

## Prayer points – May 2018



### Speak up week

In the UK, the [Climate Coalition](#) is asking us to organise a local event between the dates of 30<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> July. Ideas for possible events include a tea party, a craft event, a picnic or a nature walk. They are encouraging us all to engage in a national conversation on how climate change is affecting the life we love. Please prayerfully consider how you might use this opportunity - what things do you love that you might want to [#SpeakUp](#) and protect?

### New hope for bees

We give thanks for the really encouraging news that EU member states have voted for a near [total ban on bee harming neonicotinoids](#). The world's most widely used insecticides will be banned from all fields within six months, to protect both wild and honeybees that are vital to crop pollination. The ban on neonicotinoids is likely to come into force by the end of 2018 and will mean they can only be used in closed greenhouses.

[Bees](#) and other insects are vital for global food production as they pollinate three-quarters of all crops. The plummeting numbers of pollinators in recent years has been blamed, in part, on the widespread use of pesticides. Neonicotinoids are nerve agents and have been shown [to cause a wide range of harm to individual bees](#), such as damaging memory and reducing queen numbers.

### Big firms sign Plastic Pact

Thanks to the 'Blue Planet effect' there's been much action to tackle the scourge of plastic pollution. Now more than 40 major supermarkets, retailers and manufacturers [have signed up to the UK Plastics Pact](#), a voluntary commitment to make all plastic packaging either reusable, recyclable or compostable within the next seven years.

[Many firms are already taking some steps](#), but this agreement is far reaching. Firms such as Asda and Marks and Spencer say they'll make 100% of plastic packaging recyclable or compostable, and get rid of 'difficult or unnecessary' single-use plastic packaging altogether. The signatories are responsible for more than 80% of plastic packaging sold through UK supermarkets, so the move has been welcomed. But environmental groups stress that the word "voluntary" is important and government action will be needed to make sure the promises are delivered.

### Algae may help solar technology

Diatoms are a kind of algae that are able to manipulate light in order to photosynthesise more energy. Their skeletons made of silica and glass, trap and scatter light, making them very efficient in using light. Now, researchers hope to use this property to boost solar technology. A research team with scientists from NASA, Princeton and Lincoln Universities, are looking into ways to incorporate diatoms into photovoltaics, reducing their cost whilst maintaining their efficiency. The technology is known as [organic solar technology](#) and early findings are proving encouraging. In addition Diatoms reproduce rapidly and are the most common type of phytoplankton found in nature. Seems that nature may have a lot of the answers we need to move forward. We pray for this team of researchers and for other teams around the world looking into innovative and sustainable approaches to meet our energy demands.

## What can kids do about climate change?

We all want to pass on a healthy planet to the next generation – and are conscious how important it is for everyone – young and old – to think how they can be a good steward. But are we actually engaging with what that will take? In a recent [talk to youngsters in Lund, Sweden](#), Dr Kimberley Nicholas mentioned the need for high impact actions and noted how few of these are generally mentioned in government documents – which tend to focus on low impact responses. Top of her list regarding the high-impact changes people can make are to have one less child, to live without a car and to fly less. Lower but still significant impacts come from switching to green energy, using an electric car and eating a meat-free diet. Dr Nicholas encourages young people to work on cutting their school and neighbourhood carbon footprint in half – and ideally at home too – and then to look at system change. System change might sound overwhelming but she shares some very positive examples and quotes from youngsters doing exactly that.

Her work gives a simple but fundamental challenge to us all – to cut our carbon footprint in half. Let's pray for encouragement in doing just this – and enjoying life in the process.

## A reading from Psalm 19:1-4 (GNB)

How clearly the sky reveals God's glory!

How plainly it shows what he has done!

Each day announces it to the following day; each night repeats it to the next.

No speech or words are used, no sound is heard;

Yet their message goes out to all the world and is heard to the ends of the earth."

## Client Earth celebrate 10 years

[Client Earth](#) have rapidly gained a reputation for innovative environmental work, shining a spotlight onto issues such as air pollution, plastic pollution and the need for companies to manage climate risk – all based on detailed research and sound legal analysis. We pray that they, and similar organisations, will continue to highlight pressing environmental needs and ensure governments respond.

## Bluebell woods ... and other flowers

The UK is home to half of the world's bluebell woods, and now is the time of year when, if you are near one, you can marvel at their amazing beauty, walking through a haze of deep blue and, if blessed by warmth and sun, smelling the delicate fragrance from thousands of bluebell flowers. The marvel of flowers, though, doesn't just lie in the spectacular: even in off-seasons and in highly built-up areas, you may suddenly see a cheerful dot of colour – nature's beauty brightening the surroundings. If you can take time to make a special 'flower' trip this month, do – but wherever you are, take time to marvel at the wonder of God's creation, giving thanks 'for the beauty of the earth ... hill and vale and tree and flower ...'