

CHOOSING HOPE

ANGLICANS WORKING FOR JOINT ACTION ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND NATURE LOSS

Anglican Communion Calls for COP16 and COP29

ANGLICAN
COMMUNION
IN OVER 165 COUNTRIES



CHOOSING

HOPE

ANGLICAN COMMUNION CALL TO ACTION FOR COP16 AND COP29

WELCOME

The Anglican Communion is the world's third largest Christian community with 85 million members in over 165 countries. Many Anglican churches are in communities that face the realities of biodiversity loss and climate change every day.

This paper represents the voices of millions of Anglicans around the world to leaders at COP16 and COP29.

It calls the parties at COP16 and COP29 to respond to calls for action on climate change and biodiversity loss.

It shares examples of how Anglican faith communities are working together for change. Together we can choose hope.

WHY ARE THE COPS IMPORTANT TO ANGLICANS?

Giving thanks and praise for the world as God's creation is a major aspect of Christian belief. In Anglican liturgy, the 'Benedicite' is based on words that share praise for all creation: *"Bless the Lord you creatures, sing his praise and exult him for ever"*.

The book of Genesis describes God's created world as 'very good'. It is the fullness of all that he has made, with the sabbath being the culmination, or crown, of creation. A pause, a breath, a taking stock to wonder at nature.

Yet we know that climate change and biodiversity loss are major crises facing humanity. Anglicans around the world are experiencing first-hand biodiversity collapse, the daily impact of climate change and the scourge of pollution.

Floods, wild-fire, rising sea levels, increasing intensity of storms are all signs of the damage caused by our lifestyles and use of fossil fuels. The impact is greatest on those who have contributed least. This can only be grievous to God who loves everything into being. We have failed in our calling, not only to take care of creation, but also to act justly towards our neighbours and to live in harmony with our fellow creatures.

WHAT ARE ANGLICANS SAYING AT COP16 AND COP29?

In our churches and communities, we sense a growing cry of lament, as the cost of nature loss and climate change takes its toll. At COP16 and COP29 we want to represent this lament, on behalf of Anglicans around the globe, as we urge governments to act to protect, and to stop increases in global temperatures and rising sea levels. We want to express our global commitment as Anglicans to be part of the solution, demonstrating the impact of faith actors in restoring and safeguarding God's world. We come to listen, to learn and to collaborate.

Resources:

Visit www.anglicancommunion.org/cop29 for information about the work of Anglicans at COP16 and COP29 and to access resources including:
Bishop Graham Usher's Theological Reflection '*All Creatures of our God and King*'.
Nicholas Pande's '*The Challenge of Biodiversity Loss*'.

CHOOSING

HOPE

COMING
TOGETHER
TO SPARK
A POSITIVE
CHANGE



“We have a responsibility to those who are suffering to make sure something changes... Religious leaders listen to the voice of the young people around the world: “you can do more”.

The Right Revd Julio Murray,
Anglican Bishop of Panama



“These are atrociously difficult decisions politically, but this is a crisis that calls for leadership, and the leadership of people of faith could not be more important. Faith leaders represent the great majority of people across the world, both in developed and developing countries. We can demonstrate to world leaders that people of faith want to see, and are willing to support change. We can lead by example. We can let world leaders know they have a mandate for bold, ambitious, decisive decision making.”

The Most Revd and Right Honourable
Justin Welby, The Archbishop of
Canterbury



“We must take responsibility for the care and preservation of our planet in a sustainable manner. We Anglicans have it in us to spark a movement of positive change. Let us come together and make it happen”.

The Right. Rev Dr Vicentia Refiloe Kgabe,
Bishop of Lesotho



“As an African youth fighting impacts of climate change, we face outcomes of slowed down actions that should be implemented urgently. I would like to highlight the factor of integrational climate injustice where pursuit of welfare by the current generation should not diminish opportunities for a good and decent life for succeeding generations.”

Grace Maghanga, Kenyan climate activist



“The climate crisis is the product of an inherited Western mindset, including globalization, capitalism and individualism, one that was nurtured by empire and colonialism. The response therefore needs to be underpinned by other ways of thinking and of being, especially that of indigenous ways in which the environment and humanity are interconnected as part of creation. Therein lies the path to true justice and peace for our planet”.

