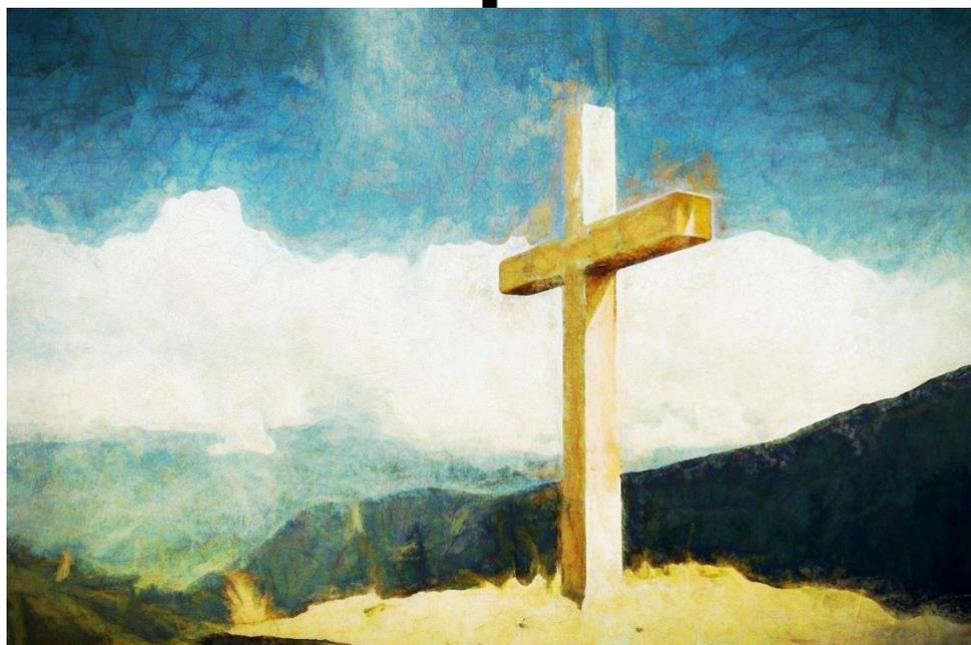

LIVING LENT IN A “CLIMATE” OF CHANGE

February 17 – April 3 2021

Climate Justice for All

Young methodists for COP 26



Opera per le Chiese Evangeliche Metodiste in Italia (OPCEMI)
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Introduction

The British Methodist Church in collaboration with JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) and All We Can (Methodist Relief and development organisation) and, on the Italian side, with OPCEMI has launched an international campaign with and for young Methodists around the world who are called to meet and raise awareness in Methodist churches and organisations (and partner) at both the national and international level in the run up to COP 26 (which will be structured in three events: Milan - 28-30 September 2021 - "Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition" event; Milan - 30 September-2 October 2021 -PreCop26; Glasgow - 1-12 November 2021 - COP26) as part of the Methodist churches' commitment to climate justice.

The project seeks to promote different initiatives which seek to bring change by listening to the voices of the Global South and to those who migrate for reasons relating to climate change. The coronavirus pandemic, while horrific in its consequences, has presented opportunities for different ways of working which can potentially reduce climate change. Moreover, the crisis has, in certain cases, created an openness to explore alternative ways of being in the aftermath of the pandemic.

A number of questions for reflection have arisen in many people's hearts during this period. Churches around the world have called for a more balanced and sustainable way of living, guided by the biblical promise that we live and move in the grace that God gives to us. This grace liberates us from destructive words and behaviours and enables us to reach out to others and to be reconciled with the creation.

The change we are all hoping for requires us to cease exploitative and unsustainable forms of producing and consuming goods. Unfortunately, in the past the church has not encouraged good stewardship of the creation but has in fact promoted an anthropocentric theology which since the mid-1800s, wrought considerable damage to the environment and caused much suffering to God's creation, of which climate change is one of the signs. However, latterly the church has tried to re-centre its theology and different forms of liberation and ecological centred theologies have arisen which witness a conversion in the general attitude of the church.

In the run up to COP 26, we have decided to offer some resources for study, meditation and prayers (by leaders of the churches participating in the CJ4A's campaign), suggestions for discussion and proposals for action on climate protection and climate justice. During the weeks of Lent we hope that these will facilitate a time of reflection, moderation, fasting, and renewal.

Working from within this framework it has become clear that, given the urgencies of climate change, there needs to be a 5-step approach; associated with the goals of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. These are: food, waste, mobility, digitalization and energy, water.

There are a number of factors which drive this initiative. In this vein it is helpful to quote the introduction to the volume *Hope in God's Future: Christian Discipleship in the Context of Climate Change* produced in 2012 by a joint working party on climate change and theology; convened by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church:.

1. Approaching God in the context of climate change

The theological task is to reflect on modern scientific accounts of current and threatened future harms from climate change in the context of affirming the triune God as creator and redeemer of the universe. The scientific analyses of climate change and the role of

human greenhouse gas emissions are well-grounded. It is now morally irresponsible to fail to acknowledge and address the urgent need for radical cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent intolerable damage to human populations and mass extinctions of many plant and animal species.

2. Encountering the Word of God

Reading the Bible in the context of climate change gives a vision of hope in God's faithfulness to creation, a call to practise love and justice to our human and non-human neighbours, and a warning of God's judgement of those who fail to do so. In this context, closing our ears to the voices of those most vulnerable to climate change would be nothing less than giving up our claim to be disciples of Christ.

3. Responding to God's Word

What is required of God's people in the industrialized world is repentance. The first step towards this change of heart and practice is confessing our complicity in the sinful structures that have caused the problem.

4. The body of Christ in the World

A core component to Christian discipleship is now a commitment to lifestyles consistent with levels of greenhouse gas emissions the earth can sustain. The church must commit itself to this standard of sustainability. At the time of writing, this means signing up to the UK government target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 80% from 1990 levels by 2050 and to urgent action to meet appropriate interim goals, as well as assisting members of its congregations to make similar changes and engaging with government to enable national and international change.

5. Sending out

We call on our churches to confess their guilt in relation to the causes of climate change, to show signs of repentance and redeemed sacramental living and to be a prophetic voice in the life of our communities in the following ways:

- Through prayer, preaching, bible study, teaching, and discussion to raise awareness of the need for confession and repentance among the churches and thereby enable acts of corporate confession in liturgical settings.
- To act urgently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the whole of church life in line with the national goal of a minimum 80% reduction on 1990 levels by 2050 and appropriate interim targets. This will require first a systematic audit of church greenhouse gas emissions at national and local levels and second a strategy to reduce these emissions to achieve this target.
- To help members of congregations to make similar adjustments in the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their lifestyles by supporting them in a personal audit and strategies to reduce their emissions.
- To campaign at a local and national level for policies that strengthen and take steps towards realizing the commitment to a minimum 80% reduction by 2050.

OBIETTIVI PER LO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE



□ February 21 – Food and Climate change – Goal 15: Life on Land

File

It is clear that there are number of issues surrounding food security that are closely related to the environment. These include: production, storage, distribution, and markets. All of these are sensitive to extreme weather patterns and climate fluctuations. Food production and its quality are also affected by soil and water quality, the presence of pests and diseases, and other biophysical conditions.

In this vein, it has been calculated that a 1°C increase in average temperature is equivalent to moving crops 150 kilometres further north in latitude and 150 metres in altitude. It is concerning that the predicted rise temperatures and increasing CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere will accelerate the proliferation of weeds and destructive insects, and new diseases may appear as a result.

Agriculture is the most land-intensive human activity on the planet. If we exclude Greenland and Antarctica, we currently cultivate 38% of the earth's land, the rest being mainly deserts, mountains, tundra, ice, urban areas, natural parks, and other areas not suitable for agriculture. The area covered by agricultural activities is 60 times the area taken up globally by roads and buildings.

Globally, food production is responsible for one fifth of greenhouse gas emissions (21%). A study published last year in *Nature* (volume 586, pp. 248-256 - 2020) provides a detailed map of nitrous oxide emissions globally. Taking into account both natural and anthropogenic sources, the authors determined that between 2007 and 2016, emissions were approximately 17 million tonnes of nitrogen per year. Moreover, they found that global human-induced emissions, dominated by the use of agricultural fertilisers, have increased by 30 per cent over the past four decades to 7.3 million tonnes of nitrogen per year. All this has had a detrimental impact on the earth's atmosphere.

After agriculture, livestock farming is the most land-intensive activity. Livestock farming (pastures, maize, soya or fodder production areas) accounts for 70% of cultivated land and 30% of the planet's land surface. Almost half of the emissions from the agricultural sector are caused by the enteric fermentation of animals, mainly cattle, which account for 83% of livestock emissions: 63% for meat production and 19% for milk and dairy production (compared to a contribution of 0.6 from the poultry sector, 5.1 from the pig sector and 11.7 from the sheep sector). They release methane, which is 23 times more significant in global warming than CO₂.

Bible references

Meditation: Exodus 16:11-18

This passage from Exodus is a well-known Bible story that is often read and dramatized in Sunday schools.

However, this is also a passage which speaks powerfully to us today about how our societies are structured and how God shatters unjust social structures, opening new perspectives!

The people of Israel, who were enslaved and were suffering profoundly in Egypt, were freed from slavery by God through their servant Moses. Now they are in the desert and they

experience freedom and the difficulties that accompany it. The journey through across the desert is a time of trial, difficulty and hunger.

As time passes, the Israelites begin to murmur against God – contending that when they were slaves in Egypt they did not suffer famine. They remember with nostalgia the bread given to them by Pharaoh. This was the food of slavery, however reliable it appeared; it was the food of Mammon; the god of those who accumulate at the expense of others. This raises the following question: is an acquiescence in oppression preferable to hunger in freedom?

We still face this question today. For example, if industrial/food production bring both wealth environmental destruction where is the long term benefit? The striking case of the Italian firm ILVA of Taranto offers a case in point. In 2012 it was discovered that this steel plant was causing so much pollution that it increased the risk of cancer to many people living nearby and accounted for over 30% of all Dioxin emissions in Italy (2002)!

Despite these horrific examples, many still find comfort in the accumulation of wealth that is supposedly guaranteed by these industries – even if they enslave the environment to the bondage of pollution. The murmurs that turn into accusations, lead hungry people ready to devote themselves to idols to miss the promise of God's provision: "I will make bread rain from heaven for you" (Exodus 16:4). It is this new divine creation in the desert that satiates the famished and gives life to the dying.

