

## March 2021 Update



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



## A BRIEFING FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES: March 2021

### CoP26: 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 (SEC) in Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021. Since the first CoP in Berlin in 1995 there has been slow and 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 limit global warming to well below 2° Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels and if possible to 1.5°C.

### Why is the CoP important?

As global temperatures rise so do the range of risks and their severity, particularly for tropical countries. [Small island states](#) and low lying countries are dangerously exposed to [rising sea levels](#) and have campaigned to limit temperature rises to 1.5°C. Without radical action this will very likely happen before 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 will be well represented, from the [Holy See](#) and [World Council of Churches](#) (members include the Church of Scotland and Scottish Episcopal Church) to development agencies and other faith groups including [ACT Alliance](#), [Islamic Relief](#), [Brahma Kumaris](#) and many others. The total number of participants may be in the thousands – although post pandemic travel restrictions make the precise number uncertain.

### 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 its [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 is five years on from Paris. *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 we get involved?

Access to the UN negotiations in the SEC (called the 'blue zone') will be tightly controlled but there will be [UK Government events](#) across the river at Glasgow Science Centre ('green zone') and [fringe activities](#) across the city and beyond. In the civil society [CoP26 Coalition](#) we are preparing for any changes due to Covid-19. Faith groups including churches, mosques and other places of worship are encouraged to get involved. 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.

### Reflection, Learning, Prayer and Worship

- Register with [Climate Sunday](#) and hold a service or other worship event before September.
- Join others in prayer, for example the global [Climate Justice Prayer Chain](#).
- Learn about CoP26 developments on the [UK Government CoP26](#) and [Climate Fringe](#) sites.
- Join a pilgrimage to the CoP and welcome pilgrims to Scotland.

### Action

- Commit as a local church or faith community and in your household to reducing your own greenhouse gas emissions, taking action with [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#).
- Sign the [Scottish Churches COP26 Pledge](#) in support of fossil fuels divestment and a just and green recovery.
- Ring out a bell for climate justice. **On Thursday 11 March join [Sacred People, Sacred Earth](#), the biggest ever global interfaith climate day of action. \*NEW\***
- Host an event or activity in your place of worship or hall. Register with [Spaces for Change](#) opening your doors, welcoming visitors – **or offer floor space for [accommodation](#). \*NEW\***
- 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](#).

### Advocacy

- Speak up for a fairer, greener future and sign '[The Time Is Now](#)' declaration both as a church and an individual.
- [Meet your MP/MSP](#) to share your concerns or your plans for CoP26.
- Get involved in campaigning for action now and at the CoP with [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) and the [CoP26 Coalition](#).
- Plan ahead for the CoP in November. Keep in touch through the [Climate Fringe](#) website.

### Keep in touch!

Please sign up now for the [Eco-Congregation Scotland newsletter](#) and [Climate Fringe mailing list](#) to keep in touch with developments throughout this year.

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