The Most Revd Don Tamihere, Pihopa o
Aotearoa, or leader of the Maori Anglican
Church, and Venerable Dr Hirini Kaa, The
Archdeacon of Tairāwhit

CALL
ONE

CHOOSE

HOPE

WORKING
TOGETHER,
OUR ACTIONS
ADD UP

CALLS TO GOVERNMENTS:

- We call governments to work with faith groups to ensure communities are resilient to climate shocks, particularly the most vulnerable.

INVITATION TO CHURCHES OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION:

- Develop or join church-led community vulnerability mapping and disaster response.
- Develop or join a net-zero plan for your church. To find out more contact the [Anglican UN team](#).
- Tackle biodiversity loss through reforestation.
- Join the [Communion Forest](#).

WHY IT MATTERS

Current national action plans reduce greenhouse gas emissions by only 2.6% compared with the 43% scientists say is necessary. Global deforestation is also 1 million hectares above the level needed to be on track to zero deforestation by 2030. The lack of ambition on both has significant implications for community resilience. As emissions continue, climate crises increase, which spark humanitarian crises by impacting housing, infrastructure, energy access, food and water security, and public health.

Faith groups are in communities before, during and after disasters and well positioned to strengthen community-resilience, reducing loss of life. Communities that come together to plan and prepare for a stronger future have better capacity to withstand shocks than those that have not.

REFLECT

When we slow down and enter into a sabbath pause, we notice things. Jesus brought this pause into every day. He saw the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the fruiting of trees, the corn ripening in the fields and that which had been choked by thistles. When we notice something, we are far more likely to treasure it and protect it and see it thrive.

When policies, commitments, actions and habits are in place that are good for nature, generally they are also good for sustainable business, and good for people too. This is a hope-filled vision for all creation.

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGLICAN ACTION: KENYA

Surrounded by challenges linked to environmental degradation, including severe flooding and erosion of soil for farming, the Anglican Church of Kenya made wholesome ecology a major part of their 10 year strategy.

They prioritised tree growth and ecosystem stewardship. Over the last five years, the church has planted over 5 million trees across the country, established tree nurseries, and adopted public forest blocks for reforestation interventions in Ngong Forest, Nairobi.

TONGA AND FIJI:

Anglican youth in Tonga have developed a Community Vulnerability Assessment Initiative which uses surveys and drone footage to map relative vulnerability of households across the community, ensuring they are prioritised with supplies and assistance before and after a disaster. Their data are now being used by governments across the region.

CALL
TWO

CHOOSE

PEACE

RECONCILE
PEOPLE AND
PLANET

CALLS TO GOVERNMENTS

- Stop nature loss and slow climate change to prevent worsening conflict.
- Prioritise peacebuilding and reconciliation work to stop the cost of war on people and planet.

INVITATION TO CHURCHES OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION:

The impact of conflict and war harms people and planet. Developing skills in peace making and reconciliation can inform our response. Use the Difference course to learn about environmental justice and conflict from the Difference blog posts [here](#) and read a blog post about climate change [here](#).

WHY IT MATTERS

Nature is often a casualty of war. Conflicts destroy habitats, kill wildlife and generate pollution – with major consequences for decades. Nature loss also affects human living conditions, contributing to mass migration and instability. About 35% of Europe's biodiversity, concentrated in Ukraine, which represents less than 6% of the continent's territory, is under severe threat. Climate disasters also damage or change huge areas of land, forcing people to migrate differently and increasing competition for resources. When governments are in conflict, less attention is given to climate action.

Many Anglicans live in places of war, are emerging from conflict, or are themselves refugees. Inspired by their faith, they are often the reconcilers and menders in their communities. Faith groups are also leading mediation and dialogue between different communities as they build their resilience to changing patterns of land and resource use.

REFLECT

The Hebrew bible uses the word 'shalom' for peace, though shalom is a broader concept referring to the harmony of all life lived with an awareness of God.

It is that harmony with creation that we are called to discover through our servant-hearted discipleship as we follow the call of the prophet Micah (6:8) "to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God."

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGLICAN ACTION: JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The links between conflict and environmental degradation are all too clear in the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. A deal between the Jordanian and Israeli government to exchange water for solar energy evaporated following the atrocities of October 7th 2023 and public opposition that was mounting beforehand. The conflict since has not only claimed tens of thousands of lives and flattened 70% of Gaza's infrastructure, but also decimated environmental resources. As more people are displaced by the conflict and have less land to use for habitation and agriculture, the risks of further tension between host and displaced communities rise.

