

APRIL 2021 UPDATE



UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



A BRIEFING FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

CoP 26: What is it?

The 'twenty sixth conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' (or [CoP26](#) for short) will take place *Covid restrictions permitting* at the [Scottish Event Campus](#) in [Glasgow](#) from 1 to 12 November 2021. Since the first CoP in Berlin in 1995 there has painstaking progress towards international agreement. Getting every country in the world to sign up to life changing commitments is not easy but in Paris in 2015 (CoP21) there was [agreement](#) to try to limit global warming to 1.5°Celsius above pre-industrial levels and not to allow it to go above 2°C.

Why is the CoP important?

As [global temperatures rise](#) so do the range of risks and their severity, particularly for tropical countries which are already suffering terrible [loss and damage](#). The impacts often fall most heavily on [women](#) and [children](#) and those already living in [poverty](#). People living in [Small island states](#) and low lying countries are at risk with [rising sea levels](#) and have campaigned to limit temperature rises to 1.5 °C. *Without radical action temperature rises of over 1.5°C will very likely happen by mid-century.*

Who is involved?

Diplomatic representatives from all countries will be joined by campaigners, lobbyists, businesses, scientists, NGOs and the world's media. Faith groups campaigning for climate justice will be well represented including the [Holy See](#), [World Council of Churches](#), [Lutheran World Federation](#) development agencies through [ACT Alliance](#), [CIDSE](#) and representatives of other faith groups. The total number of participants travelling to Glasgow depends on Covid related travel restrictions and the event may take place in part on line.

What is up for decision?

The Paris agreement (2015) set out a mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Each country has to prepare a plan (called [nationally determined contribution or NDC](#)) to set out how it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. NDCs have to be revised and strengthened every five years and the Glasgow CoP sees the first revision. *Unless the commitments in the current NDCs are strengthened and put into effect urgently there is no hope of limiting global warming to 2 °C.*



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How can churches get involved?

All churches and others can get involved with opportunities for everyone across Scotland, not just in Glasgow, before, during and after the CoP. Faith groups are working to promote **hospitality** and **transformation**; to be good hosts to those coming to the CoP; to listen and to learn from them; and from this to seek to change our lives, churches, the places we live, economy and action by our governments. *Follow the links below for more details.*

Reflection, Learning, Prayer and Worship

- Reflect on the [Scottish Religious Leaders commitment](#) to CoP26 - how can you help take it forward?
- [Climate Sunday](#) encourages all congregations to address climate change in worship, action and advocacy. [Sign up](#) and get involved!
- View thought provoking [sermons and worship ideas](#) from the Eco Congregation Scotland Environmental Chaplain David Coleman on [YouTube](#)
- Join others in prayer, for example the [Global Climate Justice Prayer Chain](#).
- Join a pilgrimage to the CoP and welcome pilgrims to Scotland.

Practical Action

- Sign the [Scottish Churches CoP26 Pledge](#) to support fossil divestment and a just and green recovery.
- Ring out a bell for climate justice!
- A powerful way to encourage change is in talking, listening and sharing stories. Eco Congregation Scotland have produced [resources](#) to hold a [Conversation about the Climate Emergency](#). Interfaith Scotland shares [resources](#) from faith groups around the world.
- Host an event or activity in your place of worship or hall. Register with [Spaces for Change](#) and there may be opportunities to provide accommodation for a guest visiting Glasgow.
- Join [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#) or [Interfaith Scotland](#) events online. If you are organising your own event relating to climate or sustainability, please add it to the [Climate Fringe](#).
- Take action in your church buildings. The Church of Scotland and other denominations are committed to 'net zero carbon emissions'. Go to [360°carbon.org](#) a collaborative carbon footprint calculator for churches.

Campaigns and Advocacy

- With Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021 tell your new MSP (and your MP) about your concerns and your plans: <https://www.scpo.scot/meet-your-msp/>
- [Making CoP Count](#) is a new campaign of faith groups with events around the UK.
- Get involved with development agency campaigns like [Christian Aid](#), [SCIAF](#) or [Tearfund](#)
- Listen to the voices of [women](#) and [children](#) to share their experiences and solutions.
- Keep in touch at www.climatefringe.org

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