

**A Briefing for Faith Communities: February 2021**

**CoP 26: What is it?**

The ‘twenty sixth conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’ (or [CoP26](https://www.ukcop26.org/) 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 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](https://www.aosis.org/home/) and low lying countries are dangerously exposed to [rising sea levels](https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/climate-change-evidence-causes/question-14/?gclid=CjwKCAjwi_b3BRAGEiwAemPNU0udgXG78AgBsamlUJ1NKsqdW9T6imzOb3ZLTqi68ElH4G0U0_9YHBoCf1gQAvD_BwE) 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; church groups include the [World Council of Churches](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change), [Lutheran World Federation](https://www.lutheranworld.org/climate-justice) other faith groups and development agencies including [Islamic Relief](https://www.islamic-relief.org/climatechange) and [Brahma Kumaris](https://eco.brahmakumaris.org/conferences/climate-change-conference/), [ACT Alliance](https://actalliance.org/climatejustice) 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](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs)) 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.*

**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](https://ukcop26.org/the-conference/get-involved/) (called the green zone) across the river at the Science Centre and [fringe activities](https://climatefringe.org/) across the City of Glasgow and beyond. 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**

* Learn about CoP 26 developments at the [UK Government CoP26](https://ukcop26.org/) and [Climate Fringe website](https://climatefringe.org/).
* Join a pilgrimage to the CoP and welcome pilgrims to Scotland.

**Action**

* Can you hold and event? [Spaces for Change](https://climatefringe.org/glasgow-venues-cop26/) offers the opportunity to register and publicise your event.
* Ring out a bell of warning. Can you hold a bell ringing event in your place of worship or community?
* Join [Interfaith Scotland](https://interfaithscotland.org/get-involved) or [Eco-Congregation Scotland](https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/upcomingevents/) events online.

**Advocacy**

* Tell your MP/MSP about your concerns or your plans: [www.scpo.scot/meet-your-msp](https://www.scpo.scot/meet-your-msp/)
* Get involved in campaigning for the CoP [www.stopclimatechaos.scot](https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/)
* Plan ahead for the CoP in 2021. Keep in touch at [www.climatefringe.org](http://www.climatefringe.org)

**Keep in touch!**

Sign up to the [Climate Fringe mailing list](https://climatefringe.org/) to keep in touch with developments throughout the year.

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