In this biblical passage, as in that of the multiplication of loaves and fish (Matt 14:13ff), the true value of this food is not the miraculous event of its coming from heaven, but it is in the fact that it is given, that it must be shared and cannot be accumulated. The presence of God is not in the supernatural event, but in the changed relations with respect to daily needs.

The phrase *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"* in the Lord's Prayer precedes *"Give us this day our daily bread"*, that is, the right daily quantity every day. But this, we must admit, more than our request is actually the will of God.

But where are we?

The main problem in our lives is that we are being internally torn between the Good News of God's abundance and the human analysis that only makes us see scarcity.

The Gospel reminds us that we have been called to salvation and to life by God's generosity, yet we end up with embracing faith in scarcity, leading us to thirst for more, being the cause of social and racial tensions (you want to steal my job, my place in the society, my national identity), the destruction of the environment to gain resources for resale, the arms race to be stronger and more powerful than other nations.

Instead, the Bible reminds us that what we have is from God's goodness, not for our ability to gain resources.

The new creation of God in the desert provides a fair distribution of food resources, imparts sharing. These are the true wonders of the coming of God's kingdom. We are astonished, but at the same time nervous and disturbed.

Deep down we know that the story of scarcity is a story of death, yet all too often we remain attached to it.

In response to our confusion, God always asks us to have confidence in him precisely in times of crisis such as this, in which scarcity becomes a tangible reality. He asks us not to accumulate what we receive, but to share, because there is a bread that is more nutritious than materialism: it is the bread of life. It's not only all about money, but all the gifts that come from God...

We must choose today where we are going to place our trust: in the abundance of God or in the scarcity that seems to surround our social reality? Let us ask ourselves a question: how do we respond to God for his gifts in the discipline of daily life?

Amen

*Rev. Mirella Manocchio,
President of the OPCEMI (Opera per le chiese evangeliche metodiste in Italia)*

Prayer of the Kanak people

Lord, our God,
we give you thanks for the Earth, nurturing ground:
She's like a mother to us.
Land of our origins,
offer us a place to plant our roots.
We pray to you, Lord,
for those who no longer have a land,
for those who have been overthrown, driven out, forced into exile.

Lord, our God,
We thank you for all the plants that give nourishment,
for joy in abundance, for strength to endure in famine.
We pray for those who have no daily bread,
but also, for those who throw it into the bin,
because they can't recognize the value of things.

Lord, our God,
We thank you for the animals, the birds, the fish of the sea.
For the animals that give us their milk, their wool, their meat.
But also, for those whose existence is dear to us, even if it is not useful to us.
We pray to you, Lord,
Let us all learn to respect your creatures,
to understand how much our survival depends on it.
Amen

Suggestions for discussion

- Is daily bread everyone's right?
- A sustainable diet is based on the responsibility towards the entire supply chain. This is the spirit behind organic and fair-trade agriculture.
- Under what conditions is the Earth able to feed a human population that has reached almost 8 billion?

Proposed actions

- Make recipes using stale bread and other food waste as proposed in the cookbook "Give us today yesterday's bread too" edited by Clara Manfredi and published by Glam - the

FCEI's Globalisation and Environment Commission - to tackle food waste (here are two suggestions).

- Eat vegetarian for at least three days. *Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.* Genesis 9:3-4
- Caring for fellowship *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.* Acts 2:46-47

Tarragon croutons (old bread, no milk or butter)

Ingredients

• Tarragon 1 bunch • parsley 1 bunch • salted anchovies 1 • capers 20 g • breadcrumbs • egg 1
• extra virgin olive oil • salt • black pepper • croutons

Procedure

Hard boil the egg and desalt the anchovy by cutting 4 fillets; chop them with capers and aromatic herbs; add the bread crumb soaked in water and vinegar and well squeezed, work the mixture into cream ;) dilute with oil and season; serve on a toasted bread 12

Garlic soup (old Tuscan vegetarian soup, no milk or butter)

Ingredients

• Garlic 16 cloves • Extra-virgin oil 4 tablespoons • Dry white wine 1 t • Broth 6 t • Salt, nutmeg, pepper • Eggs 3 • old bread

Procedure

1) Sauté the garlic in the oil, add the wine and the broth and bring to boil, mashed the garlic 2) Lower the heat and add the lightly beaten yolks 3) Cook for 15 minutes uncovered and add the seasonings, cook for other 15 minutes covered 4) Whip the egg whites until stiff and spread on lightly toasted bread 5) Place the bread in the bowls and cover with broth.

□ February 28 – Waste and Climate change – Goal 12: Guarantee Responsible Consumption and Production

File

Waste production itself is a symptom of an unsustainable way of production, especially if it is toxic to life on Earth.

In 2019, the national production of urban waste and assimilated waste stands at almost 30.1 million tonnes, a slight decrease of 0.3% compared to 2018.

The amount of packaging and packaging waste in Italy stands at 13.7 million tonnes in 2019 (+0.7% compared to 2018). Among these, 36.2% comes from paper and cardboard, which is confirmed as the most marketed fraction, 23.2% from wood, then glass (19.6%), plastic (17%), steel (3.5%) and aluminium (0.5%). Special waste was around 130 million tonnes in 2018. For urban waste, the reported recycling rate in Italy is between 45.2 and 50.8%, depending on the methods used; the European average is 47%.