Churches across the region are responding through peacebuilding and through environmental action. Often one motivates the other – churches and members of other faiths can come together to address environmental damage (litter picking, river clean-ups etc) in ways that strengthen bonds, protect against conflict and allow increased collective action.

CALL
THREE

CHOOSE

WISDOM

LEARN FROM
THE WAYS OF
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES

CALLS TO GOVERNMENTS:

- Protect indigenous land.
- Learn from indigenous worldviews and ways of life that balance ecological and financial growth to ensure we live within natural boundaries.

INVITATIONS TO CHURCHES OF THE COMMUNION:

- Explore Anglican indigenous resources about our planetary crisis 'A lament in the Present and a Vision for Living Well'.

WHY IT MATTERS

As we strive to act on nature loss and climate change, our efforts must listen to the voices and experience of indigenous people. We need a moral mindset change that values the wisdom of indigenous people and transforms humanity's relationship with nature from one of exploitation to relationship, care and harmony. In many places indigenous peoples are custodians of biodiversity, carrying a deep knowledge of life on the land and water. Their contribution is beyond monetary value and is lost forever when its carriers are silenced, broken or die.

REFLECT

Indigenous peoples have much to say about living in harmony with nature if only we have the ears to hear. They point us back to the wisdom of God. The book of Proverbs speaks about wisdom as a woman who is always pleasant and peaceful and brings something more special than jewels. Unlike the tree of knowledge in Genesis, which is off limits to Adam and Eve, the Tree of Life found in Proverbs is ready to be harvested and with more wisdom comes more happiness (Proverbs 3.13-18).

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGLICAN ACTION: POLYNESIA AND THE REM FRAMEWORK

The Anglican Church in Polynesia (through the Pacific Conference of Churches and Pacific Theological College), is approaching biodiversity loss through an initiative called 'Reweaving the Ecological Mat (REM)'. It is a collaboration of faith-based and civil society organisations from Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

The project aims to embrace indigenous worldviews in addressing the ecological crisis and was developed based on the values and culture of the Pacific people. The framework sees life as interconnected and interwoven like the strands of a mat. It combines theological, ethical and indigenous perspectives. Alongside financial growth, the value of human relationships, community resilience and the role of people as stewards of land and water are equally prized. Through the framework, Gross Domestic Product is seen as being dependent on other measures of well-being, including the health of soils (through which food is grown), the health of creeks and rivers (from which drinking water is taken), the health of forests and, crucially, of oceans (that sustain nutritional needs, way of life and worldview).

The REM Framework includes indicators for all these factors. It is now part of the Pacific Island Forum's strategy for development to 2050.

CALL
FOUR

CHOOSE

JUSTICE

FUND ACTION
TO REDUCE
DAMAGE AND
INEQUALITY

CALLS TO GOVERNMENTS:

- Ensure full funding of national plans for nature restoration and climate change responses, particularly in developing countries, using grants not loans.
- Phase out fossil fuels justly.

INVITATIONS TO CHURCHES OF THE COMMUNION:

- Find out about the **Communion Forest** pilot twinning projects which fund nature restoration through Companion Links.
- Find out how your bank or pension invests your money – this could be for you as an individual or for your church finances. Consider changing to a green bank or fund.

WHY IT MATTERS

Most of the earth's biodiversity damage is impacting the global south due to the extraction of resources used by the global north. The world's poorest cannot afford to pay for this, but it is a moral duty on those who have economically benefited to provide funding. Continued expansion and subsidisation of fossil fuel extraction is pushing our world beyond its natural boundaries. Some of this is driven by over-consumption and profit-seeking, some by the need to provide basic needs. We need a just approach to phasing out use of fossil fuels that respects different national and local needs, and workers involved in the fossil fuel sector. Faith groups can bridge between corporations and communities, seek justice and promote more sustainable approaches to energy production, consumption and waste.

Countries suffering the most generally also face higher borrowing rates and more debilitating levels of debt, making it more difficult to invest in green energy, disaster-resistant infrastructure, biodiversity protection and emergency response. Countries have struggled to agree and deliver collective finance targets to ease this pressure. The international financial architecture that functioned well in the aftermath of World War II is no longer fit for purpose, but change is not happening quickly enough. We need new financial solutions and we need financial metrics that value the environment and relationships among communities as much as they value growth.

