



## Why should climate change matter to Christians?

As temperatures rise, rains are becoming less reliable and droughts, floods and storms are becoming more frequent and extreme.

We might notice some of these changes here at home, such as the flooding and heatwaves in recent times. But it's impacting people living in poverty globally first and worst.

As Christians, we know that 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it' (Psalm 24:1). We're called to act justly and to love our neighbours. God's creation is good, but the way we've damaged it is pushing people deeper into poverty. Responding to the climate emergency has to be a key part of living out our faith.

## Positive news

- + The Anglican Church of Southern Africa, a church of 3–4 million people, has declared a climate emergency and is scaling up its use of renewable energy.
- + The Church of England has committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2030.
- + 85% of British people are concerned about climate change; the majority are very concerned.
- + Almost half of Britons intend to reduce the amount they fly for holidays post-lockdown.
- + Churches, theological colleges and dioceses all over the UK are declaring a climate emergency in 2021 and making plans to respond.

## Case study: Orbisa, a mum in Ethiopia.

Orbisa lives with her family in Ethiopia, rearing goats and cattle.

Over the last few years, rainfall in her region has reduced dramatically because of climate change. 'In the past we had rainfall every six months, but now we don't know when the rainfall will come. The length of the dry season is increasing,' says Orbisa. Without rain, her animals are dying, which means less income, less food and poor health for the family.

Orbisa now has to travel many hours every day to fetch water, but still her children go thirsty. This is what the climate emergency looks like. If we don't take urgent action now, climate change will continue to push millions more people like Orbisa deeper into poverty.

[See <https://www.tearfund.org/stories/case-studies/orbisas-story> or <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/your-neighbour-is-thirsty>]

# Climate Sunday service resource sheet

## Some Bible verses which show God's heart for his creation

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Genesis 2:15)

“You must keep my decrees and my laws.... And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.”  
(Leviticus 18:26, 28)

“The land must not be sold in permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers (tenants).”  
(Leviticus 25:23)

“You shall not pollute the land in which you live [...]. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the Israelites.” (Numbers 35:33-34)

“I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land, and made my inheritance detestable.”  
(Jeremiah 2:7)

“How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished. [...] Many shepherds will ruin my vineyard and trample down my fields; they will turn my pleasant field into a desolate wasteland. [...] The whole land will be laid waste because no-one cares”  
(Jeremiah 12:4, 10)

“Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?”  
(Ezekiel 34:17-18)

“There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.” (Hosea 4:1-3)

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” (Romans 8:22)

### Creation's relationship with the Creator

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.” (Job 12:7-10)

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” (Psalm 19:1-4; cf. Psalm 97:6)

“Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)

# Climate Sunday ideas for action

The hope is that by engaging with Climate Sunday you and your church will be better equipped to address this critical issue.

The following actions are two key things that you can do individually and collectively to take action as part of Climate Sunday.

## 1. Make a Commitment

Make a commitment to taking long term action to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. The best way to do this is to join one of the existing programmes such as [Eco Church](#) in England and Wales and [Eco-Congregation](#) in Scotland.

## 2. Speak Up

Use your voice to tell politicians that you want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans to rebuild a strong economy.

The language of ‘emergency’ has gained a lot of traction over the past couple of years because it communicates both the scale and urgency of the climate crisis.

Making a declaration, or formally recognising the emergency, unites us with a growing movement of citizens, councils, businesses and organisations who are doing the same. It publicly communicates your commitment to pursuing justice and loving your global neighbours who are already facing the worst of the climate emergency.

Your public statement also has a positive impact way beyond your own congregation. By speaking up with others, you will be joining the growing movement of people calling for much faster action from local institutions and national governments. This is vital in the coming year as the UK will

be hosting leaders from around the world for the UN's climate talks (COP26) in November 2021.

By speaking up prophetically together, we are increasing public understanding of how urgent this is, inspiring people to play their part, and encouraging national leaders to act with the necessary ambition.

(Taken from <https://www.climateemergencytoolkit.com/declare>, where you will find a link to a 'toolkit' offering more details and help.)

Read and sign the [The Climate Coalition's 'The Time Is Now' declaration](#) both as a church and an individual.

### Other actions

If you are not yet ready to sign up to an 'eco' scheme, here are some things you could do to get started:

- + Commit to focusing on issues of climate change and creation care more regularly in your worship, prayer and teaching.
- + Pull a group of people together to consider how best to take action
- + Use a tool such as [360°carbon](#) to measure the carbon footprint of your corps/centurch or home. (In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, you may want to do this based on your activities in 2019 rather than 2020/2021 due to the restrictions of certain activities over this period).
- + Consider what switches you could make, i.e LED/lower energy bulbs, recycled or sustainably sourced products, reducing use of disposables (eg cups and plates), environmentally friendly cleaning products. If you are unable to find suitable products through your usual purchasing channels contact the [Procurement team](#) to enquire about support.

- + Consider how to reduce your travel footprint as a congregation/individual by walking or cycling more where possible.
- + Improving any outside land or space you have for the benefit of native wildlife through tree planting, wildflowers, bird feeders, bug hotels etc.
- + Joining in with any local conservation work or community clean up projects.

### Young people and climate change

For Christian teenagers, the link between climate change and faith is clear:

9 out of 10 Christian teenagers surveyed are concerned about climate change. Only 1 out of 10 think their church is doing enough.

Source: Tearfund and Youthscape, 2021

### How can we stop climate change getting worse?

Everyone has a part to play in tackling this huge and urgent challenge. Governments and businesses need to make changes much faster, and we need to keep up the pressure on them. We can build momentum for change by speaking up, inspiring others, living differently and, crucially, by praying.

# Going Deeper

Tearfund has a great resource for small groups and interested individuals: a series of talks with Q&A's by climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe. She is very 'real' and entertaining, and explains things in an understandable way.

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/christianity-and-climate-change-film-series>

Climate Emergency factsheet from Tearfund

<https://www.tearfund.org/-/media/tearfund/files/campaigns/reboot-campaign/climate-factsheet-2021.pdf>

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