



CLIMATE CHANGE

Meeting Segment Guide

Produced by the Policy and Advocacy Team
as part of the *Social Justice Stocktake*



Today we will be taking some time to look at the issue of climate change and spending some time in prayer for those who are affected by it.

The following resources have been created to assist you to run a 5-8 minute segment in your Corps' or mission expression Meeting, Team Meeting, ALT Meeting or any space where you gather with other people.

These resources are ready to print and use in your Meeting. Below you'll find:



TALKING POINTS



A PRAYER TIME GUIDE
(INCLUDING THREE WRITTEN PRAYERS)



EXTENDED SEGMENT OPTIONS



LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES

For further support in connecting with issues in your local community, contact us at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au



INTRODUCTION

Today we will be taking some time to look at the issue of climate change and spending some time in prayer for those who are affected by it.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- » **Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns** that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates. Changes observed in the Earth's climate over the past 120 years are primarily driven by human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, which increase heat-trapping gases in the Earth's atmosphere, raising the Earth's average surface temperature.
- » **The raising of the Earth's average surface temperature has led to more frequent and extreme** heatwaves and bushfires; prolonged drought in some regions with devastating floods in others; mass melts in polar regions and glaciers; sea level rise; larger and more intense cyclones; and decimation of vulnerable habitats such as coral reefs. We witness these impacts occurring across Australia and throughout the Pacific region.
- » **Unabated, climate change will be catastrophic. Apart from the destruction of the natural systems** that all life depends upon, for humanity, even 'moderate' climate change represents a grave threat in terms of increased food insecurity, decreased access to clean water and sanitationⁱ, displacement and loss of life through natural disasters, changes to the spread of diseases, increased povertyⁱⁱ and a rise in mental illness. The demand on Salvation Army services will rise significantly.
- » **But we are not without hope.** There is consensus that rapid and intentional action will help stabilise climate in the coming decades. This is the work of the 2015 Paris Agreement and subsequent UN Climate Change COPs (Conference of the Parties), seeking international cooperation to bring global carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. In this context, The Salvation Army adds its voice to calls for the Australian government, both as a 'social service provider' and as a Christian movement.
- » **Love for our neighbour, as taught by Jesus (Luke 10:25-37), requires us to consider** how we might ensure safe living environments and economic wellbeing for the world's most vulnerable communities, including our neighbours in the Pacific and South-East Asia who are already experiencing the dire effects of climate change. Climate action is an expression of Christian love for our neighbours.
- » **Love for God also compels us to care for the Earth.** Scripture tells us that God declared creation to be very good (Genesis 1:31), created through Christ and for Christ (Colossians 1:16). While the earth continues to groan under the oppression of humanity's greed and destruction (Romans 8:20-22), God's plan is to bring all of creation back into shalom through Jesus (Colossians 1:20), ultimately renewing all Life in the fullness of God's Kingdom (Revelation 21:5). Rather than be spectators in the decay around us, Christians are sent to bring this good news to all creation (Mark 16:15). Climate action is bringing good news to the world.

i. Department of the Environment and Energy (2017), Australia's 7th National Communication on Climate Change, https://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/national_communications_and_biennial_reports/application/pdf/024851_australia-nc7-br3-1-aus_natcom_7_br_3_final.pdf
ii. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014), AR5 Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>



Talking Points



» In this context, The Salvation Army has co-signed a letter with other denominational leaders to the Prime Minister of Australia calling for greater climate action. Specifically, Christian leaders including Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson advocate that the Federal Government do a number of things, including:

- Scaling up Australia's 2030 emissions reduction target to at least 50% and ambitiously aim for 74%.
- Cooperating internationally to help limit global temperature rise to less than 1.5 C.
- Achieving net-zero carbon emissions nationally by 2050
- Developing a national climate action plan that includes a just and sustainable transition for communities currently dependent on carbon intensive industries for employment
- Investing in renewable energy
- Developing policies that support people, nations and ecosystems that are most vulnerable to climate change, strengthening the resilience of communities as they adapt to the effects of climate changeⁱⁱⁱ

» The Salvation Army's International Positional Statement on Caring for the Environment says,

"In its operations, among its people and through its public influence, The Salvation Army seeks to foster a culture of sustainability with a focus on long-term environmental solutions."^{iv} Every faith community, every ministry, every Salvationist is called to climate action.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

» In 2020, The Salvation Army Australia Territory adopted an Environmental Sustainability policy.

One of the objectives of the policy is that The Salvation Army will reduce its carbon footprint by reducing or offsetting carbon emissions and utilising renewable energy.