REFLECT

The Lord's Prayer asks God to 'give us today our daily bread,' not 'my' daily bread. He does not promise a whole bakery or deep freezer of bread. He promises us enough. He is reminding us of the gift of creation and that we have yet to find a way to ensure everyone has enough. We must confront the individualism of our consumer culture head-on. Too often we are consuming not today's bread, but the bread of the day after tomorrow though the over-exploitation of nature's bounty. We are surpassing planetary boundaries with nature and robbing future generations.

CALL
FOUR

CHOOSE

JUSTICE

FUND ACTION
TO REDUCE
DAMAGE AND
INEQUALITY

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGLICAN ACTION: MELANESIA

The Anglican Church of Melanesia, through the Franciscan brothers in the Solomon Islands, has been calling for justice in many communities whose human rights are being abused through illegal logging in the islands. The communities traditionally rely on the forest and sea for their resources. Streams have been polluted or blocked. Deforestation is causing a rise in temperatures. The barges used to collect logs have damaged coral reefs and fishing grounds. Invasive species are threatening their crops.

Working with Franciscans International the churches prepared a joint submission to the UN Human Rights Council, 3rd Cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on the Human Rights Situation in the Solomon Islands. It highlighted violations of human rights related to widespread commercial logging, under the headings of (a) the participation and consent of local communities on their customary lands, (b) the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, (c) the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, water and sanitation, (d) women's and children's rights, (e) environmental human rights defenders and (e) impact of logging activities on climate change. The submission concluded with recommendations to the government of Solomon Islands.

Seven out of the nine recommendations were taken on board by member states. 8 were accepted by the Solomon Islands Government, and 1 was noted. This was adopted during the 48th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in September/October 2021.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PENSIONS BOARD

In May 2022, the Church of England Pensions Board convened twelve UK Pensions Funds (representing 18 million members with assets of £400bn) to commit to supporting just transitions in emerging markets. Their collaboration recognises the complexity of financing transitions in states needing to prioritise rapid development and vulnerable to major climate shocks. But it also recognises the opportunities that can be opened up through principled investment.

By working towards new ways of making and monitoring investments, this collaboration will influence wider financial systems and increase of investment in emerging markets where need is great. This coincides with a net zero strategy that will see the Church of England become carbon neutral by 2030.

CALL
FIVE

CHOOSE

WELLBEING

RECOGNISE
THAT NATURE
IS GOOD FOR
THE SOUL

CALLS TO GOVERNMENTS:

- **Mandate that businesses disclose their impact on nature**
- **Encourage whole society approaches to protecting nature as a source of wellbeing**
- **Legislate to support businesses that recognise the value they add to community and environmental flourishing, not only to economic growth**

INVITATION TO CHURCHES OF THE COMMUNION:

- **Integrate nature in your church's liturgy and regular worshipping practice (find out more from the Anglican Communion Environment Network)**

WHY IT MATTERS

Nature connection is important for childhood development and adult mental health. Studies have shown that we thrive when out in nature and there are many positive health benefits in terms of reducing stress and enhancing mental wellbeing, as well as the enjoyment of physical exercise.

Children should grow up in environments where nature is cherished, where pollution is prevented, and where businesses disclose their impact on nature, not in a voluntary way (as currently in the Global Biodiversity Framework) but through mandatory action that will lead to pride in their business delivery.

REFLECT

The psalmist knows the value of each person in God's creation and the value God's earth is intended to have in our lives "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" (Psalm 8.3-4)." Safeguarding and sustaining God's earth plays a vital role in quality of life and wellbeing both now and for future generations.

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGLICAN ACTION: ENGLAND

St Mary the Virgin, Lewisham, South London, sits next door to a hospital mental health unit. Patients regularly walk through the churchyard, so it was a natural next step to create a therapeutic garden – a safe and beautiful green space in which patients can reflect and revive. Now, patients are given social prescriptions to join the church's weekly gardening club, working in the raised beds to plant and weed, as well as general tidying. Each session ends with a short time of quiet, and patients can add a ribbon to the prayer tree.

BRAZIL

"Eco Saúde" (eco health), an initiative of Paróquia da Ascensão, Brazil, emphasizes a holistic approach to health and wellbeing while closely connecting participants with nature. The program includes community activities such as a local trail, a solidarity economy fair, and events like the blessing of health and guided meditations, illustrating how nature significantly contributes to physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