The waste management sector has a turnover of more than 13 billion euros. There are 637 active companies, 50% of which are specialised in the collection and transport phases; 25% are involved in both collection and the management of recovery and/or disposal facilities; and the remaining 25% are specialised only in the management of facilities.

Every year in Europe, over two thousand million tonnes of waste are produced, of which over forty million tonnes are classified as hazardous.

The sector is heavily infiltrated by the mafia and official figures are therefore only partially reliable. New, less stringent rules, higher prices for legally disposing of waste and restrictions due to the Coronavirus have made it easier for the mafias to enter the sector by offering industries attractive conditions and prices that then create an illegal, parallel, and hidden market. In order not to arouse suspicion, mafias even pay recycling fees or other costs associated with the proper disposal of waste that is in fact stored illegally.

"We can only defeat these new mafias if we understand that it is necessary to involve all national, European and international institutions, and to raise public awareness," said Vincenzo Musacchio, jurist, and professor of criminal law, on several occasions.

In May 2019, the EU adopted a ban on single-use plastic products, thereby setting stricter rules for the types of products and packaging that are among the ten most frequently found polluting products on European beaches. In May 2018, the EU decided on new rules for waste management and set legally binding recycling targets. These targets cover urban waste, recycling of packaging materials and landfills.

Finally, at the beginning of January 2021, the state-owned company in charge of decommissioning nuclear power plants and managing radioactive waste (Sogin) published the list of Italian areas identified as those that could host the national repository for Italian radioactive waste. To be precise, there are 67 areas scattered throughout Italy, in seven regions, which meet the 25 criteria set out in the Charter of Potentially Suitable Areas (Cnapi). However, the plan has not yet been activated due to the many concerns and complaints raised by the regions. Globally, the biggest 'producers' of radioactive waste are nuclear power stations (the construction of which has been prohibited in Italy since 1987, but which are still present in other European countries). Other sources are medical analysis and treatment equipment and

some industrial machines used mainly for production analysis of metal parts and for other analysis and research applications.

Bible references

Meditation: Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus words from the Gospel – “Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself” – do not imply a lack of concern for the future. They say, do not worry about your future, but worry about the future of those who come after you.

Similarly, parable of the “Rich Fool” in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 12:13-21) is a reminder of the human folly and the error of thinking one does not need God.

Jesus’ words strike at the very heart of what we term, the “throwaway culture”.

The ‘throw-away’ culture first developed during the 1918 influenza pandemic known as the Spanish Flue, when disposable items were sold as the safe option to protect against disease. Today, in the face of another global pandemic and rampant plastic pollution, the plastics industry is taking advantage of the crisis, putting profits over people and the planet. It is estimated that between 8 and 12 million tons of new plastic waste enter the ocean every single year.

The emphasis on acquisition as a form of validation has led to quality of life being defined by possessions owned, disposable income, type of phone, car, style of clothes – all things that have a predetermined “shelf-life” or planned obsolescence. The result is more unsustainable extraction of natural resources, human resources with little regard to the integrity of creation nor the dignity of persons.

Our society, driven by a “throwaway culture,” discards not only things but people as “leftovers,” whether it is the poor and vulnerable who suffer most from climate change or indigenous peoples who have been displaced from their lands or seen their water contaminated due to an economic system that prioritizes profit over people and the common good.

A primary value in throwaway culture is maintaining a consumerist lifestyle, but to cease caring about who is being discarded, most of us find a way to no longer acknowledges their inherent dignity.

A person who "is not rich toward God" lives to accumulate and enjoy wealth only to die with nothing permanent or eternal to show for his efforts. Godly living—and all that God esteems to be true riches—is eternal. To think of life only in terms of physical things is both foolish and fatal because life is not comprised and enhanced even by abundant material possessions but by spiritual and eternal things. If we place God first rather than the accumulation of wealth, then we will use whatever He allows us to have, no matter how little or how much, to glorify Him.

In the Pacific, as we respond to the existential threats of climate change (sea-level rise, ocean acidification, extreme weather) and its impacts, coupled with unsustainable extraction of the natural resources of land and sea to feed the “throwaway culture,” we recognize from our indigenous spirituality, culture and Christian faith that our identity, our value is not based on possessions but on relationship and holistic wellbeing. In such a community:

“Life is significant, valued and celebrated. There is a celebration of life over material wealth. “Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect ...prioritizes relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things. This is an “alternative to the project of economic globalization which entails domination through an unjust economic system.”

As we hope to forge a relationship of mutual caring with creation, we turn our backs from our wasteful tendencies and excesses and pray: “May your blessing act in us, O Lord, and transform us with your renewing power, so that we might be wholly disposed to the service of what is good.” (Pope Francis)

*Rev. James Bhagwan
General Secretary, Pacific Conference of Churches*

Prayer

Creator God, we give you thanks for the great abundance and nourishment that you provide us through your Creation and through your great love.

As we come together to worship you, reveal to us ways we can honor you and your created world.

Heal our hunger for things that do not last.

Teach us to take enough, as well as give back to the earth, so that all may live from Your generosity and that no one shall go in want.

God of Creation, we pray for strength and wisdom to be good stewards.

Forgive us for the ways in which we contribute to the disfigurement and destruction of your Creation.

