

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH ECO-BULLETIN 9

2023 State of the Climate report

Scientists have been warning of a future marked by extreme climatic conditions caused by ongoing human activities for several decades.

A report recently published in the journal Bioscience (an update of a previous report in 2019) has been endorsed by 15,000 scientists and it makes uncomfortable reading with hard-hitting statements. The report says that **“unfortunately, time is up – we are pushing our planetary systems into dangerous instability”**. The scientists stated that they are shocked by the ferocity of the extreme weather events of 2023 and that they are afraid of the uncharted territory that we have now entered.

- **Earth’s vital signs are worse than at any time in human history, meaning that life on the planet is in peril.** Greenhouse gas emissions, global temperature, sea level rise, human and livestock population numbers are a few of the 35 vital signs used to track the climate crisis.
- **Many climate records were broken by enormous margins in 2023** including global air temperature, ocean temperature & Antarctic sea ice extent. The highest monthly temperature EVER recorded was this July and was probably the hottest the planet has ever been in 100,000 years.
- **By 2100 as many as 3bn-6bn people may find themselves living outside Earth’s livable regions** encountering severe heat, limited food and elevated mortality rates.
- **Life on our planet is clearly under siege.** The statistical trends show deeply alarming patterns of climate related variables and disasters.
- The report highlighted the **flooding in China & India**, the **wildfires in Canada** which produced as much CO2 emissions as the entire output of Japan, the world’s fifth biggest polluter, **extreme heatwaves on the US** and more.
- **By mid-September there had been 38 days with average global temperature more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.** Such days were a rarity until now.
- The record extremes are alarming in themselves and they are in danger of triggering **tipping points that could do irreversible damage and further accelerate climate change.**
- Dr Glen Peters at the Global Carbon Project said recently that **global emissions must fall by 45% to have a good chance of staying under the 1.5C rise in global temperature.**
- Another analysis of the Earth systems using different parameters concluded that **the planet’s life support systems had been so badly damaged that Earth is well outside the safe operating space for humanity.**

The report states that “big problems demand big solutions. Therefore we must shift our perspective on the climate change emergency from being just an isolated environmental issue to a systemic existential threat”. Global heating is just one aspect of the escalating and interconnected environmental crisis we are facing – biodiversity loss, fresh water scarcity and pandemics. The researchers point out **that they found little progress to report in combating climate change** and listed the actions that in their opinion are required to redress the balance.

- **The researchers urged a transition to a global economy that prioritises human wellbeing and cuts the over consumption and excessive emissions of the rich**, saying that the top ten emitters were responsible for almost 50% of global emissions on 2019.

- **We must phase out fossil fuel subsidies, ramp up forest protection, shift towards plant-based diets** in wealthy countries and **adopt international treaties to end new coal projects and phase out oil and gas.**
- **We must stabilize and gradually decrease the human population** with gender justice through voluntary family planning and by supporting women's and girls' education and rights which reduces fertility rates.

It is perhaps harder for us to hold onto our core belief that God has the whole world in his hands as we read all this and face the stark reality of what mankind has done and continues to do to the world in terms of its major negative contributions to global heating and environmental loss. This is compounded when we see the awful scenes of destruction in the Middle East and Ukraine. While these are not directly to do with the climate crisis, they are a major distraction from the priority actions the world needs to be taking now to redress climate change.

A renowned climatologist stated in a radio interview that the world does have the solutions but we need to apply them. The BBC documentary "The Perfect Planet" says that there are sufficient natural resources in the world to generate all the power we need. We must give thanks and take heart that God is providing solutions and pray that the world has the wisdom and the will to apply them.

As Christians we must lead by example and do all that we can as individuals and as a church. It can be hard to see what difference we can make but God uses every one of us as individuals and we may not appreciate or see the cumulative effect of our words and actions. Change is happening in both small and big ways - Tesco swedes are no longer plastic wrapped for example (!!) - but we must pray for the rate of change to accelerate.

You may soon notice that a monthly Bible Bite spot in our services has an "Eco flavour" giving examples or suggestions that might work for you or even some challenges that you might feel you can rise to. If you have ideas you would like to share or topics to discuss please let us know.

If you want to read the original article from which these facts and opinions are taken go to [Bioscience Oxford Academia.co.uk](https://www.bioscience.oxford.academia.co.uk) and scroll down to the discussion article "[The 2023 state of the climate report](#)".

For information about some of the solutions, Clive Brook recommends Paul Hawken's book "Drawdown- The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever proposed to Reverse Global Warming" ranks 100 known solutions in terms of cost and net savings by 2050.

Finally, please pray for COP28 taking place in Dubai from 30th Nov- 12th Dec plus pre-sessionals from Nov 25-29.

May God grant the world leaders the wisdom to make just decisions which respect the earth and all that live in it, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. May there be a spirit of co-operation and a recognition that recommendations made and actions agreed MUST be acted on if we are to make any progress in saving the planet.

If you have any comments or suggestions you can e mail them to kathrynallen82@yahoo.co.uk or any other member of the Environment group.