**PRESS RELEASE [Date] 2021**

**XX Church in XX [*TOWN*] joins Climate Sunday Campaign**

**to act, pray and speak up on Climate Change for COP26**

XX Church in XX [*town*] has joined the Climate Sunday initiative to act, pray and speak up on climate change. With less than 2 months to go until COP26, the critical international climate negotiations in Glasgow during November 2021, more than 1000 churches across Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland have held a climate focussed worship service. Hundreds more, including several cathedrals, are also planning to join the initiative in the coming months.

This widespread take up of the initiative across diverse church traditions indicates a growing commitment by local churches to act on climate change, and places increasingly vocal pressure on the UK Government to bring policies beforethe COP26 conference which will get the UK back on track with its own emissions targets. Churches are also calling on the Government, in their role as chair of COP26, to be much more ambitious in seeking faster and deeper global emissions cuts and the delivery of long-promised finance to help poorer countries adapt to the climate disruption which they are already experiencing.

XX Church in XX [*town*] have registered their Climate Sunday service. They are delighted to join the initiative and particularly [*something that was covered in your Climate Sunday service*]

The Climate Sunday initiative is the largest ecumenical response to the climate crisis in the UK in the run-up to COP26. Participating churches are asked to do three things: hold a climate-focused service to explore the science and theology around addressing human-caused climate disruption; commit to taking ongoing practical action themselves, and sign a joint call for the government to act - the Time is Now Declaration. A website contains a ‘toolbox’ of free resources, and enables churches to register their commitment. Typically, churches are committing to progress through one of four major ‘church greening schemes’ (see Notes). Many are ‘speaking up’ for the first time joining thousands of other members of the public, organisations and other faith groups in signing the Time is Now declaration.

XX, vicar/minister/pastor of XX Church in XX [town], explained, *“Our commitment to act and speak up on climate change will be counted and we have had a wonderful response from our congregation, everyone got involved! It’s becoming a matter of integrity for churches to put their own house in order on this threat to people and nature. Local church communities in all four nations are also signalling loud and clear that they expect the Westminster government to show integrity too, and get the UK firmly on track to meet its own emissions targets before chairing the UN climate negotiations in November.”*

A key milestone of the campaign before COP26 will be a national Climate Sunday event in Glasgow Cathedral on Sunday 5 September 2021, to celebrate the commitments made by churches so far, and to present the Government with a list of those commitments and the signatories of all churches who have signed the Time is Now Declaration. The final total of participating churches and commitments will be presented to the Government during the COP conference itself.

**Andy Atkins, CEO** of Christian nature conservation charity A Rocha UK, and Chair of the Climate Sunday coalition said: *‘The climate crisis is accelerating alarmingly; but we have the unique opportunity in rich countries to accelerate the solutions by directing Covid recovery funds towards building a new, green economy. At present the government is in danger of ‘building back worse.’ So, there has never been a more crucial time for UK churches to come together to pray, act locally and speak up nationally on the climate crisis and on the need to ‘build back greener.’*

* END -

**For images and to arrange interviews with spokespeople please contact:**

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**Notes to Editors:**

**1)Climate Sunday initiative,** organised by the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)’s Environmental Issues Network (EIN), is the UK’s largest joint project planned by UK Churches on Climate Change.

* The vision for Climate Sunday is to leave a lasting legacy of thousands of churches better equipped to address this critical issue as part of their discipleship and mission and to make a significant contribution to civil society efforts to secure adequate national and international action at COP26.
* The collective action and commitments from local churches across Great Britain & Ireland will be presented to the UK Government at ***a Nations Climate Sunday Service in Glasgow on Sunday 5th September 2021***. Further details about this event are available at: www.nationsclimatesunday.eventbrite.co.uk.
* Climate Sunday has formal backing from CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund, The Salvation Army, A Rocha UK, Operation Noah, Climate Stewards, Eco-Congregation Scotland, Eco-Congregation Ireland, Green Christian, the Church of England, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Baptist Union of Wales, the United Reformed Church, The Church of Scotland, Cytûn (Churches together in Wales), the Union of Welsh Independents, The Church in Wales, World Vision, The John Ray Initiative, USPG, , Joint Public Issues Team, CTBI, Christian Concern for One World, Church of Ireland, Young Christian Climate Network,

More details on Climate Sunday, including the full range of free resources, can be found at:

[www.climatesunday.org](http://www.climatesunday.org)

**2) Church Greening Schemes**

There are four principal independent schemes in the UK to help grass roots churches tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and other pressing environmental issues. They work closely together. More than 4000 UK churches are now registered with one or other scheme.

**Eco Church**, run by A Rocha UK, for churches in England and Wales - [https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/)

**Eco-Congregation Scotland** is an ecumenical environmental charity supporting local churches throughout Scotland to care and act for God's creation, reducing their impact on climate change and living sustainably - <https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org>

**Eco-Congregation Ireland** is a project of the Church in Society Forum, a standing committee of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, encouraging churches of all denominations across Ireland to take an eco approach -<https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/>

**Live Simply** is the environmental award scheme of the Catholic Church in England and Wales -<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award>

**3) Time is Now Declaration** - organised by the Climate Coalition, of which most members of the Climate Sunday Initiative are also members. It can be signed by individuals, business and community organisations. So far, 146,570 individuals, 640 businesses/organisations, and 264 community/faith groups have signed up (147,474 in total). These figures are shown here<https://thetimeisnow.uk/>.

**4) A Rocha UK** is the UK’s only Christian nature conservation charity. Its mission is to equip UK Christians and Churches to care for the environment. It runs the popular Eco Church ‘greening scheme’ now with more than 3,500 participating local churches, as well as a growing programme to support Christian land managers in managing their land for nature and to cut carbon (Conservation Partners in Action), and the Wild Christian programme to help individuals and families address the environmental crisis in their home and community and by speaking up. [www.arocha.org.uk](http://www.arocha.org.uk/)

A Rocha UK is part of an international family of Christian conservation organisations now in 20 countries.