

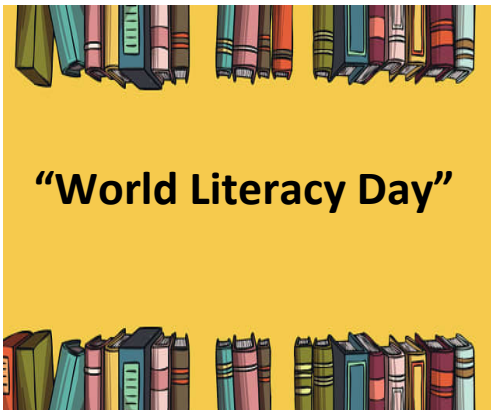
## Participation-September 2018



### September 1—World Day of Prayer for Creation

September 1<sup>st</sup>, World Day of Prayer for Creation, is the opening of what Pope Francis has declared as the Season of Creation. The season extends through the feast of St Francis, the patron of ecology, on October 4<sup>th</sup>. This is a day to recall and marvel at the beauty and wonderful diversity of creation. It is also a day to renew our commitment to care for our common home (*Laudato Si*). Each day, climate change threatens life on our planet. In recent years we have seen an unprecedented heat waves, floods, droughts and severe storms. Science tell us that these changes are greatly influenced by human activity, especially by the “Throw away” culture that Pope Francis talks about in *Laudato Si*. We are being called to simplify our lives, turn away from the use of fossil fuels and toward clean renewable energy, and to reuse and recycle as much as possible.

*God, we thank you, for the wondrous beauty, diversity and power of creation. We recognize that we have often made choices in our lives that harm Earth and threaten our common home. Today and every day, help us to recognize the many changes that we can make to help restore our planet's health. Move us to conversion of heart so that we respect one another and our Earth. Let us recognize your divine presence in all of creation and work to honor that presence for ourselves and future generations.*



### September 8—World Literacy Day

The purpose of World Literacy Day is to raise the world's awareness of literacy issues that are faced by people all over the world and to endorse campaigns that help increase literacy for all people. The 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goal #4 called for universal primary and secondary education for all children worldwide, regardless of religion, gender, economic status or nationality. By including this goal, the world community recognized that education is essential to lifting individuals, communities and countries out of poverty. Education opens a door to a world of possibilities that can transform the future. Today, about 1 in 5 men and nearly 2 of 3 women are illiterate. This means that over half of the world's adult population are not able to live up to their full potential. This year's theme of “Literacy and Skills Development” raises our awareness that literacy is essential if we are to reach our goal of empowering each person to fully contribute to the common good.

*We praise you, God, for all the wonders with which you fill the earth. Inspire us through the gift of education, so that we can learn from one another across cultures and across the globe. Expand our ability to communicate by enhancing access to literacy for all people so that each of us can develop our gifts and thus contribute fully to the common good.*

## September 10—World Suicide Prevention Day



This day focuses on a worldwide effort to prevent suicide which claims over 800,000 lives per year, with 25 times as many unsuccessful attempts yearly. Depression, loneliness, fear and bullying can all be contributing causes for suicide. The stigma that remains attached to seeking mental health treatment often prevents those who are suffering from seeking professional help. This day is dedicated to bringing mental illness and hopelessness out into the open. It is a day to offer support and understanding to those who are in desperate need of help. It is a day to reach out, to lift-up and to walk with, so that no one has to feel alone, abandoned and hopeless.