» On an individual level, every officer, soldier, employee, volunteer and friend of The Salvation Army is encouraged to look at the actions they can take personally and collectively to reduce carbon emissions. Making our centres, ministries and homes more sustainable is an important step in showing our love for God, our love for our neighbours and care for God's wonderful creation.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Council of Churches (2021), Letter to the Prime Minister, <https://www.ncca.org.au/newsletters/566-churches-combined-letter-to-pm-re-cop26/file>
^{iv} The Salvation Army International (2021), International Positional Statement: Caring for the Environment, https://s3.amazonaws.com/cache.salvationarmy.org/61b9802b-e89d-4607-a3c6-f4d88d2cf23c_Caring+for+the+Environment+-+July+2021.pdf



Prayer Time



You may wish to invite people to spend time in silent, individual prayer while one of the songs below plays:

[So Will I \(100 Billion X\) – Hillsong Worship](#)

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 998 – Beauty For Brokenness ([lyrics](#))

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1001 – Help Us Build A Loving World ([lyrics](#))

Alternatively, you could invite people to take a prayer walk outside while reflecting on the challenges of climate change, and the role of Christians in responding to this crisis.

Following this time of individual prayer, you may like to have people read the three prayers below.





Prayer Time



Prayer for the world

We come before you, Almighty God – the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things. We are awed by your creative power and continuing work all around us. Scripture reminds us that this beautiful planet we call ‘Earth’ is yours and everything in it: skies, oceans, rivers, mangroves, soil, fungi, forests, bees, crops, flowers. This dazzling array in its complexity and interdependence is the work of your hands and is the object of your redeeming love.

As we think of the suffering of the Earth today, we are mindful that humanity’s greed and destruction is an affront to your grace and love. Collectively, we cause the earth to groan with our unrelenting appetite for more. We confess our part in this sin, and ask for your forgiveness, Lord.

Today, we pray for our leaders – for elected officials, diplomats, public servants, scientists, entrepreneurs – all who have the capacity to bring change that may heal the earth. God, please give them your wisdom and courage to address climate change, and a spirit of unity to do this together.

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for Australia

Dear Lord,

Over the last century Australia has flourished with the economic opportunities that fossil fuels have brought us. Our prosperity has cooled our hearts to the concerns and needs of the nations around us. Even as our coral reefs have bleached time and again, savage bushfires have burnt our forests and homes, and droughts have brought farming communities to their knees, Australian policy has remained unmoved. We confess our part in this sin, and ask for your forgiveness, Lord.

We recognise the uniqueness of this land we call home, her plants, animals and habitats. God, awaken us as a nation, to live with deeper respect and cooperation with the ecosystems around us. Teach us to live with humility and to learn the power of contentment, that we would not be mastered by greed.

We pray this in Your name,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for our responses

Lord,

We ask that you would write on our hearts again, “The Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1, NIV). Thank you for the privilege of being a steward of your beautiful and beloved earth. Show us how to live in a way that reflects this trust, loving you and loving our neighbours. We pray that you would lead us to be voices of hope, compassion and justice in our community, as we seek to address climate change together.

In Jesus’ name we pray,

Amen.



For an extended segment



If you would like to present an extended segment (that goes for longer than 10 minutes), here are some ideas that may take people deeper:

- » General Brian Peddle's "[Devotions with General Peddle](#)" on 'Caring for the Environment'.
- » Prayer activity: It's time to go outside. Read Psalm 104 aloud, looking at all of creation around you. Every plant and animal around you is participating in the work of God in your community. Take time to plant some seedlings together (trees for shade or habitat, flowers or a veggie-patch). If there is no garden bed available, you can pot some plants. Think about what these plants will become as part of the flourishing of the Kingdom of God. Read over verses 30 and 31 again and pray that God would renew the Earth where you are.
- » Encourage each person to take a personal audit of their actions that contribute to climate change, using this [Footprint Calculator Tool](#)

USEFUL SONGS:

[Great in Power](#) – Hillsong Worship

[Lord Of All](#) – Hillsong Worship

[Shout To The Lord](#) – Hillsong Worship

[So Will I \(100 Billion X\)](#) – Hillsong Worship

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 2 – All Creatures Of Our God And King](#) ([lyrics](#))

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 14 – For The Beauty Of The Earth](#) ([lyrics](#))

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 998 – Beauty For Brokenness](#) ([lyrics](#))

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1001 – Help Us Build A Loving World](#) ([lyrics](#))

» Useful Scripture passages:

- Genesis 1:1-31
- Psalm 24:1
- Psalm 104
- John 3:16
- Colossians 1:16-20

FOR KIDS

- » While walking outside, collect leaves, flowers, bark, seeds and stones to glue onto cardboard, making a beautiful collage from God's beautiful earth. Give thanks to God for all the things you see as you walk together



Further Resources



For more information on this issue,
and for further resources:

[The Salvation Army International Positional Statement on Caring for the Environment](#)

[Taking a stand series](#): exploring the Army's International Positional Statement on Caring for the Environment

['Climate Justice'](#) by The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission

Read the [letter](#) signed by Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson, sent to the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison, in relation to climate action

The Salvation Army in the UK is part of the [Climate Sunday](#) initiative, calling for greater government action on climate change

[Five Leaf Eco-Awards](#) is an Australian-based ecumenical resource to help faith communities improve their environmental sustainability. It has a useful survey to assess ways that churches can care for creation as part of their Gospel-witness.

If you'd like any further information on this resource please contact the Policy and Advocacy Team at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.



