

Climate Justice



The climate crisis is one of the most pressing issues our world has ever faced. Not only impacting our physical world but putting those who are least responsible for this disaster at risk, affecting these communities first and worst. Climate injustice is also intersectional, crossing lines and worsening impacts already felt to those most marginalised by gender oppression, racial inequality, refugee status, and many other factors.

On Thursday April 22nd 2021, the US held a two day [Climate Leaders summit](#) with 40 world leaders to galvanise efforts by the major economies to tackle the climate crisis. This was the first of three major moments this year looking at the climate crisis under a microscope, while ensuring major steps and commitments are taken globally to act with urgency. The second was the [G7](#) which met in Cornwall, England in June and now we look towards the postponed [COP26](#) United Nations Climate Summit in November hosted in Glasgow, Scotland.

The focus when it comes to climate is on the important number [1.5°C](#). This is the figure which scientists under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPCC](#)) have calculated that past this, and especially past 2°C of global warming since pre-industrial levels, we will see catastrophic world impacts due to climate change. We have less than 10 years to bring down our carbon emissions to be in line with this target, and currently sit dangerously close to this at [1.2°C](#) at present day. However we know that already communities are already facing catastrophic impacts. Sea levels are rising engulfing islands creating climate refugees, and droughts, floods, food insecurity and water scarcity are among the other common impacts our global neighbours are experiencing even today. We need governments, industry, and individuals to act to change a system which is putting our world under an unsustainable strain. Currently, we are waiting for world leaders to produce their Nationally Determined Contributions ([NDCs](#)) which will pledge what they will do from their respective countries to bring down emissions. The UK for reference makes up 1% of global emissions, and has just this week revised climate targets shifting up a gear to cut emissions by [78% by 2035](#). Decisions have already been made to [stop funding fossil fuel projects overseas](#) which is a world first, however we must ensure the pressure is kept on to continue making the changes we need, while ensuring a just and fair transition for all.

The church has a role in fighting for climate justice, under many umbrellas steeped in theology. As Christians we have not only been called to care for creation, we also have a responsibility for our neighbours both local and global, in seeking justice for a broken world. Both creation care and ecojustice themes must be brought into the front and centre of the global church, clearly identifying this as not a side issue, but a holistic part of discipleship and the gospel. Engaging with local government, industry, and living differently as individuals is essential for the sustainability of our natural world.

There is a growing movement of Christians responding to the climate crisis in a variety of ways:

- Tearfund and Youthscape released research this year looking at the urgency needed for the church to address the climate crisis with a particular focus on the passion

from young people. [Burning Down the House](#); how the church could lose young people over climate inaction. The major takeaways from this were that 9/10 Christian young people are concerned about climate change, yet only 1/10 think their church is doing enough.

- Prayer networks have been launched globally to pray for the climate crisis. Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in conversation with environmental theologian Dr Ruth Valerio stressed the importance of [prayer](#) in the landmark moment of the Paris Climate Agreement back in 2015. Groups like the [Climate Intercessors](#) are creating a space for deep and focused prayer globally every month as we journey towards COP26 and pass through these important summits like the US leaders climate summit and G7.
- Christians are global citizens, called by God to live justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him, giving our lives as a sacrifice holy and pleasing to God. Churches are also crucially placed within local communities globally, and have influence and resources to make huge changes to align with God's plan for restoration. Initiatives like the [Climate Emergency Toolkit](#) are equipping and empowering congregations to declare that we are in this crisis and look towards making changes to play their part in a global movement of action.
- These join the many other organisations such as Arocha, Eco Congregation Scotland, YCCN, and many others who are calling for climate justice to be at the heart of discipleship and Christian living.