God of providence, transform us, that we may place the welfare of the earth and your people before our fleeting desires.

Grant us divine wisdom and embolden us to replace systems of destruction and wasteful consumption with systems of justice and sustainability.

AMEN

Suggestions for discussion

- How can we change the way we produce and consume so that we produce less waste, and at the same time draw resources from it?
- The importance of differentiated waste collection lies in preserving our collective health. separate collection of waste is not only a required by law, but it is also our duty as citizens and as living beings to the environment in which we live and to our children, to whom we have an obligation to leave a sustainable and liveable planet. This approach is only a stopgap because the aim is to reduce waste production to zero.
- Donate what we no longer use. What for us may be waste, a useless object, something to get rid of, for someone else may not only be useful, but even indispensable.

Proposed actions

- Get rid of disposable products: paper napkins, handkerchiefs and wipes can easily be replaced by traditional cloth ones.

- In and out of the house, avoid plastic water bottles and replace them with flasks and thermos flasks, and always carry a cloth bag to avoid using bags.
- Donate clothes or objects you no longer use to a relative, friend or, even better, to a charity.

□ **March 7 – Mobility and Climate change – Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

File

For many people, the car seems irreplaceable: for going to work, shopping, going to church or going to a concert, 'taxi services' for children, leisure and travel.

We want to strongly oppose this attitude and try out alternatives. This is active climate protection and is also good for your health. Let's try it this week and further on!

In the **modern world** mobility is an expression of freedom and self-determination and a precondition for social participation, but mass motorisation using fossil fuels is a burden on the environment and on health. The hyper-mobility of large parts of society leads to enormous problems, including health problems, from which many people suffer. Often these are the same people who, in turn, have the smallest share in this mobility. This is doubly **unfair**. For example, to people in the global south, who are particularly vulnerable to climate change, or to people in Europe who live in small flats with little protection from noise and on busy main roads. In Italy, there are 38.5 million cars on the road, 655 cars for every 1,000 inhabitants, while if all vehicles are taken into account, the ratio rises to 868/1000 inhabitants.

Many people are now aware that the use of fossil fuels is harmful to the environment, to the climate and to people. Regardless of whether it is coal in the blast furnace or oil in the internal combustion engine, both need to be reduced massively in order to still be able to contain human-induced climate change. In the energy sector, emissions have decreased in recent decades, but not in the transport sector where they have even increased slightly. The current health emergency due to the pandemic has stopped the movement of people 'not essential to production', while the transport of goods has continued. The inevitable and necessary containment of mobility has, however, led to suffering and unease in interpersonal relations.

Sustainable mobility cannot be achieved through a change of engine fuel, but must include a diversification of means of transport in favour of cycling and collective means of transport (car-pooling, public transport), as well as a shift to cars as a service (car sharing) and no longer as property.

In April 2019, stricter emission limits for cars and vans were set by the EU to ensure that, from 2030, new cars and vans generate on average 37.5% and 31% lower CO₂ emissions respectively than 2021 levels. Between 2025 and 2029, cars and vans must generate, on average, 15% less CO₂ emissions.

Limits for trucks and other heavy vehicles were adopted in June 2019. Under the new rules, manufacturers will have to reduce CO₂ emissions by an average of 15% from 2015 and 30% from 2030 compared to 2019 levels.

Bible references

Meditation: Deuteronomy 29:2-5

Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them: "Your eyes have seen all that the Lord did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those signs and great wonders. But to this day the Lord has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear". Yet the Lord says, "During the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet".

Why did the Israelites move to the desert? The answer is simple and tragic. After leaving Egypt, out of slavery, they had reached the promised land of Canaan after 40 years. Bearing dust, heat, drought and all other harsh living conditions.

Can our generation control climate change, or should the next generation wander in the desert? Today we have less than 40 years to achieve sustainability, and we have to make together big decisions to meet climate justice and mobility, as a congregation. That is why these decisions must be taken politically.

We need a different way of life, not only individually but also in our society. There is still a long way to go before we reach a sustainable lifestyle, but it'll be worth it.

A just and sustainable lifestyle is like the promised land. It takes courage to enter and settle. Let us not hesitate too long, like the Israelites. Take courage and dare, we will discover that we have a bright future ahead of us.

For us and the next generation.

*Rev. Simon Schu, pastor in Minden,
Evangelical Church of Westphalia*

Prayer

Forgive us, Lord God our Creator.

In haste and hunger for progress
we have laid waste the good earth you have made.
We have mined landscapes, spoiled coastlines
and polluted air and water.

We have brought health and wealth to some
and suffering and deprivation to others, exploiting the earth
and threatening its creatures. Make us hungry now
for generosity and balance.

Make us brave enough to choose more wisely
for the future of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Anglican Church of Australia

Suggestions for discussion

- Mobility in rural areas. There may be several solutions before relying on the private car such as carpooling with the school bus or an on-call service.
- Smart working. Hence home seems to be the solution to reduce the mobility of men and women employees in non-personal services. Let us talk about it!
- E-commerce leads to traffic of small delivery vans. It alone generates 21% of the greenhouse gases released in Europe. When it comes to the electricity transition, it is the fastest sector that must be de-carbonized if the EU expects to cut emissions by 44% by 2030. Of this 21%, almost three quarters are generated by road transport, mainly private cars and small vans widely used for online delivery.

