis Day) The Mission of World Animal Day is to raise the status of animals in order to improve welfare standards around the globe. It is a day for examining how we interact with those with whom we share this Earth. Building the celebration of World Animal Day unites the animal welfare movement, mobilising it into a global force to make the world a better place for all animals. It's celebrated in different ways in every country, irrespective of nationality, religion, faith or political ideology. Through increased awareness and education we can create a world where animals are always recognised as sentient beings and full regard is always paid to their welfare. It is no coincidence that World Animal Day is celebrated on the same day as St Francis Day. Beloved St Francis' devotion to God was expressed through his love for all of God's creation. St. Francis cared for the poor and sick, he preached sermons to animals and praised all creatures as brothers and sisters under God. There are so many stories about St Francis' special connection with animals, and a favourite is <i>St Francis and the Wolf</i> when he tamed the wolf that was terrorizing the people of Gubbio. While Francis was staying in that town he learned of a wolf so ravenous that it was not only killing and eating animals, but people, too. The people took up arms and went after it, but those who encountered the wolf perished at its sharp teeth. Villagers became afraid to leave the city walls. Francis had pity on the people and decided to go out and meet the wolf. He was desperately warned by the people, but he insisted that God would take care of him. A brave friar and several peasants accompanied Francis outside the city gate. But soon the peasants lost heart and said they would go no farther. Francis and his companion began to walk on. Suddenly the wolf, jaws agape, charged out of the woods at the couple. Francis made the Sign of the Cross toward it. The power of God caused the wolf to slow down and to close its mouth. Then Francis called out to the creature: "Come to me, Brother Wolf. In the name of Christ, I order you not to hurt anyone." At that moment, the wolf lowered its head and lay down at Francis' feet, meek as a lamb. Saint Francis explained to the wolf that he had been terrorizing the people, killing not only animals, but humans who are made in the image of God. "Brother Wolf," said Francis, "I want to make peace between you and the people of Gubbio. They will harm you no more and you must no longer harm them. All past crimes are to be forgiven." The wolf showed its assent by moving its body and nodding its head. Then to the absolute surprise of the gathering crowd, Francis asked the wolf to make a pledge. As Francis extended his hand to receive the pledge, so the wolf extended its front paw and placed it into the saint's hand. Then Francis commanded the wolf to follow him into town to make a peace pact with the townspeople. The wolf meekly followed Saint Francis.
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		By the time they got to the town square, everyone was there to witness the miracle. With the wolf at his side, Francis gave the town a sermon on the wondrous and fearful love of God, calling them to repent from all their sins. Then he offered the townspeople peace, on behalf of the wolf. The townspeople promised in a loud voice to feed the wolf. Then Francis asked the wolf if he would live in peace under those terms. He bowed his head and twisted his body in a way that convinced everyone he accepted the pact. Then once again the wolf placed its paw in Francis' hand as a sign of the pact. From that day on the people kept the pact they had made. The wolf lived for two years among the townspeople, going from door to door for food. It hurt no one and no one hurt it. Even the dogs did not bark at it. When the wolf finally died of old age, the people of Gubbio were sad. The wolf's peaceful ways had been a living reminder to them of the wonders, patience, virtues and holiness of Saint Francis. It had been a living symbol of the power and providence of the living God. <i>"Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures" - St. Francis</i>
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Prayer for the week in a time of coronavirus

A Prayer for Teachers and Educators during the COVID Crisis

Father,

This is the day You have made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. It doesn't look like we thought it would look, nor will tomorrow and the days to come likely be executed in the way we expected and prepared for. Help us to see the good in each day. Help us to find reasons to rejoice and ways to be glad. Litter our lives with moments of laughter and light-heartedness, even in these extremely dark and trying times. Birthdays are still be celebrated each day. The sun keeps coming up, and You remain the same. We are created in Your image, God, to do good and great things to bring glory to Your name. Each one of us, both teacher and student, were created with specific purpose. Help teachers to have confidence in their craft. They were meant to teach, educate, coach, counsel and lead. They are needed, appreciated, and loved. Their work and their efforts are never in vain. When it is hard to see the good, grab our attention, Father. When we are sad and miss school, our normal routine, and our teammates and coaches, encourage our spirits. Sustain us through our very real fear of what is and will happen in our world, God. Remind us we are not alone, even when we feel isolated.

