



Jewish and Christian Leaders reflect on COP 26

01.12.2021 | Council of Christians and Jews

COP 26 has renewed discussion around Climate Change, what the future holds, and most importantly a means of mitigating its impact. Leaders around the world are speaking up about their hopes and fears for the conference and for the environment. For your ease, we have collected together a number of reflections on the conference from religious and interfaith leaders. Below you can find reflections from some of CCJ's Presidents and other leaders.

EcoShabbat and other Jewish advocacy around the COP 26 climate summit:

EcoSynagogue is promoting an EcoShabbat on this weekend, providing all their UK synagogues with the opportunity to put discussions, education, and commitment to the environment at the top of our agenda during a week when the world's focus will be on the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. Ahead of this Shabbat Rabbis across Jewish communities have shared religious inspiration for environmental concerns.

Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl said: "The world is facing a grave climate emergency and it is up to all of us to do all we possibly can to make a contribution. I am delighted that the Board of Deputies and EcoSynagogue are leading community efforts to engage on this vital issue."

EcoSynagogue co-founder and Chair Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg said: "The Torah commands to 'choose life'. At this critical time, we have the absolute responsibility to do all we can to choose life for humanity itself and for our planet."

www.bod.org.uk/bod-news/chief-rabbi-and-israeli-minister-tamar-zandberg-to-headline-ecosynagogue-and-board-of-deputies-events-for-cop26/

Liberal Judaism's CEO Rabbi Charley Baginsky said: "EcoShabbat is an excellent initiative. As a movement we value the principle of bal tashchit (do not destroy) and are committed to living harmoniously with the world around us. We are supporting and encouraging our communities to join EcoSynagogue and its projects. It is an important step towards the reduction of our impact on climate change and a great initiative that brings the entire Jewish community together."

Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich of The Liberal Synagogue Elstree represents Liberal Judaism on the EcoSynagogue Steering Group. She said: "This unique intra-faith cooperation manifests the importance and urgency of the current climate change but also calls us to action as the Jews. Climate change, pollution and the death of natural habitats--to mention just a few -- have started having a direct effect on our being, if not on our conscience."

Rabbi David Mason of Muswell Hill Synagogue, said:

"What motivates me so much to be passionate about preventing Climate damage, is my belief in the importance of humanity and its future. That is a Jewish belief. We have a role to be responsible for bringing about a better world and leaving it in a better place. If we allow the Climate to become damaged, humans will suffer, across the world."

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, speaking at the joint EcoSynagogue and Board of Deputies event called 'Carbon Zero, If Not Now When?', said: "No one is an island, no one can say this has got nothing to do with me – we have to bear the responsibility individually and collectively for this horrifying situation which threatens our world and which threatens our grandchildren and our great grandchildren".

[jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/chief-rabbi-we-must-act-on-horrifying-situation-of-climate-change/](https://www.jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/chief-rabbi-we-must-act-on-horrifying-situation-of-climate-change/)

On Monday 8th November the Board of Deputies of British Jews will be hosting a livestreamed interfaith discussion at the halfway mark of the COP-26 climate talks reflecting on the summit, the crisis and the path ahead for faith communities.

twitter.com/BoardofDeputies/status/1455818681141841922/photo/1

Are Religious Leaders Rising to the Climate Challenge?

Join Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth; The Rt. Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading; Chief Imam Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi, Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society; and chaired by CEO of the Commonwealth Jewish Council CEO, Clive Lawton OBE JP

Watch the Interfaith Panel discussion here: www.youtube.com/watch.

Christian Leaders reflect on COP 26:

The Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading and a member of the Church of England's environment working party, notes that faith leaders are 'on the same page' about the climate crisis, urging people to hold the Government to account on their promises.

www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/5-november/news/uk/faith-leaders-all-on-the-same-page-about-climate

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has written to the Prime Minister, urging him to support the poor and vulnerable who face the devastating impact of climate change: www.cbcew.org.uk/cardinal-writes-to-pm-ahead-of-cop26-climate-summit/

Speaking at the University of Notre Dame, Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew says "It is our obligation before God, neighbor and creation to assume responsibility for addressing climate change and suppressing the pandemic": www.ncronline.org/news/earthbeat/eastern-orthodox-patriarch-bartholomew-says-young-people-can-save-democracy-and-our

Pope Francis asks people to pray for the climate, responding to the cry of the earth: <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/31/1050927699/pope-francis-climate-cop26?t=1635857272718>

The moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC, speaks of the Church of Scotland's commitment to Net Zero by 2030 and the importance of care for creation for Christians: theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2021/11/cop26-the-moderator-on-climate-change-and-the-church/

Archbishop Justin Welby draws attention to the disturbing future which awaits us if we do not take action on the climate: www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/cop-26-archbishop-canterbury-justin-welby-b1948458.html

Churches across many different denominations held a 'climate Sunday' in advance of COP26,

committing to tackling climate change:

www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.commit.to.leading.by.example.on.climate.change/137676.htm

Source: [Council of Christians and Jews](#), United Kingdom.