Proposed actions

- Take walking and cycling around the city.
- Create a carpool, or an on-call service, e.g., with work colleagues or neighbors for the weekly shopping trip.
- Decide to cancel a holiday by plane, opting for other, less polluting means of transport.

□ **March 14 – Digitalization, Energy and Climate change– Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**

File

The effects of information and communication technologies (ICT) on the environment are often classified as first, second or third order. The first are the direct effects that ICT has on the environment in terms of raw material consumption, e-waste production and energy consumption, which are negative for the environment.

The raw materials and energy needed have a large footprint - also for the climate: just half an hour of streaming alone causes about 1.6 kg of CO₂ - as much as a short trip. In addition, the extraction of raw materials for smartphones, tablets and similar devices goes hand in hand with exploitation, child labour and environmental destruction.

A computer requires 20,000 litres of water to be produced; a smartphone about 1280 litres of water. And then there are metals. Here are a few. The extraction of industrial gold for computers and mobile phones requires large amounts of water into which toxic chemicals such as cyanide are injected to dissolve the gold from the rock. Cyanide is toxic. In connection with air, sulphuric acids are formed, which also permanently poison the groundwater.

First mined in Sweden in 1800, rare earths are 17 chemical elements of the periodic table classified as metals, namely Lanthanum, Cerium, Praseodymium, Neodymium, Samarium, Europium, Gadolinium, Terbium, Dysprosium, Holmium, Erbium, Thulium, Ytterbium, Lutetium, Yttrium, Promethium and Scandium, and are only found in certain areas of our planet. They are used in the construction of superconductors, magnets, optical fibres and high-tech components. In particular, they are found in all smartphones and computers. Coltan is a rare surface mineral found in the Congo and a few other countries. It is indispensable for our smartphones and for the aerospace industry. Cobalt is an essential mineral in the new rechargeable lithium-ion batteries that power electric cars, but also smartphones, tablets and computers.

Second-order effects are indirect, i.e. related to the influence - which should generally be positive - that an ICT service or application operating in any sector has on the environment. Video conferencing, for example, is replacing travel but its take-up is limited.

Third-order effects, on the other hand, are systemic (and often unforeseen) effects that ICT produces. For example, efficiency can produce an increase in demand.

Estimates of global electricity consumption in the sector today and in the future are divergent, ranging from 0.1%-2% today to 10%-20% in a few years in the absence of established tracking methodologies.

The transition from fossil fuels to sustainable sources is the goal of this beginning of the millennium, and for much of the experience of the health emergency has made this even more obvious.

As part of Europe's Green Deal, the Commission proposed in September 2020 to raise the target for 2030 greenhouse gas emission reductions, including emissions and removals, to at least 55% below 1990 levels. It has considered all necessary actions in all sectors, including increased energy efficiency and energy from renewable sources, and will start the process to make detailed legislative proposals in June 2021 to implement and deliver this increased ambition.

This will enable the EU to move towards a climate neutral economy and meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement by updating its nationally determined contribution.

The 2030 climate and energy framework include strategic goals and objectives at EU level for the period 2021 to 2030:

- a reduction of at least 40% in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels)

- at least 32% renewable energy contribution
- at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency.

The 40% GHG reduction target is implemented through the EU ETS, the Effort Sharing Regulation with Member States' emission reduction targets, and the Regulation on Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry. In this way, all sectors will contribute to achieving the 40% target by reducing emissions and increasing removals. All three pieces of climate legislation will be updated to implement the proposal to increase the net greenhouse gas reduction target to at least 55%. The Commission will present the proposals in June 2021.

Bible references

Meditation: Leviticus 25:1-2

The creation stories tell us how the earth belongs to God. We hear how God made the day and night, the seas and earth, the fish and animals, women and men...and that God said it was good. As the psalmist wrote:

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it;
 2 for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.
 (Psalm 241)*

Within this long tradition, there is also a belief that humans have been given the responsibility of stewardship of God's world. This is far from the idea of rule or control implied by the word "dominion". Instead, the concept of stewardship implies responsibility for and participation in God's creation. The earth is the Lord's - and God has placed trust in God's people who inhabit it.

What then did God's people hear in the passage above from Leviticus? They had experienced slavery in Egypt, when their very bodies were seen as the possessions of others. God had liberated them from slavery, and Moses led them out of Egypt towards God's promised land. They tried, and being human, failed to trust in God's provision during their time in the wilderness.

God remains faithful, however, and makes an amazing promise to landless former slaves: You will enter the promised land. It is my land, and I gift it to you. And I will show you how to live well together.

We read how God gave rules to enable the people to live in a just, fruitful, sustainable community. "A Sabbath for the Lord" or, as we later read, a Jubilee, required land to be returned, debts to be cancelled, people to be set free. Stewardship of God's earth requires a mindset quite different to the prevailing thinking of our day. And stewardship helps us to think about the challenges of digitalisation and energy use.

We live in the midst of amazing creation. We may first think of the oceans and mountains and the sheer variety of created animals and plants. But let us also wonder at the variety of God's earth shown through rare metals - yttrium, terbium and dysprosium to name but a few - which make the technological leaps, undreamt of by our grandparents, possible. Smartphones, cloud storage, imaging and processing power have all been life changing - and lifesaving - for many people.