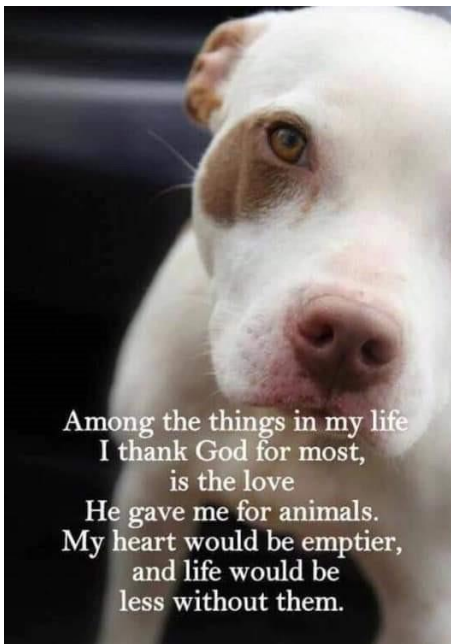
Amen

Monday	5	World Habitat Day Established by the United Nations in 1985, World Habitat Day focuses on the state of human settlements and on the basic right of all to adequate shelter. It also aims to remind people that they are responsible for the habitat of future generations. The theme for 2020 is <i>"Housing for All: A better Urban Future"</i>. Issues around housing need to be at the centre of sustainable and inclusive urban development. Sustainable Development Goal 11 aims for resilient, inclusive, safe, diverse cities by 2030 and one of the targets is access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all by 2030 and the upgrade of slum. <i>Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</i>	
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		Cities are hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more. At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically. However, many challenges exist to maintaining cities in a way that continues to create jobs and prosperity while not straining land and resources. Common urban challenges include congestion, lack of funds to provide basic services, a shortage of adequate housing and declining infrastructure. The challenges cities face can be overcome in ways that allow them to continue to thrive and grow, while improving resource use and reducing pollution and poverty. The future we want includes cities of opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more. Goal 11 Targets: • By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums • By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries • Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage • By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management • By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities • By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels <i>Although much work has been done in this area, many of the targets are behind in their achievements. Cover this important aspect in prayer.</i>	
Tuesday	6	5 October - World Teacher Day UNESCO inaugurated 5 October as World Teachers' Day which represents a significant effort to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation for the vital contribution that teachers make to education and development across the globe. Our Teachers have had an extraordinary tough time during this year! Teaching through a pandemic certainly isn't what they signed up for, and yet they're doing it anyway! <i>Thank you, Teachers!</i>	

		A Prayer for Teachers Lord, bless the teachers who give their heart to teaching. Thank you for the special gift that You have given them and for giving them a spirit of grace and compassion. May they have strength and endurance to perform their many tasks, and may they know and feel the deep gratitude of those whom they teach. Amen
Wednesday	7	“Weedbuster” Week (4-10 October) It’s <i>WeedBuster Week</i> and gardeners are encouraged to remove invasive alien plants, estimated to use 7% of South Africa’s water resources, and replace them with indigenous plants. Invasive alien plants have the ability to smother and destroy ecosystems and are estimated to use 7% of our water resources as well as taken over 10 million hectares of land! Invasive alien plants invade large stretches of tourist-friendly indigenous flora, create impenetrable, water-hungry thickets in water catchment areas, take over productive farming land, cause runaway fires, smother indigenous plants, reduce biodiversity and endanger ranching and livestock farming. So what can you do? • If you own or care for land, keep it clear of invasive alien plants (IAPs). • Talk to neighbours that have IAPs on their property, so that your land is not invaded as a result of ‘seed pollution’ from IAPs on your neighbours’ land. • Never accept a gift of an IAP from a friend and report the presence of an IAP in any garden centre to the South African Nursery Association. • Never bring undocumented foreign plants or animals into our country (or take our plants and animals to other countries) as a tourist. • Join a volunteer clearing (‘hacking’) group, and adopt a piece of land to keep it clear. • Encourage your local authority, agricultural union, school, church, community bodies to learn about the monumental costs to society of removing invasive plants that have taken over local ecosystems. <i>... And just by the way It’s not only plants that can be invasive ... so can mammals, reptiles, birds Download South Africa’s National Listed Invasive Species booklet</i> <i>What action will you take to during this “Weedbuster Week” to care for the wonderfully diverse indigenous fauna and flora that Creator God has blessed our Country with?</i>
Thursday	8	"Solutions begin with small steps individuals can take to alter the way our cities function. We must reduce the amount of waste we produce, and, at the same time, start seeing it as a valuable resource that can be re-used and recycled, including for energy." <i>UN Secretary-General António Guterres</i>



