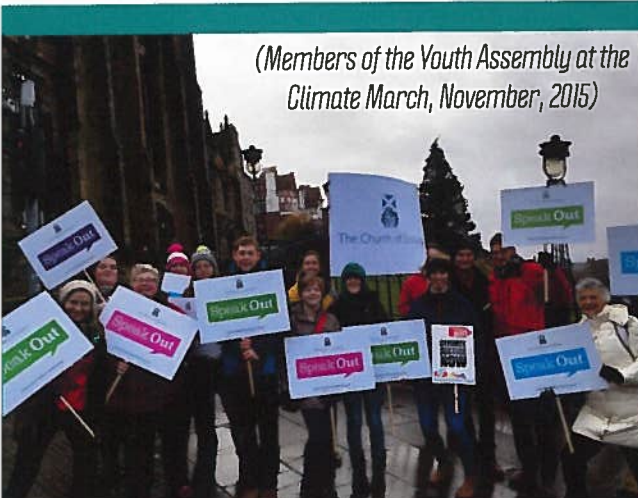




Week of action on climate justice, November 2015

Whilst some of our team were in Paris representing us at COP21, the rest of us were busy in Scotland with our week of action on climate justice. Working with other Councils of the Church we invited people to make a pledge of what they could do to challenge climate change. We were delighted that hundreds of people took part and are making small changes in their lives towards climate justice.

On the 28th November 2015 a group of us joined thousands of others in Edinburgh to march for Climate Justice. Following an ecumenical service in St Albert's Chapel, we gathered with 8000 others for the march. We represented the Church of Scotland's voice in the demand for action to tackle climate change at the climax of the Speak Out campaign.



(Members of the Youth Assembly at the Climate March, November, 2015)

The National Youth Assembly (NYA) is a platform for young adults to voice their opinions and actively participate in decision making within the Church of Scotland.

Over the course of a weekend, young people from all across Scotland come together to celebrate and share our faith. We debate current issues that are affecting the world and discuss how the Church of Scotland can help. NYA 2015 focused on child exploitation, confessions of faith, climate justice and the future of the General Assembly.

A group of youth reps elected at NYA have been working throughout the year on a number of projects focusing on child exploitation, climate justice, intergenerational work within the Church of Scotland and promoting the NYA. Our work with these topics has seen us join forces with the Guild, the Church of Scotland's refugee coordinator as well as many other Councils of the Church.

Working on climate justice we have produced this guide to share with you some of what we have been doing. We hope this is a useful resource to you, and that you may be inspired by our work to help us confront this issue.

As you'll see our campaign for climate justice started small with individual pledges and has taken us international, and we're excited to share our journey (so far) with you...

NATIONAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY



The Church of Scotland

Working To Promote Climate Justice

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/national_youth_assembly



It is not often that environmental politics makes the news but the events of 30 November – 12 December 2015 in Paris marked a significant step in the movement to address climate change and was rightly celebrated throughout the world. With the whole world watching the Paris Agreement came together in draft form during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Essentially countries sent negotiators to Paris with the aim to realistically address rising global temperatures.

The deal itself aims to keep global climate change well below 2°C of change since pre-industrial times. Presently, climate scientists have discovered a 1°C increase in global temperatures. However there has been some criticism that even if all targets are met there will be a 2.7°C increase. There are already many disputes as to what 2°C change means in real terms as the reality is climate change has already brought destruction to many communities.

The other major part of this deal is its plan for developing nations. Often times developing nations are hit hardest by shifting climate patterns and stuck with building industrial economies with significant environmental effects. A \$100bn fund will be set up to assist developing countries create greener economies.

“Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs” This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”
– Pope Francis in ‘Laudato Si’

Many Christians enter the season of Lent with foreheads covered in ash, meant to remind us of the dust from which we came and to which we shall return when we die. The Christian tradition is full of images and rituals that remind us of the connection we have to the world we live in. For many Christians it is their faith in God who creates and sustains that led them to Paris in late November through early December for COP21. I, with the help of Wellington Church, had the wonderful opportunity to accompany the Rev. Sally Foster-Fulton (Convener of the Church and Society Council), Sheena Wurthmann (Chair of Eco-Congregation Scotland), Adrian Shaw (Climate Officer for the Church of Scotland), and Rachel Walker (a fellow NVA Youth Representative and MSVP) to Paris to share the story of the Eco-Congregation Baton and the work of the church in Scotland in working for climate justice.

The first was a meeting of pilgrims from around the world in Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux Church. We heard the stories of about 30 groups who had come to Paris to demand that a deal was made.

Some had walked from the border of Germany and Denmark, others had cycled from England. We heard their stories and we all sang the songs that they sang on their climate pilgrimages.

The next day we attended a multi-faith service at the Basilica of St. Denis with reflections from various faith leaders on climate justice. After the service we went across the street to a press conference organized by the WCC. We were fortunate enough to be joined an envoy of the French President and Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They were presented with a petition with 1780528 signatures on it calling for a strong, fair deal that helps poor countries adapt to their changing climate.

The whole experience showed the amazing work that faith group around the world are doing to create a more just and environmentally sustainable world. In doing so giving praise to our Lord.

Duncan Logie (NVA Rep 2015)



(The “Eco-Congregation” delegation with the Eco baton in Paris, December 2015)