Yet these new technologies have also impacted on human and non-human life. Around the world billions of dollars are gambled each year on phones or other devices, with individuals, families and communities experiencing harm as a result. People are drawn into a world of online pornography, with the phenomenon of “revenge porn” becoming more common. And of course, the mining of rare metals can harm communities and the environment, and the exponential use of cloud storage consumes more energy.

What does it look like to be a steward of God’s earth in this context? “Civilization requires energy, but energy use must not destroy civilization.” So said Pope Francis to a gathering of top energy executives in 2018. Science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity. Yet technology is not neutral. Technology shapes the way we view the world; it changes what is seen as possible or necessary. Smartphones, for example, mean we are always available. They have increased the disposable culture by being largely unrepairable. The creation of new and better models feed a sense of avarice and competition within society.

But this way of seeing the world isn’t fixed. As Christians, we are given a different model. We are given the lens of stewardship, of a people who believe that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it”, who are called to help the land “observe a Sabbath for the Lord”.

What might stewardship look like as we reflect on the challenge of digitalisation and energy? Jesus spoke about the “year of the Lord’s favour” as being a time when the captives are released, sight is given to the blind and freedom given to the oppressed. Who is held captive by the way technology shapes the world? How is our climate exploited or oppressed by the decisions we take because of growing digitalisation? What injustices do we fail to see around us?

*Ms. Rachel Lampard
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Prayer

Loving God

We wonder in your creation and in the creativity of your people.

Help us we wrestle with the challenges of digitalisation and energy.

As stewards of your earth let us use the gifts you give us,

And instead of oppression and destruction,

Help us to bring freedom and fruitfulness.

Suggestions for discussion

- How much does the Internet pollute? Even though internet is apparently invisible, it pollutes. Every click on the internet has an environmental impact. For example, an email produces about 4g of CO₂, which can be as much as 50g if you have large attachments - about the impact of a light bulb turned on all day.
- Being sustainable online starting with our web searches. Ecosia is a search engine that uses advertising revenue from online searches to plant trees where they are most needed. By searching with Ecosia, you are not only helping to reforest the world, but also strengthening communities.
- The impact of digital technology on the environment is not only limited to the energy needed to run devices or services: think, for example, of the problems resulting from the

disposal of electronic waste. According to UN figures, only 17% of electronic waste from Europe or the United States is collected and recycled properly, the rest often finds its way to the African continent, where Western countries dump all kinds of electronic waste. It is the poorest populations who pay for this "environmental racism".

Proposed actions

- Do not send attachments that are too big: when it is necessary, use sites that compress documents such as WeTransfer or hyperlinks. Do not leave your computer on standby (especially all night when you leave the office just because 'there are a lot of tabs open'. Tomorrow you can browse your timeline, for example)!
- How often do we find our inbox full of emails that we don't even read or that are useless? However, these mails consume energy (digital pollution), so to tackle this problem it would be better to clean the mails more often.
- For our right to the future, support Fridays for Future actions to speed up energy conversion and stop public subsidies to fossil fuels.

□ March 21 – Water and Climate change – Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

File

Alterations in the water cycle are the most evident sign of climate change.

Water resources are limited and increasingly precious: 97.5% of the water on our planet is salty and 2/3 of the rest is glacier water. Unfortunately, mountains and glaciers all over the world are no longer able to store water due to the climate crisis, and this situation will lead in a few years to a real global water emergency with almost two billion people literally dying of thirst.

According to forecasts by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the rapid melting of ice at the poles could lead to a rise in sea levels that would leave 400 million people exposed to coastal flooding. And this within a few decades. It is believed that 2020 will mark a new negative record on this issue (measurements are ongoing). Indeed, melting sea ice has increased from 81 billion tonnes per year in the 1990s to 475 in 2018. From 1994 to 2017, 28 trillion tonnes of ice were lost.

Antarctica and Greenland are the regions of the world that are most affected by this problem. Half of the losses come from melting ice on land (including 6.1 trillion tonnes of mountain glaciers, 3.8 trillion tonnes of Greenland and 2.5 trillion tonnes of the Antarctic ice sheet). These losses have resulted in a global sea level rise of 35 millimetres. It is estimated that for every one-centimetre rise, around one million people risk having to migrate to leave coastal regions that are at a low sea level.

The available stock of fresh water is thus being reduced while anthropogenic consumption is increasing. It seems that water consumption has increased sixfold in a century.

Agriculture is by far the largest consumer of drinking water: 69% of the annual total is used to irrigate fields around the world, and the United Nations points out that "with an increase in the average global temperature of just 2 degrees Celsius, it is predicted that between 540 and 590 million people could find themselves malnourished". This could have serious repercussions in terms of health and loss of biodiversity.

Industry, transport, energy production, world human consumption (with a growing population of almost 8 billion) and pollution that poisons water follows.

Not all fresh water is drinkable. At present, 87% of the world's population (around 5.9 billion people) have access to drinking water sources, while almost 39% (over 2.6 billion people) lack basic sanitation.

This is why water is the subject of economic appetites and pressure towards commodification not only through the bottled water market (revenues in the bottled water segment are expected to reach \$306,444 million in 2021. The market is expected to grow annually by 6.4% - CAGR 2021-2025), but also the management of water networks, as has happened in Italy.

In Italy, the Committee for Public Water has focused on the issue of ownership of management for its many implications, from service, to prices, to water saving, to its protection as a universal right.