Friday	9	 Among the things in my life I thank God for most, is the love He gave me for animals. My heart would be emptier, and life would be less without them.
Saturday	10	World Migratory Bird Day Early May saw the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) as migratory birds wended their way to their Summer grounds ... now we celebrate their return. The Day is celebrated bi-annually on the second Saturday in May and in October.  This day is an awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It aims to draw attention to the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them. Here in South Africa, we welcome back the many birds that have undertaken a daunting migration. The most amazing group of migrants must be the diminutive warblers weighing only a few grams, migrating by night, navigating by the stars between northern Europe or Siberia to southern Africa where they spend the European winter months in our gardens returning six months later to the north to breed.  <i>Icterine Warbler</i> What can you do to welcome these intrepid travellers ? • Make your garden bird-friendly! Include safe shelters and a bird bath. Make sure that food that is provided is bird-safe and does not cause malnutrition. • Pets are part of our lives, but they can have very negative impacts on birds. Keep an eye on your pets, and make sure any bird areas are out of reach for cats and dogs. <i>Pray for the many scientists – both professional and citizen and related organisations – who work to protect our feathered kin.</i>

Sunday	11	National Garden Day Garden Day is a chance for people across the country to down tools and celebrate their gardens. Everyone can take part, regardless of the size of their gardens – rolling lawns, potted windowsills, urban rooftops and patio planters – all are welcome. Anyone can benefit from the calming effects of weeding, watering and planting. Gardening reconnects us to nature and awakens our senses. It gives us feelings of peace and wellness and is scientifically proven to have positive effects on our health, both mentally and physically. So, today, let's go into our garden or park and celebrate God's Creation - ENJOY!	
Prayer for the week in a time of coronavirus Love never fails Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope. Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far. Love compels us to give and act as one. Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before. As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family. So, let us pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer. www.christianaid.org.uk			
Monday	12	National Marine Week (12-17 October) National Marine Week's purpose is to create awareness on the marine and coastal environment, the promotion of sustainable use and conservation of these resources, for the benefit of all both present and future generations. Marine week helps to show the vital importance that our oceans have on our livelihoods and how they are being threatened by the way we live. It also highlights the world's fisheries and their importance to ecosystems and our livelihoods. It is important to appreciate our oceans and their uniqueness as a global heritage, that should be protected as a natural resource and preserved for future generations. While this week aims to create awareness about issues facing our seas, it also creates a sense of pride for the unique environment.	

		This is where the country gets involved in helping to make a change to protect this vulnerable environment. Although, much is known about the effects of pollution and how this has escalated over the years, our knowledge about our oceans is still very limited. Plastic pollution is one of the most problematic issues that faces our oceans, with about 8 million litter items entering the ocean EVERY day! Approximately, 90% of this marine litter is made of plastic that enters the oceans from both land- and sea-based sources. That is why it is so imperative to take action against plastic pollution and help to save our seas and protect its living inhabitants.	
Tuesday	13	International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction <i>"Making infrastructure more climate-resilient can have a benefit-cost ratio of about six to one. For every dollar invested, six dollars can be saved. This means that investing in climate resilience creates jobs and saves money." — UN Secretary-General António Guterres</i> The International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction was started in 1989, after a call by the United Nations General Assembly for a day to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) aims to reduce the damage caused by natural hazards like earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones, through an ethic of prevention. Disasters often follow natural hazards. A disaster's severity depends on how much impact a hazard has on society and the environment. <i>A new question is posed Can the Covid19 Pandemic be classed as a natural disaster? and could the severity have been avoided? In the COVID-19 context, terms such as "disease", "epidemic" and "pandemic" which are often listed as force majeure events are a natural starting point when it comes to seeking relief. Other less obvious, but equally common, terms such as "natural disaster" may also cover COVID-19 impacts.</i> While we are still at the mercy most natural catastrophes like earthquakes and tsunamis, hurricanes and tornadoes, volcanic eruptions and landslides, floods, droughts and wildfires, perhaps this is one type of natural disaster we could have done something about. Viral and bacterial outbreaks leading to epidemics and pandemics and their devastating repercussions, have shaped and defined many aspects of human civilization for centuries. However, despite more than 10 years of epidemiological alarms sounding its inevitability, sadly COVID-19 caught everyone off-guard and the global disaster has had more far reaching and devastating consequences than a local flood or earthquake. <i>(In September 2019, the WHO's Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) published a report on preparedness for such pandemics, reminding states of the urgency to "prepare for the</i>	

