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# Not Ordinary Church

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## Ritual for Leadership and Action

*As world leaders gather at the Glasgow Climate Summit COP26*

*Allyson Sawtell, 2021*

### Notes to Pastors/Worship Leaders

- The “Opening Words” may be read out loud at the start of the ritual. Or, if you prefer, you can print them in the bulletin, and just speak a summary of the first six paragraphs, and end with speaking the last three paragraphs, starting with “We are indeed living in the ‘fierce urgency of now.’”
- Here is the list of the U.S. governmental delegation. This is for your information, and in case any of you would like to contact them ahead of time to express your thoughts and feelings about what needs to happen at the conference. ***But to be very clear – this ritual is a prayer for all the folks gathered there, not just for “our own” representatives.***

#### The U.S. Delegation includes:

President Joe Biden

John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate

Gina McCarthy, international climate advisor

Tony Blinken, Secretary of State

Pete Buttigieg, Transportation Secretary

Jennifer Granholm, Energy Secretary

Michael Regan, EPA Administrator

Tom Vilsack, Agriculture Secretary

Deb Haaland, Interior Secretary

Janet Yellen, Treasury Secretary

Samantha Power, USAID Administrator

Rick Spinrad, NOAA Administrator

Eric Lander, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Director

Brian Deese, the National Economic Council director.

- There will be other environmental groups sending their own representatives as well, and representatives from the oil and gas industry will be there, too.

# Ritual for Leadership and Action

*As world leaders gather at the Glasgow Climate Summit COP26  
2021 A. Sawtell*

## **Opening Words**

For nearly 30 years, the United Nations has been bringing together almost every country on earth for global climate summits. The upcoming Glasgow summit (or COP26) will be the 26<sup>th</sup> conference. And it is not just one more international summit. Most experts believe COP26 has a unique urgency. Many believe this summit is the world's last best chance to get runaway climate change under control.

Back in the Paris summit of 2015, in a momentous happening, every country agreed to work together to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees and aim for 1.5 degrees, to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate and to make money available to deliver on these aims. This was the Paris Agreement.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries committed to bring forward national plans setting out how much they would reduce their emissions. Each nation agreed that every five years they would come back with that updated plan reflecting their highest possible ambition at that time.

Even with that momentous commitment that was the Paris Agreement, it was not enough. The commitments laid out in Paris did not come close to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, and the window for achieving this is closing. The decade out to 2030 will be crucial.

Countries must go much further than they did even at that historic summit in order to keep the hope of holding temperature rises to 1.5 alive.

COP26 needs to be decisive. The conference has outlined goals – phasing out of coal, moving to renewables, curtailing deforestation, restoring eco-systems, building resilient infrastructure and agriculture, and having wealthy nations and international financial institutions paying their fair share in the financing of this, just to name a few.

We are indeed living in the “fierce urgency of now.”

Time is short, but there is still time.

This summit is the crucial tipping point for our ability to rein in environmental disaster and the ongoing destruction of God's good Creation.

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle and Words of Determination**

### **Reader One:**

On Christmas and on Easter, the Christ Candle is lit. It's a symbol of the presence of God in our world, strengthening us to do the work of justice and restoration. It's a symbol of the light shining in the gloom, of hope that emerges even from weary hearts and tired souls, and frightened people.

### **Reader Two:**

So even though nations of the world have gathered again and again, and talked and promised and constructed plans over and over, and it's never been enough; even though nations have tried and

failed on their promises; even though our nation of the United States itself broke its promise when we were withdrawn from the Paris Agreement – even with all of that – nations gather again and in so doing, rekindle the light of hope for our world.

All:

We light our candle in solidarity with those leaders, with the work they will do and the promises they will make.

We will hold their feet to the fire! We will push and work to make sure that this time, it is enough. That this time, promises will be kept. That this time we will make good on our hopes and dreams and fine words.

And when our delegations return home to their nations, we will be there, candles lit in our hearts and minds, hope flowing from open hands that will do the hard work of restoring this good Creation.

May it be so. Oh God, may it be so!

*The Christ Candle is lit*



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