The ownership of water resources, both surface and groundwater, is always public.

Its management, on the other hand, can be public, private or a mixture of the two. There are basically four types of control:

- direct management (municipalities directly manage water resources and their supply) for 12% of the Italian population;

- public management (i.e. carried out by wholly publicly owned companies) for 55% of the population;
- mixed management (i.e. carried out by companies with mixed public and private capital in which the share of the public is increasingly small due to the debt of local authorities) for 30% of the residents
- management by wholly private companies for 3% of total users.

In the autumn of 2020, news began to circulate that "blue gold" would be quoted on the stock exchange and traded on the Wall Street futures market like any other commodity, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to water, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, expressed his grave concern. Incidentally, one should ask why it is socially accepted to commodify raw materials, food and the Earth itself through land ownership.

Bible references

Meditation: Matthew 6:25-34

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink". (1 Corinthians 12:13)

There is almost no other element as water that has a similar meaning to the narration of the Jewish Bible and the New Testament. The water is at the beginning of the Bible *"and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters (Genesis 1:2)* and at the end ... *"let the thirsty come, let the thirsty take as a gift the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).*

When the Bible speaks of water, it is always a life-giving, refreshing, purifying element in both real and a metaphorical sense. Water means fertility and growth (Psalm 104:10), it is God's blessing from heaven and the earth below. The fresh water of the spring is a compendium of the divine blessing: The Lord feeds me with a green pasture and guides me along the fresh water (Psalm 23:2).

Giving bread and water are the signs of hospitality of ancient times.

However, water in the daily life of people in the Near East is always linked to the experience of lack of water. The desert as an expression of absence and the sea as a menacing place.

Excess water is often thought of as a collective fact. The history of the flood (Gen. 1,7) makes us reflect on how water can be an element that destroys all life. In the memory of the people of Israel God's saving action is often associated with the containment of the masses of water.

In the story of Israel's passage through the Red Sea (Gen. 14), there is talk of the imminent danger of dying of thirst and reports of the no less dangerous situation of drowning. Water is either too little or too much. But God is there for everyone in the right measure. The availability for all people is the image of the irrigated gardens and the infinite water sources described in the book of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 12:3; 58:11).

And the New Testament fits into this tradition of hope.

From those who believe in Jesus rivers of living water will come out (Jn. 7:38).

In baptism, purification condenses and the saving effect of water. The person to be baptized is submerged, experiences a danger of life and rises from the water, purified and saved: I baptize you with water, repent, preaches John the Baptist (Mt. 3,11).

In the New Testament Jesus is the one who calms the mortal storm on the Sea of Galilee, saves the disciples from drowning. You can walk on water without sinking (Mt. 14,22ff). The element of water dominates in the Bible.

Jesus is the one who washes the feet of his disciples (Jn. 13:1ff), a gesture that connects the theme of justice to the purifying power of water: in the ritual of the washing of the feet he takes the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7) and shows solidarity with all those deprived of their civil rights. In practicing a conscious use of water during Lent hope is renewed: the "water of life" will never run out and will be available and equally accessible in the right measure for all people and all living on this Earth, without drought or floods, in the fulfillment of the promise of a fullness of life.

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Prayer

A prayer on the edge of a lake

I look at you,
listening to your lake voice obscuring message of millions of years ago.
You were here long before me
a bird with silent waters.

I hear a kid playing
just before bedtime
You will live here
when my friends and I are gone.

I look at the lake, now calm in the evening
Water, without you there is no life
You baptized me
You, clean, clear water.

I look at you, birch
Grow and reach the water
Give me and all the other beings breathing air new life power.

I look at you, high rock behind the cottage,
You're protecting the one who dives, the baby and the birch,
by the wind blowing behind you, this part of the island is serene.

Mother Earth, brother wind, father rock,
my sister in the water,
you are the body of God,
Body of God
who was born your brother and mine.

May you still live for millions of years rock, my father, protect this lake,
earth, my mother, brings life that grows, my brother, wind, blow and make the air clear,
Water, when evening comes, sustain life, stay clean, revive the gift of the Holy Spirit
sisters and brothers and the whole of creation.
Amen.

Ilkka Sipiläine (pastor in Finland)

Suggestions for discussion

- Virtual water is the water used in the production of food (and fibre) and non-food consumer goods, including energy. For example, it takes about 1,300 tonnes (cubic metres) of water to produce one tonne of wheat and 16,000 tonnes to produce one tonne of beef.
- Is water a shared resource?
- Water is so precious that it is called 'blue gold' and could be the cause of wars in the coming years. Although the planet is covered with 70% of it, only 0.5% is usable for humans, agriculture, and livestock. However, not everyone has an equal access to this resource, and the UN fears waves of migration of one billion people over the next two decades due to water scarcity.

Proposed actions

- Washing dishes with pasta cooking water is an excellent degreaser that can be used together with detergents, thus reducing the quantities used.
- Use the washing machine and dishwasher with a full load. Washing with a full load saves a considerable amount of water: for a "typical" family of three, a saving of 8,200 litres per year has been calculated.
- Turn off the tap.
Brushing your teeth or shaving are everyday actions during which we let the water run without using it. If we only kept the tap running for as long as it was actually needed, we could save around 2,500 litres of water.