

Climate Write-ins for churches – guidelines for organisers

Christians, like anyone else, often feel they should be doing more, speaking up, on serious issues such as the climate emergency. We often hear that the most effective thing any of us can do to promote real change is to lobby our MPs, the Government, other representatives.

Probably the most common reason why churches and individuals don't act is ***not knowing where to start***. When information is overwhelming and the issues very serious a normal human reaction is to turn away.

So – here is a simple idea which has been trialled a bit in some churches and attempts to cut through the problem of confusion: organising an after-church 'Write-in'.

How -to:

1. Decide on ***one issue*** to write about and ***who*** you're going to write to. Look at the current example, attached.
2. Choose a date when the sermon or worship theme or some other anniversary or event will resonate positively with worshippers.
3. Have at least two other people who will be actively supporting you, and if possible prime another two or three others with the idea and willingness to participate. This can easily be done if you already have the beginnings of an Eco Group or similar in your church. That way you'll have a half a dozen people creating a buzz of activity around the writing table.
4. Set out a table or two, preferably near where people are having coffee or are used to milling around.
5. On the table:
 - Pens, A4 or writing paper, envelopes, stamps
 - Computers – writing digitally is fast and effective but setting this up in some church spaces can be tricky
 - Printed guidance for how to write digitally if people want to go away to do this
 - Relevant addresses of politicians etc
 - Very simple précis of what you want to say – usually two or three bullet points, or even a few sentences people can copy! Often people think they won't know what to write and then before they know it, they take off!

Note: the secret is to have plenty of space for people to sit and write and easy visual access to the information, so you'll need to have several copies. Average writing time is about 8-10 minutes.

IMPORTANT: Don't forget to announce in the notices that this will be happening! And emphasise that this is not a big ask. We are not writing essays, and unless people want to, we're not making lengthy arguments. We're making our views very clear on what we think politicians should do.

EXAMPLE

Suggested Church Write-in on Climate for December 2021/ early 2022

MAKE SEVERAL COPIES OF THE QUICK PRÉCIS AND ADDRESSES BELOW TO HAVE AROUND THE TABLES (I usually have the notes distributed on half-page slips of paper and the addresses on separate slips. Generally friends choose which of the politicians they want to write to and just do that one)

OBVIOUSLY if people want to ignore these points and emphasise things that they feel strongly about this is all to the good!

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Subject: political action needed COP26

Target: local MPs or Boris Johnson or Alok Sharma (full time President for COP26)

Introduction:

You are horrified by the recent IPCC Report which issues a 'Code Red for Humanity'. You note that the consequences of not acting radically now to reduce carbon emissions will be catastrophic for humanity.....your grandchildren.....the future of civilisation as we know it....etc

Your requests – use all if you like, or just two or three:

Our hope is that climate catastrophe is averted for the poorest and most climate-vulnerable countries, and that the pledges made at COP26 are fulfilled.

At the start of COP26 you acknowledged the responsibility of richer countries to support those suffering the worst effects of the climate crisis. After COP26, you said there is now 'a clear roadmap to limiting the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees'.

But the proof is in the pudding. ***During the remaining UK COP presidency in 2022, we call on you to:***

1. Ensure countries deliver stronger national plans to keep 1.5°C alive.

(And at home - Ask for the Government to tell the truth and hold regular TV briefings as they did in Covid at which they have scientists are present; ask that they 'follow the science' urgently)

2. Secure more ambitious climate finance commitments.

(Recognise that although the cost is immense the cost of inaction is immeasurably greater and the need to be clear to the public about this)

3. Press for finance for climate-related loss and damage.

(Ask for clear commitments on supporting developing economies globally to grow without depending on fossil fuels – because, like Covid, climate is a global problem and 'no-one is safe until all are safe'. You may add here a request to reverse the decision to cut foreign aid.)

4. Lead on drawing the fossil fuel era to a close and a just transition to renewable energy. Ask for action not just targets. (Especially that the Government announces clearly what it will do to rapidly expand the green economy – eg. expanding training and jobs in wind, solar, home insulation, electrifying transport and supporting cycling)

Conclusion – ***thank them; be polite; be firm!***

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Boris Johnson

**The Right Hon. Boris Johnson M.P.
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA**

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**The Right Hon. Alok Sharma M.P.
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA**

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Local MP – find out who this is for most of your worshippers – individual churches will have only one of course but sometimes people travel in from other areas. Whoever they are, the written address will be the same:

**House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA**

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Contacting politicians by email.

This is very easy and quick. Generally a format comes up which asks for your contact details. You usually have to go to your own email afterwards to 'sign off' the message and click to send.

Prime Minister

<https://email.number10.gov.uk/>

Alok Sharma

<mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk>

All other MPs and local councillors can be contacted on this link:

<https://www.writetothem.com/>