		<i>worst”, the worst being identified then as a “a rapidly spreading, lethal respiratory pathogen pandemic”).</i> Perhaps the severity of this appalling natural disaster could have been prevented, stopped or better contained but we failed to do so. We were not prepared! ... will this Day for Disaster Risk Reduction call us to be better prepared in the future? <i>Prayerfully reflect on this and pray that God will inspire scientists to find solutions</i>
Wednesday	14	The latest estimates indicate that there are 20 million hectares of planted oil palm in the world, and 12.5 million hectares of coconut. But coconut palms are mostly grown on tropical islands, many of which possess remarkable numbers of species found nowhere else on Earth. So despite its benign reputation, coconut has a surprisingly large negative impact on tropical biodiversity. Per volume of oil produced, coconut production affects more species than any other oil crop, including oil palm. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), coconut threatens some 20.2 species per million metric tonnes of oil produced, followed by olive with 4.1 species, oil palm with 3.8 and soybean, 1.3. <i>Take action by checking that the coconut oil in products that you buy come from ethical sources</i>
Thursday	15	The Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre, (COPAC) together with the South African and Food Sovereignty Campaign, (SAFSC) along with activists on the ground and various stakeholders, have developed a Climate Justice Charter for South Africa. It is a unifying document with guiding principles and systemic alternatives. This charter comes out of our activism, on food, seed and water sovereignty which commenced in 2014. The final document will be presented to Parliament tomorrow – 16th October. <i>Pray that the document will be well received and acted on with urgency</i> 

Friday	16	World Food Day As countries around the world suffer the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, ... this is no ordinary <i>World Food Day</i>, and we need anything but ordinary action. ... <i>World Food Day 2020</i> marks the 75th anniversary of FAO in an exceptional moment as ... FAO 2020. Grow, nourish, sustain. Together. As countries around the world suffer the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, #WorldFoodDay is launching a call for global solidarity to help the most vulnerable people to recover and make food systems more sustainable, stronger and resilient to shocks. Our actions are our future. But the responsibility doesn't only lie with governments. We all have a role to play, from making food choices that improve both our health and that of our food system, to not letting sustainable habits fall by the wayside. Nearly 690 million people are hungry, up 10 million since 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic could add between 83-132 million people to this number, depending on the economic growth scenario. Countries, the private sector and civil society need to make sure that our food systems grow a variety of food to nourish a growing population and sustain the planet, together. We all have a role to play, from increasing the overall demand for nutritious food by choosing healthy, to not letting sustainable habits fall by the wayside, despite these uncertain times. What can you do? Everyone across our food chain has an important role to play – and that means you too! Here are some everyday actions to become a food hero and make healthy food and sustainable habits a part of your lifestyle. • Choose Healthy and Diverse • Respect Food and Food Heroes • Choose Local • Choose Seasonal • Grow Food at Home <i>Prayerfully consider what your actions will be.</i> <i>Prayer for World Food Day</i> Good and gracious God, You are gathering this community from across the earth, asking us to pour out our lives on behalf of those who hunger. For hope. For justice. For daily bread. You are asking us to see the earth as you do, So very, very good. Trees with fruit, bursting with seed.
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		Green plants for food, for humans and for every living creature. As a holy place for everything that breathes and to whom you have given life. Yet we see the realities before us and it takes our breath away: Those whose bellies growl every day. Those who consume more than their fair share. Those who walk miles for clean water to drink. Those whose gardens are demolished by corporations who lease land quietly and displace lives to make a profit. Those whose farms have crashed under the weight of cheaper foods that undercut local prices by decisions made far away in trade agreements. Those whose very lives are impoverished more by our globalizing economies. Breathe new life into us ... As a global community. As local congregations. As networks of committed people. As individual souls, all unafraid. For we see anew our depth, breadth and life. Gather us together so that we may remind each other of your intent for this earth. Gather us so that we may pour out our lives in Christ's name, as Christ does on behalf of those who hunger. For hope. For justice. For daily bread. So that it will be on earth as it is in heaven. For now and for always. (Acknowledgment - www.presbyterianmission.org)
Saturday	17	
Sunday	18	Creator God, we cannot spread care for your creation throughout the world, but help us to begin where we are. Make us honest and careful in all our dealings, true in our words and actions. We cannot alter the course of a suffering and unjust world, but help us to light candles in the darkness in the name of your Son Jesus Christ who at his glorious Day of Judgement will herald the triumph of Justice and Peace. Amen

Prayer for the week in a time of coronavirus

Loving and compassionate God,
you call us to love our neighbours and to be bearers of your hope and grace in our world. Expand our hearts and vision to respond with compassion to those around us, who are struggling in this time of uncertainty, anxiety, grief and suffering.

