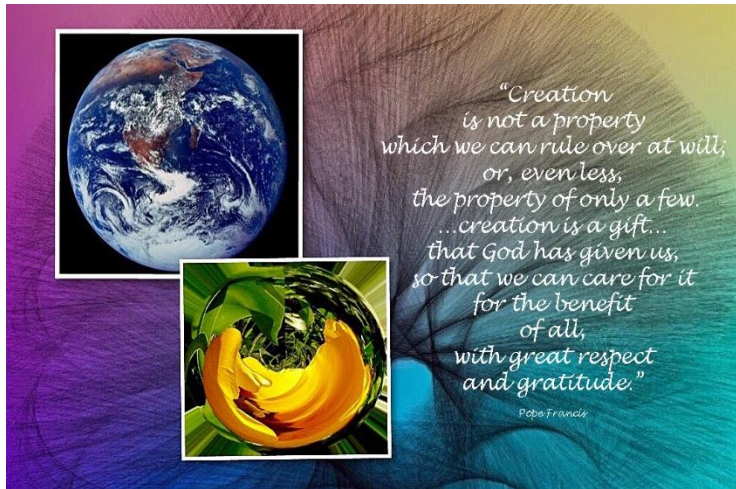


International Solidarity Days—September 2020

September 1—World Day of Prayer for Creation



Tuesday, September 1st, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, marks the beginning of the 5th annual, world-wide **Season of Creation**. The season extends through the feast of St Francis, the patron of ecology, on October 4th. It is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion and commitment. In addition to celebrating the joy of creation, we are called to reflect on our own lives and how we have over-used, abused or neglected to care for creation. In light of these reflections,

we are encouraging awareness-raising initiatives and lifestyle changes to protect the natural environment and address the crisis of climate change.

This year's ecumenical theme for the season of creation is: "**Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope.**" This year's COVID 19 pandemic has awakened in all of us the awareness of the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and with one another. We are called to radically new ways of living in harmony with creation by creating just and sustainable systems. This month-long celebration of "Jubilee for the Earth" is a special time to pause and reflect, and to realize that all creation is united—what affects one affects all. Our futures are inexorably linked to one another and to Earth itself. Together, let us rejoice!

Holy One, we are so grateful for the wonders of creation! We thank you for creating our Mother Earth, whose gifts sustain, enrich, and inspire us. Thank you for the elements of earth from which we are made and for returning us to Earth's loving embrace when our journey here is completed. We praise you for the wonders, beauty and power of creation with which you surround us each day. Laudato Si—Praise be to You!!

September 8—World Literacy Day

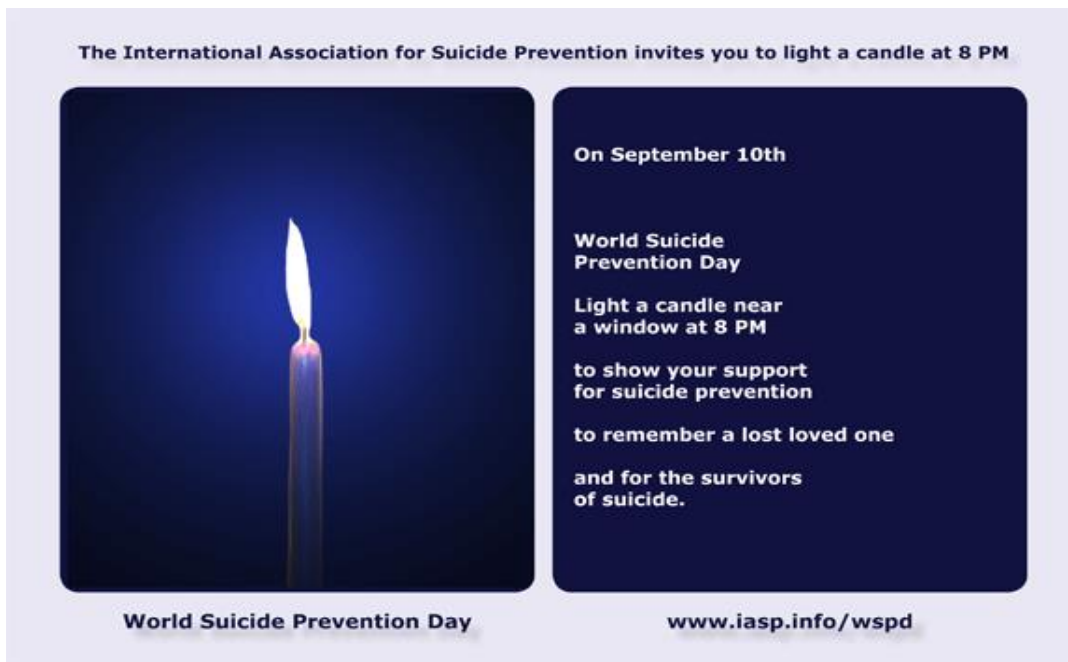


World Literacy Day is dedicated to all the children of the world, raising awareness that all children have a right to basic education and literacy in order to develop their gifts fully for the common good. The goal is that primary and secondary education is accessible to all children, regardless of religion, economic status, or gender. The UN Sustainable Development Goal #4 recognizes that this level of education is essential to the elimination of worldwide poverty. It is also critical to the

development of sustainable, just and creative societies of the future. The greatest resource of any nation is its children. Educating each child so that she/he can contribute as fully and creatively as possible to the world is critical for all of us.

