

## Care for Creation

There is something about September that speaks of endings and beginnings – the end of summer and seaside holidays, the beginning of autumn and a new school year. The change of seasons is marked in nature, autumn bringing its own beauty, summer flowers fading replaced by leaves turning red and gold. But August's record temperatures have somewhat obscured the usual trends of plant behaviour. September is a time for conkers and berries but instead of the glossy brown chestnuts we are expecting, some of the fruits are desiccated already, unable to mature fully in their casings due to the lack of water. And the blackberries are not as juicy, shrivelled under the sun.

The prolonged hot dry spell has come to an end but rivers are below their usual level and there are hosepipe bans in some places. We are told we should get used to hotter summers and higher temperatures and adapt our homes and behaviour to match these scorching conditions, and we can each do something to save water and cool our homes.

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September is designated World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, an initiative begun by Pope Francis.\* He encourages us to pray together in "the great cathedral of Creation" warning the world that we are reaching "a breaking point" and must act decisively so that "we and future generations can continue to rejoice in creation's sweet song of life and hope."

As well as joining in prayer together, it is suggested that we take time out to walk in the park, to notice the plants, trees and flowers growing around us and to think about the connectedness of all creation. We are all interdependent, as we have had graphically illustrated by the effect of the war in Ukraine not only on energy supplies but on food security around the world. The blockade of the grain ships has pushed up the price of wheat to unaffordable levels and threatened famine among some of the poorest people globally. The United Nations Development Programme has warned that some 71 million people worldwide are experiencing poverty due to soaring food and energy prices driven by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. \*\*

Here in the UK we are not immune to these global trends nor are we able to be self sufficient in growing our own food, especially in the weather experienced this summer. We need to take more of a global view. We are all living on the same planet and if countries and governments act together, sharing food and economic resources, there will be enough to go round. Locally, plants, trees, rivers and wildlife need our help to flourish as our climate heats up and extremes of weather become more frequent. It is our responsibility to act to safeguard nature and the earth that God gave us.

"Then God said "I give every seed bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." Genesis 1.29 NIV



Reverend Claire Hargreaves

\* <https://cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Celebrate-World-Day-of-Prayer>

\*\*<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/7/inflation-pushed-71m-people-into-poverty-since-ukraine-war-undp>