Give wisdom and strength to our health workers, and government officials, as they provide leadership in bringing our country through this crisis.

We bring before you and into our hearts and minds:

Those whose work and income are uncertain.

Those who are isolated.

Those who are fearful of an unknown future.

Those who are homeless, and all those who offer them support and care.

Those who are involved in aged care

Businesses whose futures are uncertain

Schools – their school staff and students.

Those with health conditions that put them at greater risk.

Give wisdom and care-filled discernment to all our Church leaders as we seek to creatively live out our worship, witness and service in ways that offer Christ's life-giving love and presence.

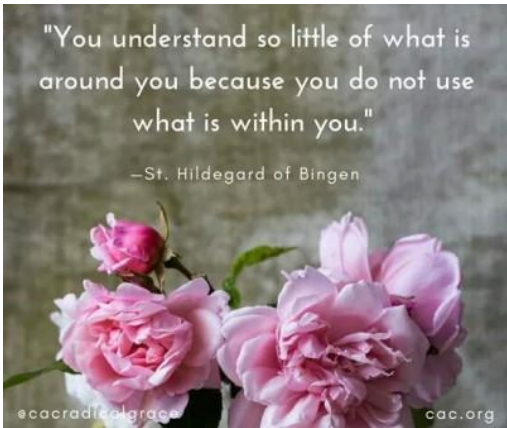
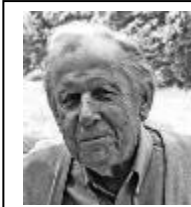
Strengthen and sustain us to be your people shaped by your abundant grace, bearers of your generosity and overflowing love.

Through Christ our Light and Hope, we pray.

Amen.

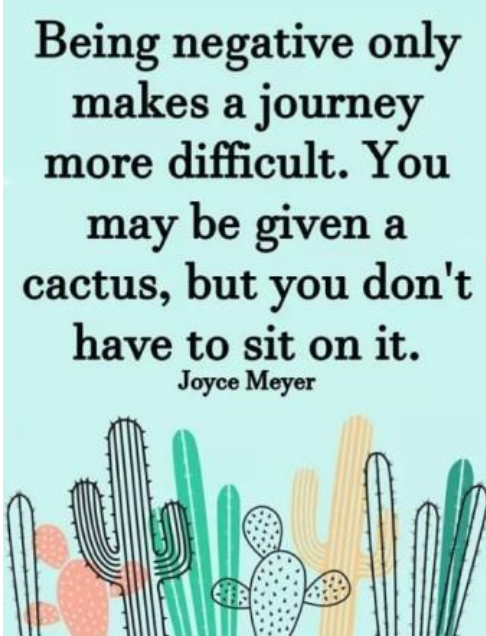
Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

(Adapted)

Monday	19	
Tuesday	20	"In reality, there is a single integral community of the Earth that includes all its component members whether human or other than human. In this community every being has its own role to fulfil, its own dignity, its own inner spontaneity. Every being has its own voice. Every being declares itself to the entire universe. Every being enters into communion with other beings. In every phase of our imaginative, aesthetic, and emotional lives we are profoundly dependent on this larger context of the surrounding world. " Thomas Berry 

Wednesday	21	Psalms 98 Sing to GOD a brand-new song. He's made a world of wonders! He rolled up his sleeves, He set things right. ² GOD made history with salvation, He showed the world what he could do. ³ He remembered to love us, a bonus To his dear family, Israel—indefatigable love. The whole earth comes to attention. Look—God's work of salvation! ⁴ Shout your praises to GOD, everybody! Let loose and sing! Strike up the band! ⁵ Round up an orchestra to play for GOD, Add on a hundred-voice choir. ⁶ Feature trumpets and big trombones, Fill the air with praises to King GOD. ⁷ Let the sea and its fish give a round of applause, With everything living on earth joining in. ⁸ Let ocean breakers call out, "Encore!" And mountains harmonize the finale— ⁹ A tribute to GOD when he comes, When he comes to set the earth right. He'll straighten out the whole world, He'll put the world right, and everyone in it.
Thursday	22	Great in Power Praise Him, you heavens and all that's above Praise Him, you angels and heavenly hosts Let the whole earth praise Him Praise Him, the sun, moon and bright shining stars Praise Him, you heavens and waters and skies Let the whole earth praise Him Great in power, great in glory Great in mercy, King of Heaven Great in battle, great in wonder Great in Zion, King over all the earth Praise Him, you heavens and all that's above Praise Him, you angels and heavenly hosts Let the whole earth praise Him Praise Him, the sun, moon and bright shining stars Praise Him, you heavens and waters and skies Let the whole earth praise... <i>Hillsong Worship</i>



