



recovery plan does not bypass care for the Environment

Li-An Lim

Marking the end of the first half of London Climate Action Week, representatives from UK faith groups have signed an open letter to the UK Government urging it to ensure that its economic recovery strategy is centred on the urgent need to reduce the impact of climate change.

In the letter, the signatories, some of whom are members of the 'Faith for the Climate' network, also commit to the goals of the *Laudato Si* encyclical - an initiative of Pope Francis - to advocate for and model positive initiatives to continue to tackle the Climate Emergency.

**The open letter reads:**

COVID-19 has unexpectedly taught us a great deal. Amidst the fear and the grief for loved ones lost, many of us have found consolation in the dramatic reduction of pollution and the restoration of nature. Renewed delight in and contact with the natural world has the capacity to reduce our mental stress and nourish us spiritually.

We have rediscovered our sense of how interconnected the world is. The very health and future of humanity depends on our ability to act together not only with respect to pandemics but also in protecting our global eco-system.

At the same time, less travel and consumption and more kindness and neighbourliness have helped us appreciate what society can really mean.

We have also seen yet again that in times of crisis, injustice becomes more obvious, and that it is the poor and vulnerable who suffer most.

All this shows us how precarious our previous 'business as usual' was, socially, economically, ecologically and spiritually.

Yet we have also demonstrated our capacity to adapt to new realities.

Many people have discovered a deeper sense of spirituality. We have seen the possibility of creating a more sustainable and generous society in which we care more deeply for each other and the world.

Our faiths teach us that our planet, with its rich resources and inspiring diversity, is lent to us on trust only and we are accountable for how we treat it. We are urgently and inescapably responsible, not just before God but to our own children and the very future of humanity.

This unique moment calls us to develop a shared new vision for our future which we cannot afford to miss. As faith leaders we are committed to working alongside the people and governments of this nation and the world to formulate and live by such a vision.

It must be based on the recognition of our limits: this planet is a complex ecosystem in which we are only one part. It must be rooted in sustainability and respect for nature and the earth's resources. It must be founded on the fundamental principles of justice and responsibility.

**In this, the fifth anniversary year of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, we undertake to:**

Speak out urgently about the need for change;

- Promote the vision of the earth as our common home which must be shared equitably;
- Protect biodiversity and restore natural environments;
- Work with our communities to reduce substantially the carbon intensity of our activities;
- Build worldwide partnerships to reduce the impact of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable;
- Model what we teach in our faiths and communities.

**We therefore call on our Government to:**

- Ensure that every element of the economic recovery strategy has at its centre the urgent need to reduce the risk of catastrophic climate change;
- Implement policies for sustainability in every sector of the economy;
- Take its due share of responsibility for a global & just transition, including through its approach to trade, investment and overseas aid;
- Use its COP26 presidency to work for a global commitment to net zero, building on the Paris Agreement;
- To protect biodiversity and restore the environment;
- We urge every sector of civil society to use this opportunity to work together to create a better world.

Yours faithfully,

**The undersigned:**

*Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury and Church of England lead Bishop on Environmental Affairs*

*Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, Rabbi, New North London Synagogue and Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism*

*Bishop John Arnold, RC Bishop of Salford and lead on Environment for the Catholic Bishop's' Conference of England and Wales*

*Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London*

*Dr Husna Ahmad OBE, CEO, Global One, Trustee, Faith for the Climate*

*Qari Muhammad Asim MBE, Chair, Mosques & Imams National Advisory Board*

*Rabbi Charley Baginsky, Interim Director of Liberal Judaism*

*The Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, Convener of the Faith Impact Forum, The Church of Scotland*

*Talia Chain, CEO, Sadeh Farm, Trustee, Faith for the Climate*

*Rt Revd the Lord Chartres, formerly Bishop of London*

*Rt Revd Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston*

*Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark*

*Rt Revd Jonathan Clark, Bishop of Croydon*

*Commissioner Anthony Cotterill, Territorial Commander of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland*

*Jamie Cresswell, Chair, Religions for Peace UK, Trustee, Faith for the Climate*

*Rt Revd Woyin Karowei Dorgu, Bishop of Woolwich*

*Mr Derek Estill, Moderator of General Assembly, United Reformed Church*

*Olivia Fuchs, Eco Dharma Network coordinator*

*Revd Giles Goddard, Chair, Faith for the Climate*

*Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, Senior Rabbi, Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue*

*Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain*

*Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism*

*BK Jayanti, Director, Brahma Kumaris UK*

*Jagbir Jhutti-Johal, Senior Lecturer, Sikh Studies, University of Birmingham, Trustee, Faith for the Climate*

*Bishop James Jones KBE, former Bishop of Liverpool and former Co-founder of Faiths4Change*

*Fazlun Khalid, Founder, Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences*

*Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference*

*Rabbi David Mason, Muswell Hill Synagogue and Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue Executive*

*Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Co-Director, Virtue Ethics Foundation*

*Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain*

*Mrs Trupti Patel, President Hindu Forum of Britain, Trustee, Faith for the Climate*

*Gopal D. Patel Director, The Bhumi Project*

*Imam Sayed Razawi FRSA, Chief Imam, Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society*

*Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich, Rabbi, Nottingham Liberal Synagogue*

*Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church*

*Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference*

*Revd Nigel Uden, Moderator of General Assembly, United Reformed Church*

*Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich*

*Canon Guy Wilkinson CBE, Secretary, Faith for the Climate*

*Rt Revd the Lord Williams of Oystermouth, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and formerly Archbishop of Canterbury*

## **More information**

- [London Climate Action Week](#) is divided between 1-3 July and 14-20 November.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-leaders-make-call-environment-focused-economic-recovery>