

A reflection on our planet

'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it; the compass of the world and those who dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas; and established it upon the waters.' Psalm 24; 102

The Minster is one of the UK's 53 'Partners in Action' of *A Rocha*, an international organization committed to caring for God's Creation. *A Rocha* embraces many cultural and Church traditions, yet is united in its desire to be faithful to Jesus and to demonstrating Christ's Lordship in caring for God's world. Our 2025 'Listening to the Leaves' leaflets will explore *A Rocha's* seven-point biblical basis for its work.

1. God and Creation God created all that exists from the farthest reach of the cosmos to the complex ecosystems of Earth. God delights in the natural world in all its beauty, wildness and mystery, declaring it "very good". Creation in turn is a source of wonder and wisdom, and a witness to God's divine nature and eternal power.

2. Our knowledge of God comes through our relationship with Jesus Christ and commitment to the Word of God in the Bible, and our experience of Creation in worship, relationship, creativity; also in the scientific investigation of life and its intricate interconnections and dependences.

Prayer Heavenly Father, you have created and filled the world with beauty. Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works that, rejoicing in the whole creation, we may learn to serve you with all gladness, for the sake of Him through whom all things are made, your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

January

Daily prayer for the month

God, preserver and sustainer of life, thank you for January. May we be aware that nature, though leafless, is not lifeless. Allow us to see your providence in budding twigs, in moving creatures, a drumming woodpecker, a chuckling fieldfare, a wheeling red kite, a fishing heron, rustling mammals in the leaf litter. May we notice beauty in bleak midwinter - from magnificent brown trout in chilly rivers, to mysterious ocean drifters brought to shore by storms, and majestic swans throwing beautiful shapes on mist-wreathed lakes. And, here and there, the spark of a new beginning, a glimpse of yellow winter aconite glowing under the trees. Amen

Intercessions for the month

Week 1 With a New Year we pray for New Hearts, steadfast and contrite. We pray for courage each day to find something right to do ourselves - small or big.

Week 2 The prime outcome of COP29 was a commitment to annual support of \$300 billion by 2035: far less than necessary, and far too late. Pray that this is real money, which starts to flow soon.

Week 3 As we start to build towards COP30 in the heart of the Amazon, pray for true sincerity of heart as negotiations go forward, a real intention to accomplish real things.

Week 4 Again, with COP30 being in the heart of the Amazon, continue to pray for indigenous peoples the world over already suffering from climate change.

February

Daily prayer for the month

God, our mother and midwife, show us that, though the winds may be bitter and the mornings frosted, February is not bleak; rather, it is pregnant with the gentle awakening of the earth. As nature prepares and cooperates, may we too be mindful of raising our next generation. As birds begin to nest, from courting grebes charging and splashing, to drake mallards waggling and whistling, may we too find joy and energy with our life partners. Just as you give us the buttercream primrose as a symbol of the coming of Spring, so may we give each other happiness, warmth and love. Amen

Intercessions for the month

Week 1 As Christians, pray for God's church. Pray that we may lead not follow on climate change, but even more that we truly incarnate God's love in this world, with courage, truth, humility and service. Even with sacrifice.

Week 2 In November, talks failed on marine parks and fishing agreements on Antarctica. Pray for Antarctica; its wellbeing affects the whole world.

Week 3 Technical solutions exist to all the climate challenges, but scaling them up is expensive. Pray for cheaply scaled up solutions: the right economics can change things very fast.

Week 4 As always pray for our leaders: in politics, the media, finance, faith and popular culture; all who have power over the many. They have such an effect.

March

Daily prayer for the month

God, the giver of life, as March heralds the arrival of spring, may we notice the abundance of new life. Blossoms replace berries, early Spring flowers form swathes of yellow, queen bees emerge and, from beneath leaf piles, hedgehogs awake. May we, in noticing nature's renewal, be aware of your life-giving Spirit in us and with us. Just as the dawn chorus greets the sunny mornings together, may we too awake singing your praises, mindful of your provision as we face the day. Amen.

Intercessions for the month

Week 1 Most of us have lived without great disasters in our countries, and somehow always think 'All will be well'. But two awful World Wars show it may not be. Pray for a real awareness that dreadful outcomes can indeed happen, specifically in climate change.

Week 2 1773 lobbyists supporting the fossil fuel industries attended COP29. It is hard for those who produce these fuels not to viscerally oppose climate action. Pray for understanding and for good alternatives for these countries and people.

Week 3 Waste products from plastics to sewage are doing so much damage. Pray for viable ways to benefit from recycling everything locally.

Week 4 Pray for food producers worldwide. When things go wrong due to climate problems our prices go up worldwide - but the poor don't eat at all.

The Southwell Minster Creation Prayer

Gracious God, source of all life,
we praise you for the wonder and diversity
of the natural world, and we thank you
for the genius of the craftsmen who carved
the Chapter House leaves that speak to us still.
Open our hearts and minds to your guiding Spirit
that we may discern together
how best to cherish this good earth
and safeguard its resources.
As we listen to the leaves,
show us how to share in Creation's song
and rediscover our harmony in you,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen



Southwell Minster in partnership with A Rocha UK

Action Points

- *Look out for birds, enjoy them and record them, especially 24-26 January, the annual birdwatch*
- *Join a local Litter Pick, e.g. in the Great British Spring Clean, 21 March - 6 April 2025*
- *Insist on Fairtrade tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar*



**Prayers for the
Integrity of Creation
January - March 2025**