News
EarthBeat



Fire consumes the Amazon rainforest in Altamira, Brazil, on Aug. 27, 2019. Fires across the Brazilian Amazon have sparked an international outcry for preservation of the world's largest rainforest. (AP/Leo Correa)

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To the attendees of the 2020 National Prayer Breakfast on Feb. 6,

Today, you gather in prayer for our nation and for our world — for the health of our democracy, for the good of our neighbors, for the extension of Christ's kingdom of justice and peace to the ends of the earth.

This is right and good.

Many of you in attendance today are gathered in our name. You are pastors, leaders of denominations, and elders in the faith. Your generation has taught us to take the authority of Scripture seriously, to proclaim the Lordship of Christ in all things, and to passionately pursue the Church's mission in the world. For this heritage of faith, we are truly grateful.

It is in this spirit of gratitude that we write you today, as young Christians, to implore you to engage the climate crisis with the full and faithful urgency that it requires.

It is no secret that public dialogue around climate change has been bitterly polarized and divisive, and that Christians have been as guilty as anyone of perpetuating this reality. Yet the gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to do better than to parrot partisan half-truths and retreat to tribal foxholes.

It calls us to pursue truth and to announce it with hope.

It calls us to proclaim its good news to all, especially to the poor and the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19).

It calls us to love God with everything we've got and to love our neighbors as if their current circumstances and future prospects are our own (Matt. 22:34-40).

Taking bold and faithful climate action is an opportunity to get better at each of these commands, to get better at announcing the good news of Jesus Christ in a warming world.



President Donald Trump speaks during the National Prayer Breakfast on Feb. 2, 2017, in Washington. (AP/Evan Vucci)

Accepting the findings of the rigorous study of creation and believing the firsthand accounts of climate impacts from our Christian brothers and sisters around the world is not controversial or partisan, it is Christian. For us, it is about defending human life and health, pursuing justice and compassion, and caring for all God's creation.

As people of love, courage, transformation, and hope, climate action is not something to avoid or fear. Rather, it is a powerful and prophetic opportunity for us to be the salt and light that Jesus calls us to be.

As young people raised by many of you to be just these kinds of people, here is what we ask: As you pray today, pray for God's groaning creation and for our vulnerable neighbors who are being harmed. As you go back tomorrow to the communities that you lead, live out these prayers with courage and conviction.

Introduce your followers to the richness of Scripture's teaching about God's love for God's world and our call to care for it.

Defend life by supporting policies that will transition our economy away from dirty, toxic fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy.

Love your God by acting to protect the good works of his hands.

Love your neighbors by fighting for a world where they have clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and a stable climate for generations to come.

As you pray and act, we stand alongside you in the power and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, that together we might become the answer to our prayers.

In the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Rev. Kyle Meyaard-Schaap

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(See the original letter and all signatures here. The views expressed in this commentary do not necessarily reflect those of Religion News Service.)

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