

## Prayers for the environment

These prayers are for Christians who want to engage with environmental concerns. In writing them I wanted to provide some foundations for a genuinely Christian response to the climate emergency, and the wider environmental challenges behind it.

The prayers remember that the environment we live in is God's creation; that humans have affected and marred the environment for centuries; and recognise the urgency and stress of this moment.

They attempt to name some of our anxieties, and the overwhelming burdens we feel. But they try to avoid making **guilt** the motivation for further action. Instead, they invite us to see our response as emerging from gratitude and joy for God's creation and call on our lives.

These prayers are not a response to environmental concerns: they are meant to provide a platform for such a response, to help Christians begin to find a distinctively Christian response to the crisis. There is a danger that Christians lose the confidence to respond **as Christians** to the environment. I hope these prayers root our response in our faith.

These prayers is built around three different types of prayer:

- Lamentation
- Confession
- Attending to God

As such, they will, I hope, enable Christians to turn their face to God, and to the environmental challenge..

Finally, these prayers are quite stark in places. Yet ultimately, they speak of God's grace, the core hope of the Christian faith. They are therefore only really suitable for committed groups of Christians. Although the prayers have no authorised status, they have been used as a resource in several settings across Lichfield Diocese.

In flesh you walked among us; you know this earth as God and as human.

God of longing; **call your people again**

With breath you created the world; the church also you breathed life into.

God of longing; **call your people again**

You called priests to make space holy; you called prophets to speak the truth

God of longing; **call your people again**

You called Abraham to trust and follow; to faithful service you called Samuel.

God of longing; **call your people again**

You called Paul to repentance and service; to sacrifice and joy you called Stephen.

God of longing; **call your people again**

You call us to not to trust in the works of our hands; to trust in you is your cry.

God of longing; **call your people again**

You say be my people; my people love to dwell in my temple.

God of longing; **call your people again**

*Silence*

God who calls, teach us to attend as you attend. Teach us to forgive as you forgive. Teach us to call others as you call us, to see, and to love, your everlasting movement of creation; in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

**Prayers written by Simon Foster © 2019**

## Prayers for the Environment

### Introductory Prayer (such as...)

O God of attention, who sees all things and hears all things, listen to us as we open to you our hopes and fears for your creation. **Amen.**

### Lament – Confession - Response

*(Jeremiah 2.7-13)*

Let us pray to the God who attends to all creation.

Living God, we see wide motorways, monocultures, forests cleared, and the beaches spread with plastic; and we are dismayed.

God of attention: **hear the cry in our hearts**

We fear we face a task which is impossible.

God of attention: **hear the cry in our hearts**

We dread the changes that ask to be made: the sacrifices; the inconvenience.

God of attention: **hear the cry in our hearts**

We feel powerless.

God of attention: **hear the cry in our hearts**

We don't know how to act; the environment is complex. It is nuclear power against coal; reusing against recycling; the poor against the future.

God of attention: **hear the cry of our hearts**

We are frightened that we are responsible for the sins of those who came before us.

God of attention: **hear the cry in our hearts**

We need change, but we don't like to be bossed around, and we don't want to be bossy ourselves.

God of attention: **hear the cry of our hearts**

We dread being shown up as greedy, shallow or lazy.

God of attention: **hear the cry of our hearts**

We don't want to tell our children, our next generation, how things seem. We don't want to see the look in their eyes.

God of attention: **hear the cry in our hearts**

*Silence*

Generous and tender God, hear the cry of our hearts. You are gentle and gracious, powerful and unchangeable. Teach us to trust in you.

### Lament – Confession - Response

*(1 John 1.8-10)*

Let us pray to the God who sees us and all the cosmos; who longs to be reconciled to all.

Living God, your people sought knowledge of good and evil. They left Eden to try their luck in this world.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

Your people denuded the Sahara. There are no cedars now in Lebanon; no lions in Judah.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

Your people ate the Woolly Mammoth to extinction; in superstition they killed the last Great Auk; for medicine, they destroyed the Black rhino; for pleasure they hunted the Dodo.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

Your people spread rats and disease. With fire and smoke they fly to their holidays.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

Your people take the gifts of your earth. With pools of arsenic they draw metals from the ground. With tools of iron they pierce the ocean floor for oil. With the skill you have given, they shape them into marvellous things. Then they use them once and throw them away. Your gifts float for years and choke your creatures.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

Your people eat your creatures without seeing them or naming them. They raise them in barns and slaughter them in factories. Animals know slavery; then they know death.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

Your people turn against one another. They beat ploughshares into spears. They destroy each other. In Syria, Yemen, Indonesia and Brazil, they burn the land with fear and greed.

God of creation: **forgive your people's sin.**

*Silence*

*A formal absolution may be used, or:*

Gracious and tender God, our story is marked with failure and faithlessness. Yet you long for this story to be otherwise. We thank you that you desire to forgive us our sins. We thank you that you can see redemption where we cannot. Teach us to trust your in your forgiveness. In Christ's name **Amen.**

### Lament – Confession - Response

*Psalm 84*

*Let us pray to the God who calls us to abundant life.*

Living God, you see all that is done to your creation. It seems like you watch, and wait. Remind us of your law.

God of longing; **call your people again.**

You called your people out from Egypt; from Babylon you brought them home.

God of longing; **call your people again.**

You sent prophets to us; to us you gave your only son

God of longing; **call your people again.**