Friday	23	"The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope." <i>Pierre Teilhard de Chardin</i> 
Saturday	24	
Sunday	25	Most gracious God, we come before you to pray for the wellbeing of the planet. You alone know the full extent of the destruction we have wrought to your beautiful handiwork, and what needs to be done to remedy it. We pray for the people around the globe who suffer because of environmental damage. We pray for the defenceless creatures harmed or made extinct by our selfishness and ignorance. We pray for the oceans, air, mountains, plants, and soil, that life and health may again pulse in them. We pray that we humans have a change of heart and stop harming the planet. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us that we may have the passion and wisdom to work effectively to restore your creation. Guide us in our personal, congregation, and community efforts. Give us strength to continue on with this work when it is difficult and requires sacrifice. Bless the Earth and all its life in every way. Amen.
Prayer for the week in a time of coronavirus My Mask Holy God, you see me and you hear me. Through my mask, you see if I smile or if I scowl. Through my mask, you hear me if I whisper a brief prayer or mutter a muffled curse. My friends don't see or hear or know; nor do my family; nor my colleagues. But you do. This mask takes away power – the power of clear communication but also the possibility to infect. But it also grants a freedom to be with. My smiles, my thoughts, my mumbles, though – these I know, but they are a greater mystery to others now.		

But not to you, Lord. You see past my mask, you hear through it, you know.
 But your mask, Lord, what about your mask? Who can see through your mask? Hear through it?
 I cannot.
 I cannot see if you smile or if you scowl.
 I cannot hear if you whisper an answer to my prayer or brush off my curse.
 I cannot sense if you are pleased with me or if you are waiting for me to do much better.
 Can we all take off our masks, Lord? Put them away?
 When the disease that moves us to mask our faces for safety fades away, will our eyes and our ears
 be stronger, better able to see and to hear the smiles and the frowns, the cries and the whispers of
 those who fill our lives? Who make our lives worth living?
 Will we see, Lord, that what we think of as your mask is really also our own, our inability to find you
 in the rush of our lives, our failure to see you in all the wonders you show us, our incapacity to hear
 your gentle voice in the tumult that surrounds us.
 Can we know, Lord, that we put on many masks so we can cope, avoid, pretend, be acceptable?
 (What scar did the Phantom's mask hide? "Who was that masked man?")
 Help us, Lord, to move beyond our masks. You are here for us to see and to hear. Help us. Let us
 take off our masks.

Fr. Edward Schmidt SJ

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Monday	26	
Tuesday	27	"We must fight against the spirit of unconscious cruelty with which we treat the animals. Animals suffer as much as we do. True humanity does not allow us to impose such sufferings on them. It is our duty to make the whole world recognize it. Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace." Albert Schweitzer 
Wednesday	28	Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. <i>Amen.</i>

Thursday	29	Each leaf, each petal, each grain, each person, sings your praises, Creator God. Each creature on the earth, all the mountains and great seas show your glory, Spirit of love. And yet the hand of greed has patented and plundered your splendour, has taken and not shared your gift, has lived as owner of the earth, not guest. And so ... the ice is cracked; the rivers dry, the valleys flooded and the snowcaps melt. God our Father, show us how to step gently, how to live simply, how to walk lightly with respect and love for all that you have made. Amen
Friday	30	
Saturday	31	Irish Blessing May the blessing of light be upon you, light without and light within. May the blessed sunlight shine upon you and warm your heart till it glows like a great fire and strangers may warm themselves as well as friends. And may the light shine out of the eyes of you, like a candle set in the window of a house, bidding the wanderer to come in out of the storm. May the blessing of rain be on you; the soft, sweet rain. May it fall upon your spirit so that little flowers may spring up and shed their sweetness on the air. And may the blessing of the great rains be on you, to beat upon your spirit and wash it fair and clean; and leave there many a shining pool where the blue of heaven shines, and sometimes a star. May the blessing of the earth be on you, the great round earth. May you ever have a kindly greeting for people as you're going along the roads. And now may the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly. Amen