



Guide to COP28

COP28 is the United Nations Climate Change conference happening in the United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023. It is the 28th meeting of the Conference of Parties on climate change.

What will happen at COP28?

There will be discussions, presentations and negotiations across a wide range of topics involving people from governments, businesses, communities and faith-based organisations. Climate change affects many areas of our lives, such as health, trade, energy, transport, buildings, food, education, young people, land, and nature, and these themes will be discussed throughout the fortnight.

But cutting across all these themes, and the ultimate purpose of discussing these issues are four important outcomes which we need to see:

- Cutting emissions in order to limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5°C
- making sure there is the money available to make the changes needed and to support countries already facing irreversible loss and damage
- putting nature, people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action
- making sure everyone's voices are included, especially those who are not usually heard.

The conference starts with the World Climate Action Summit. Here, world leaders come together to discuss. What happens here sets the tone for the rest of the summit.

Then there are several days covering the themes listed above.

The conference ends with two days of negotiations to come up with the final text of what has been agreed between all the parties. Everyone has to agree everything, so this part of the conference can get very tense, and negotiations often overrun.

How is the Church of England getting involved?

As this is a global conference dealing with a global problem, we will have a global representation at COP28. There will be a delegation which represents the whole Anglican Communion from around the world, led by Archbishop Julio Murray, from Panama.

Archbishop Julio especially wants to be able to share stories from around the Anglican Communion from communities who are already suffering from the impacts of climate change and have been for a long time.



Archbishop Julio

The impacts of climate change, drought, storms and floods, are not felt equally around the world. Some of the poorest communities in the world are suffering the most. And the contributions to the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere which have caused climate change are not distributed equally either. In England, we have reaped the benefits from using oil and gas to heat and light our homes and run our economy and consequently we have a very high carbon footprint. We are mostly sheltered from the impacts of climate change and better resourced to cope when things happen. It is this inequality which underpins the faith voice at COP28. We worship a God of justice, and therefore we want to be at COP28 to help bring about climate justice.

What do we want to happen?

We need the conference to talk about fossil fuels. The most recent report from international climate scientists is clear that we need rapid, deep cuts to greenhouse gas emissions in every area of life¹. We cannot cut emissions rapidly and deeply unless we cut the use of coal, oil and gas. Very surprisingly, last year was the first time that fossil fuels got a specific mention in the final text, and at the last minute the wording was changed from 'phase out' to 'phase down' fossil fuels. So we need the conference to be willing to talk about cutting the use of fossil fuels. This is a challenge for the countries where the economy is based on oil production – but perhaps it will take an oil nation to lead in order for others to follow.

We also need countries to deliver on old promises. Way back in 2010, richer countries promised to mobilise \$100bn a year to help tackle climate change. That target has not yet been met. And last year, a new fund to tackle loss and damage was announced. This year, the conference needs to agree where that money is going to come from and how to make sure it gets distributed fairly.

How can I get involved?

You can pray.

Pray for every country to be willing to make concessions to see the kind of change we need to see to tackle climate change. Pray that those who are on the margins and at the forefront of the changing climate are able to tell their stories, that these stories are heard, and that they move people to action.

Pray for Archbishop Julio and the rest of his Anglican colleagues. Pray that he gets the opportunities to speak and share stories from those who know what it means to live with the devastating impacts of climate change.

CAFOD have prepared some specific prayers which you could use in church on the Sundays during COP28 <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/cop28-prayer>

Green Christian will be holding a time of prayer every morning at 8am on Zoom during COP28. Find out how to join in here: <https://greenchristian.org.uk/prayer-for-cop28-2/>

You can write to your MP.

The UK delegation will have a stronger platform to negotiate from if they know that people back in the UK want to see radical change and bold decision making. You could echo the things which the Anglican Communion is calling for:

- Phasing out fossil fuels.
- No new fossil fuel extraction or exploration projects.
- Funds to help countries adapt to the changing climate and commitment to the Loss and Damage fund.



Banners from COP26 in Glasgow

There is a specific template for emailing your MP about the Loss and Damage fund here:

<https://makepolluterspay.co.uk/email-your-mp>

Find out who your MP is here: <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

You can raise awareness.

Climate change and big international conferences like this can be hard for any of us to get our heads round. Talking with your friends, colleagues and neighbours to raise awareness about climate change is really important.

Try to find a way to talk about this big issue in a way that makes it relatable for the person you are speaking to. For example, if they love beach holidays you could explain about how sea level rise will impact our coasts or if they care about their food, maybe discuss how food production and supply chains are being disrupted by unreliable and more extreme weather.

You could:

- Use your social media presence to share items about COP28, explain why you care about them or share prayers.
- Provide a short explanation of what COP28 is at a church service or write an item for your parish magazine.
- Include the climate negotiations in your church's intercessions.
- Find out more about how to talk to friends, family, neighbours and colleagues about the climate emergency here: <https://climateoutreach.org/britain-talks-climate/summary/>

COP28 actions near you

Check out Climate Justice's 9 December Day of Action for Climate Justice listings event listings:

<https://climatejustice.uk/9-december-day-of-action-for-climate-justice/>

Christian Aid have shared resources for actions on this day: caid.org.uk/C4CJmarch.

Closer to home and year round...

Individuals or churches can respond to local authority consultations and push for environmental considerations in local decisions. In the Diocese of Oxford area, the local authorities' consultation pages are:

Reading Borough Council - Citizen Space <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/>

West Berkshire Council - Consultations <https://westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

Wokingham – Public participation platform <https://engage.wokingham.gov.uk/en-GB/>

Windsor and Maidenhead - Consultations <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/consultations>

Bracknell Forest - Consultations <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/consultations>

Slough - Consultations <https://www.slough.gov.uk/consultations-petitions>

Oxfordshire - Let's Talk <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Buckinghamshire - Citizen Space <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/>

ⁱ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, synthesis report AR6, March 2023
https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf