THE Episcopal CHURCH

Policy Priorities for the 31st Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Antalya, Türkiye, November 2026

The Episcopal Church's commitment to the call of Jesus has led us to engage in mitigation and rightsizing our lives as individuals and in our ministries, standing with frontline communities in laboring for environmental justice, ending environmental racism, and finding a swift and just solution to the climate crisis.

During COP31 negotiations and beyond, we urge Parties and all stakeholders to embrace these priorities:

ACCELERATE AMBITION.

We urge ALL stakeholders—member states, private sector, civil society, and individuals—to accelerate ambition, close emissions gaps across all sectors, and reduce carbon footprints to keep global temperature rise to 1.5C and minimize overshoot. We urge member states to radically implement and enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions and congratulate those who have met their NDC targets. We call on all member states to adopt the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative and the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels Roadmap; end new coal, oil, or gas production; phase out existing fossil fuels production fairly and equitably; and speed up global just transition away from fossil fuel dependency.

FULFILL CLIMATE FINANCE COMMITMENTS AND STRENGTHEN MECHANISMS.

We urge member states and stakeholders to:
1) fulfill their climate finance commitments made at prior COPs, prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable countries and frontline communities, and adopt the necessary ambition, accountability, and processes to meet persistent financing gaps in mitigation and adaptation;
2) reform international financial systems to prioritize climate goals, protecting the poor and redistributing resources fairly and equitably; and
3) scale up financial pledges and technical assistance to operationalize Loss and Damage funding.

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING LOSS AND DAMAGE.

We urge all stakeholders to "leave no one behind" in the spirit of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, by prioritizing multilateral commitments to the most vulnerable. We commend member states for prioritizing Loss and Damage at prior COPs and urge them to enhance financial support for international mechanisms and accountable and effective governing structures. We encourage member states and U.N. officials to recognize and collaborate with faith-based actors in confronting climate change trauma and grief resulting from Loss and Damage, especially engaging youth and people whose futures are permanently altered.

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND AFFIRM ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION.

We urge member states to listen to Indigenous peoples worldwide who have cared for creation over generations and protect human rights defenders and environmental protectors. We ask all stakeholders to work with faith groups to strengthen resilience in communities on the front line of climate crisis, including Pacific islands, Arctic villages, Amazon settlements and coastal towns. We call on negotiators to affirm climate justice, reject environmental racism, and prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable, including small island states and least developed countries, poor and frontline communities, migrants and refugees, people of color, youth, women, LGBTQ+ and Two-spirit people, and people with disabilities. We urge negotiators to design solutions that protect the human rights and authority of Indigenous peoples and local communities, upholding the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent mandated by the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

For more information, contact The Episcopal Church's accredited delegates on site, via the COP31 virtual platform or by email at EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org:

- The Rt. Rev. Phyllis Spiegel, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah
- Ms. Rebecca Blachly, chief of Public Policy, Partnership and Witness, presiding bishop's staff
- Ms. Christina Bouri, Middle East fellow, Office of Government Relations, presiding bishop's staff
- Ms. Susie Faria, policy advisor, Office of Government Relations, presiding bishop's staff
- Ms. Amanda Fulton, Mission Program coordinator, justice initiatives, presiding bishop's staff
- The Rev. Lester Mackenzie, chief of Mission Program, presiding bishop's staff
- Ms. Lynnaia Main, Episcopal Church representative to the United Nations, presiding bishop's staff
- Mr. Alan Yarborough, director of the Office of Government Relations, presiding bishop's staff

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How is The Episcopal Church addressing the climate emergency?

In our commitment to lead sustainable lives, The Episcopal Church is taking thoughtful action and making choices that rightsize our impact on the Earth, bearing witness to the challenges facing our frontline communities, strengthening the adaptive resilience of climate-impacted peoples, and supporting vulnerable populations facing irreparable loss and damage:

- **ENACTING CHURCHWIDE RESOLUTIONS AND POLICIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY, ENVIRONMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**
  The Episcopal Church's governing bodies have affirmed support for dozens of resolutions relating to the environment, including the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals, and the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative. Since 2018, Episcopal governing bodies have passed more than 25 resolutions relating to creation care, from adaptation projects to fossil fuel divestment, carbon tracking to carbon sequestration, ocean health, ending environmental racism, supporting Indigenous peoples and women, carbon-intensive lending, green new deal legislation, just transition, protecting biodiversity, and the formation of eco-region networks.

- **PARTNERING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, UNFCCC, UNCBD, AND UNEP AS AN OBSERVER.**
  The Episcopal Church is a Christian denomination with 1.8 million members in 22 countries and territories in North America, Latin America & the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. It holds ECOSOC accreditation and DGC association with the U.N., and observer status with the UNFCCC, UNCBD, and UNEP. The church promotes environmental priorities across multiple U.N. frameworks and meetings, including climate change and biodiversity COPs, High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, Commission on the Status of Women, and Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

- **PARTICIPATING AT UNFCCC CLIMATE CHANGE COPS SINCE 2015 AND UN CBD BIODIVERSITY COPS SINCE 2024.**
  The church has sent delegations to UNFCCC COPs since COP21 in 2015. In 2024, The Episcopal Church sent its first delegation to U.N. CBD COP16 to look, listen, and learn, and to bring experiences back home to Episcopalians to inform churches' biodiversity advocacy and action. The church also educates Episcopalians about climate and biodiversity issues and fosters opportunities to engage with mitigation, just transition, and adaptation goals in their homes, communities, and churches.

- **COLLABORATING WITH FAITH-BASED AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS.**
  As a member province of the worldwide Anglican Communion (third largest Christian communion, with 85 million members in 165 countries), The Episcopal Church joins Anglican and faith-based partners in supporting spiritual and practical approaches to climate action. At COP31, The Episcopal Church is partnering with the Anglican Communion, ecumenical and interfaith coalitions for joint advocacy, public witness, prayer, and worship.

- **ACCELERATING CLIMATE AMBITION TARGETS.**
  The Episcopal Church has raised churchwide ambition toward implementing renewable energy and energy efficiency through its governing bodies and Covenant for the Care of Creation. Over 2,000 households and congregations have measured their carbon footprint via our Carbon Tracker. The church also has divested entirely from the fossil fuel industry as of 2024 and has set and is working toward churchwide goals to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030. The Episcopal Church has urged support for the Green Climate Fund and other international climate funds to address international environmental justice.

- **PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.**
  The Episcopal Church funds projects to advance environmental education, advocacy, and stewardship, and awards grants to ministries for innovative environmental work. In 2015-2021, the church allocated $1.5 million for environmental justice work, pioneering networks, educational initiatives, and environmental stewardship programs. The church encourages simplicity and rightsizing personal consumption as spiritual discipline and loving our neighbors and all creation. The churchwide Covenant for the Care of Creation invites individuals, churches, dioceses, and Episcopal institutions to commit to deeper formation, public advocacy, and conservation practices.

- **FORMATION OF EPISCOPAL ECO-REGION NETWORKS**.
  Since 2024, The Episcopal Church has increased its environmental action through the forming of Episcopal eco-region networks. These place-based networks of individuals, parishes, partner organizations, and dioceses organize around a shared ecosystem (instead of ecclesial or political boundaries). These communities of transformative action have discerned a shared call to hands-on Earth healing and advocacy, specific to their region, and support one another through best practices and prayer. Twelve eco-region networks have been launched with regionally relevant mitigation and adaptation priorities. Fifty-seven Episcopal dioceses have joined a network representing efforts in urban and rural, coastal, forests, and grasslands environments.

- **HELPING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES AT RISK FACING ENVIRONMENTAL LOSS AND DAMAGE.**
  Episcopalians follow Jesus' example in prioritizing concern for the most marginalized and vulnerable. As more communities, plants, and animals face the impact of environmental loss and damage, the church offers hope, practical action, and teachings on faith and care of creation; hosts community centers for action and refuge;, and offers trauma counseling, liturgies, prayer, and spiritual support for eco grief. The Episcopal Church is a strong partner in the Faith for the Arctic Network, a coalition of religious organizations committed to permanently safeguarding the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and supporting the Gwich'in people, an Indigenous Alaskan population heavily impacted by climate change. The church also supports fossil fuel-dependent communities in their pursuit of just transition.