

Churches across the country are planning to ring their bells on the eve of COP26, the meeting of leaders to discuss climate change.

Church bells being rung G Pledger

Bells have traditionally been rung to mark significant moments, both in times of celebration, such as victory in war, and as a warning of impending danger, such as invasion.

A number of Church of England churches will be among those joining in the Ring Out for Climate initiative at 18:00 on Saturday 30th October.

The United Nations Climate Change conference takes place in Glasgow between October 31 and November 12.

The idea was devised by Edward Gildea, the adventurer and environmentalist, who is a member of St Mary's church in Saffron Walden, Essex, as a vivid warning of the danger from the climate emergency.

The Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, the Church of England's Lead Bishop for the Environment, said: "Church bells have traditionally been rung through the centuries to raise the alarm for local communities.

"The recent 'code red' report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an alarm call for us all.

"A nationwide 'ring out for climate' on the eve of the COP26 can be a warning symbol, but also one of hope.

"Hope that this conference will lead to action for us all, like Jesus, to tread more gently on our single island planet home and care more for those already adversely affected by climate change, especially in the economically poorest places on Earth."

Bell ringers across the country are supporting the initiative.

Simon Linford, President of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, commented: "Bellringers understand how important the bells they ring are not only to the church but also to the local community.

"The sound of bells was missed during lockdown, and it is now being welcomed back as part of the nation's soundscape.

"Many bellringers are planning to join in with 'ring out for the climate', lending their powerful voice in support of efforts to halt climate change."

Mr Gildea said: "I was inspired by several things including Clap for Carers during the pandemic and, the historic uses of church bells.

"Ringling church bells as a warning for people in this country at times of national crisis is well known – with bells for the Spanish Armada right through to the Second World War.

"The climate crisis is not just a national problem but a global one.

"I thought ringing the bells for climate would be a way to wake people up, in every part of the country, to the urgency of the crisis we face ahead of COP.

"It can act as a warning in every parish that climate action is necessary, and we have an opportunity to make progress in Glasgow."

Where churches participate a notification on social media or in newsletters can help make the local community aware of the significance of the bells.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/church-bells-across-nation-set-ring-warning-climate-catastrophe-ahead>