*Holy One, we pray for all lonely, hopeless and suffering people who feel that they have no way out except suicide. Give them the courage to seek help. Surround them with the love and care that they need to begin their healing journey. Open our hearts so that we may recognize and respond to those in need of our love, support and assistance. Bless the caregivers who work to restore hope and well-being. Bless those families who have lost loved ones to suicide. May they be comforted in their sorrow.*



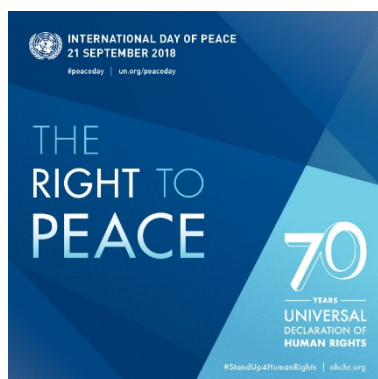
## September 16—International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

The ozone layer, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the sun's rays, thus helping preserve life on the planet. Ozone depletion and the ozone hole generated worldwide concern over increased cancer risks and other negative effects. This year marks the **31st anniversary of the Montreal Protocol**. The protocol is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production and use of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion. It was

agreed to on 16 September 1987 and entered into force on 1 January 1989. Recovery is projected to continue over this century, and the ozone hole is expected to reach pre-1980 levels by around 2075. The phaseout of controlled uses of ozone depleting substances and the related reductions have helped protect the ozone layer for this and future generations and have contributed significantly to global efforts to address climate change. It has also protected human health and ecosystems by limiting the harmful ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Due to its widespread adoption and implementation, it has been hailed as an example of exceptional international co-operation.

*God, we thank you for the gifts of creation and recognize the fragility of our ecosystems that sustain life. While we are grateful that the ozone layer surrounding our earth is slowly being restored, we know that much remains to be done to ensure the health of our planet for the long term. Help us to tread lightly on earth, reduce our carbon footprint, and continue to reduce harmful emissions that can poison earth's atmosphere.*

## September 21—International Day of Peace



This very special day is a time to remember that peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice. Established in 1981 by a unanimous United Nations resolution, Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to building a culture of peace. The theme for the International Day of Peace in 2018 is “The Right to Peace - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70”. The theme celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the UN in 1948. The Universal Declaration states in Article 3. “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” These elements build the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. By choosing this theme, the UN recognizes that respect for and protection

of human rights within as well as among nations is an essential component of justice, without which true peace cannot exist. Peaceful resolution of conflicts can be accomplished only if we are willing to treat one another with respect, recognizing that no one person or nation has all the answers. Through dialogue and respectful listening, we can come to understanding and wisdom.

*God, we pray for peace around the world on this special Day of Peace. We know that peace is only possible when built on justice. Help us to stand up for human rights and to protect each person's right to life, liberty and security. Help us to listen to one another as together we search for understanding, respect, justice and peace.*

## September 25—United Nations 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals



Adopted on September 25, 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) outline 17 goals that must be achieved in order to eradicate extreme poverty, address inequalities, and reduce

climate change worldwide by 2030. September 22-29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 will mark the third annual week of action where the United Nations and partners from around the world come together to drive action, raise awareness and hold leaders to account in order to accelerate progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals. In 2017 the conversation around the SDGs during the UN General Assembly reached 150 million people, with almost 4 billion combined social media and media impressions and more than 2 million actions taken. In July, leaders concluded the sixth High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York which saw 46 countries, more than ever before, report on their progress to the Global Goals. The HLPF highlighted that while positive progress is being made, it is not at sufficient speed to achieve the Goals by 2030. Therefore, it is more critical than ever that both the public and world leaders reaffirm their commitment to the Goals agenda.

Richard Curtis, Writer, Campaigner, and Project Everyone Founder, added:

*“In 2020 we will be a third of the way through the SDGs. With only two years to go to that crucial milestone - now is the time to inspire people to take action and to press world leaders to achieve what the Goals set out: a rigorous plan to make us the first generation to end extreme poverty, the last generation to be threatened by climate change - and the generation most determined to end injustice and inequality.”*

*Holy One, today we pledge to doing whatever we can to eradicate extreme poverty from our world, reduce climate change and address inequalities that hinder anyone from living up to their full potential. We thank you for the world you have created and dedicate ourselves to creating a more just world where everyone has what is needed to sustain life with dignity, respect and hope.*