

'A Serious Call' to observe 'Climate Sunday'

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I sent a briefing on the 'Climate Sunday' initiative, which is sponsored by most Christian denominations, to The Climate Coalition UK (TCC), a secular grouping of over 100 agencies, (including some Christian ones) with a combined membership of 22 million people. Their spokesperson says it's "*fantastic*" and intends to publicise it to all and sundry!

The crucial, upcoming International Climate Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, in November 2021, makes this a very special time indeed! It is potentially a '*Kairos Moment*', a time of special opportunity and blessing for efforts to ward off the monstrous threat to all our children and grandchildren of global heating. The whole Christian community is being called to come together and with one voice to call for decisive action on this, the greatest moral and humanitarian challenge of our generation.

And this has never been more needed! On 'Sunday Worship' on Radio 4 on Sunday 7th March, 19-year old 'Ruth' spoke of how "*confused and upset*" – her words, how "*confused and upset*" she was by the failure of the church to respond to climate change and noted that, according to a recent survey, 90% of Christian young people regard this as a serious issue, but only 10% think the church is paying enough attention to it.

But how tragic it will be if most Christian churches turn their noses up at this proposal! Hence this '*Serious Call*'. Details below.

A 'Climate Sunday Service' is available online in video and audio (it's "*wonderful*", according to TCC ☺):

[PODCAST: 11/04/2021 – A Call for Commitment to Creation Care – Whitley Bay Baptist Church \(wbbc.org.uk\)](https://www.wbbc.org.uk)

and in text form at ne-calltoaction.org.uk/?p=798. Entitled "*A Call for Commitment to Creation Care*", it includes a brief discussion of the relationship of this issue with personal redemption by faith in Christ.

Now is the Time...
to make clear our commitment to
'The Care of Creation'

***"We can no longer evade it...
because it is now brought so directly before our eyes."***

So it was in 1789, with the slave trade:

"The nature and all the circumstances of this issue are now laid open to us. We can no longer plead ignorance; we can no longer evade it... We may spurn it. We may kick it out of our way, but we cannot avoid... seeing it, because it is now brought so directly before our eyes." (William Wilberforce, First Address to Parliament on slavery, 12th May, 1789)

And so it is now, with the environmental crisis:

"Creation care is an urgent issue in today's world... Only a wilful blindness worse than any proverbial ostrich's head in the sand can ignore the facts of environmental destruction... To be unconcerned about it is to be either desperately ignorant or irresponsibly callous." (Revd Chris Wright, All Souls, Langham Place, and Global Ambassador for the Langham Partnership.)

"We declare clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency and that the world's people face untold suffering due to the climate crisis unless there are major transformations to global society." (Article in Bioscience endorsed by 11,000 scientists from 153 nations, 5th November 2019.)

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If you're a Christian believer, please ask YOUR church to have a 'Climate Sunday' – lots of resources available, or you can have what we used at Whitley Bay! [See link above.] You can schedule it at any time before COP26 in November 2021.

Climate Sunday is supported by a large coalition of churches and agencies, including CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund and A Rocha, and some commendations from church leaders are provided below.

During their local Climate Sunday, churches are invited to do one or more of three things:

1. **Climate Service:** Hold a climate-focused service at any time before COP26 in November 2021, to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care and action on climate, to pray, and to commit to action. **Make sure you register your service**, either in advance, or retrospectively, at: <https://www.climatesunday.org/register>. Please do so before the national Climate Sunday event in Glasgow Cathedral, on Sunday 5th September 2021.
2. **Commit:** Make a commitment as a local church community to taking long term action to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions.
3. **Call:** Join with other churches and wider society by adding its name to a common call for the UK government to take much bolder action on climate change in this country in advance of COP26, and to strengthen its credibility to lead the international community to adopt a step change in action at COP26. The culmination of the campaign will be the national event in Glasgow Cathedral on Sunday 5th September 2021, which will be held to pray for bold action and courageous leadership at COP26, and when the involvement of all the churches that have participated will be made known.

Commendations

Chief Executive of A Rocha UK, Andy Atkins, and chair of the Climate Sunday coalition:

“With the climate crisis accelerating and the UK due to host the COP26 climate talks in November 2021 in Glasgow, we believe the time has come for all churches across the UK to pray about and act on the climate crisis, as we have done in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our vision is to leave a lasting legacy of thousands of UK churches better equipped to address this critical issue as part of their normal discipleship and mission; and to make a very significant contribution to civil society efforts to secure adequate national and international action at the COP26 conference.”

Bishop of Salford, Bishop John Arnold, the bishop responsible for the environment for the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales:

“We need to recognise the damage we're doing to the environment and our failure to look after our brothers and sisters in our common home. “In a post-pandemic world, the Climate Sunday project is an excellent opportunity for Catholic parishes in England and Wales, as well as our ecumenical brothers and sisters, to understand responsibility to heal our planet and to pray and act in response to the climate emergency.”

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Right Reverend Nicholas Holtam, the bishop responsible for the environment for the Church of England:

“Although our focus has been shifted from climate change in recent months by the challenges of responding to COVID-19, the climate crisis has not gone away, and the driest May since records began is a timely reminder of this. Climate Sunday will be a brilliant resource to help Church of England parishes understand and respond to the climate crisis. As we work out the actions we need to take to cut our carbon emissions every year to reach net zero emissions by 2030, Climate Sunday will motivate, encourage and inspire our churches to keep going on this journey.”

Revd Judith Morris, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales:

“Climate Sunday is a crucial opportunity for all churches to take much needed action to address one of the most urgent and pressing issues facing our planet. As stewards of God's creation, it is paramount that we actively engage with climate change and commit to protecting the future for generations to come. We need to make changes before it is too late and we hope that this initiative will galvanize all Christians into action.”

Resources and Further Information:

Your Christian relief and development agency or environmental agency;

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'Climate Sunday': <https://www.climatesunday.org/>;

'Churches Together': ctbi.org.uk/climate-sunday/;

"Why the Church should Care for Creation – the Short Answer", <http://ne-calltoaction.org.uk/?p=811>

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