We praise you, God, for the great diversity of people around the world. Inspire each of us to become involved in literacy and education in some way so that all people have an opportunity to reach their full potential and build up the common good of their communities and the world. As communication across cultures and nations becomes more and more available, bless our children with access to literacy and education so that we can share one another's stories. Thus, we will build relationships that will make respect, understanding, justice and peace possible.

September 10—World Suicide Prevention Day



The International Association for Suicide Prevention invites you to light a candle at 8 PM

On September 10th

World Suicide Prevention Day

Light a candle near a window at 8 PM

to show your support for suicide prevention

to remember a lost loved one and for the survivors of suicide.

World Suicide Prevention Day

www.iasp.info/wspd

Worldwide, suicide is a top twenty leading cause of death across all ages. Suicide takes over 800,000 lives a year, leaving behind grief-stricken families, friends, classmates and co-workers. Each suicide profoundly impacts an average of 135 other people. This year's theme for World Suicide Prevention Day is "Working Together to Prevent Suicide". We call of each one of us to reach out to anyone that we know who suffers from chronic depression or despair so that they know they are not alone. By talking and listening to one another, we can each do our part to lessen the stigma associated with these feelings. Encouraging one another to seek professional help when needed is yet another way of overcoming the fear of stigma that often prevents the person from reaching out for help. Today, let us join the **Light a Candle Campaign** by placing a lit candle in a window at 8PM for one hour in solidarity with those suffering from chronic depression and with those who have lost loved ones to suicide.

Holy One, we pray for all lonely, hopeless and suffering people who feel that they have no way out except suicide. Open our hearts and the hearts of those who love them and give us the courage to reach out in support. Help us to guide them to professional help and sustain us all in our efforts to bring healing to the suffering, and comfort to the grieving. Bless the hopeless with hope, those in darkness with light and all of us with the comfort of your love.

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



This event commemorates the date of the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987. 24 countries met and agreed to rid themselves of substances that were slowly damaging earth's ozone layer and leading to an alarming increase in melanoma skin cancer in both the northern and southern hemispheres. This situation prompted the international community to cooperatively undertake

immediate actions to protect the ozone layer. Scientific knowledge and technical developments made this rapid response possible and the success of these efforts are seen in the gradual restoration of earth's ozone layer. With the threat of climate change still looming before us, the response of the global community to the ozone crisis reminds us that international, unified efforts undertaken in good faith can succeed when based on science, technical innovation and cooperation.

"For over three decades, the Montreal Protocol has done much more than shrink the ozone hole; it has shown us how environmental governance can respond to science, and how countries can come together to address a shared vulnerability. I call for that same spirit of common cause and, especially, greater leadership as we strive to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change and mobilize the ambitious climate action we so urgently need at this time."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

Creator God, we thank you for the gift of Earth, our common home. We also thank you for guiding our successful efforts to protect the ozone layer that shields our planet. Guide us as we seek ways to further protect Earth from climate change. Inspire national leaders across the globe to embark on concrete urgent actions to fulfill their commitments to the Paris Climate Agreements. Give us all courage and persistence in our efforts to demand immediate governmental actions. Bless us all.

September 21—International Day of Peace



International Day of Peace is a day that reminds us that peace is not merely the absence of violence and war, but the presence of justice and respect for human dignity. This year's theme is "Shaping Peace Together." The United Nations has called for 24 hours of non-violence and cease fire around the world. How wonderful it would be if this silencing of weapons and violence could be sustained for an entire generation! Just imagine children growing up across the world without violence or war, learning to listen to one another, to respect diversity and to live in peace. Once life is experienced this way, do we really think that anyone would choose violence and war again? If every country invested even 25% of what they spend on weapons, on teaching peaceful conflict resolution, restorative justice and cooperation, our world would be a safer, more respectful, and more joyful home for all of us.

COVID-19 has thrown our world into turmoil and forcibly reminded us that what happens in one part of the planet can impact people everywhere. In March, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on all warring parties to lay down their weapons and focus on the battle against this unprecedented global pandemic. While the message is intended for armed parties, solidarity and cooperation across borders, sectors and generations are also needed to win this new fight against the worst public health crisis of our time. As we struggle to defeat COVID-19, this International Day of Peace will be dedicated to fostering dialogue. The world will be invited to unite and share thoughts on how to weather this storm, heal our planet and change it for the better. Even though we may not be able to stand next to each other, we can still dream and stand together.

Holy One, on this special international day of peace, we pray for a silencing of weapons and an end to violence and hatred. We commit ourselves to work for true peace, which is built on respecting human dignity, honoring diversity, listening intently, speaking honestly, and living with empathy and compassion. We pray, continue to guide us in the way of peace.

September 18-26—United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals Week
September 25—United Nations 5th 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. Many of the 193 nations who were signatories on the SDGs have made significant progress toward these goals, only to now be pushed backwards by the COVID 19 pandemic. During Global Goals Week the UN will host several virtual forums, bringing together

governmental leaders, NGOs, grassroots organizations and community leaders to share what has been accomplished towards meeting the SDGs, how these efforts have been affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, and what changes and priorities need to be considered as the world seeks to recover in a sustainable and equitable way from this devastation. This critical time must be an opportunity for everyone - leaders, citizens and businesses - to commit to put the Goals at the center of the recovery

God, today we pray that all people will continue to work together and re-double our efforts to help all people of the planet as we join together to end the scourge of COVID 19 and to recover from its devastating effects. Inspire us to create systems of recovery that promote and advance the Sustainable Development Goals, creating sustainable systems that will protect human dignity, care for creation, and move us towards eradicating extreme poverty by 2030.