



Justice and Peace Spring 2024



Editor : This verse from Psalm 85 verse is so familiar to us all. But what does it mean to say Justice and Peace embrace? Are they not through us working side by side doing their own thing in a friendly way?

As I was putting together this edition of Mouthpeace, I also joined the recent NJPN open meeting on zoom. (Report on page 5). It occurred to me that whether we are coming from the peace perspective or looking at issues of justice we are sharing a concern for the future of the planet, our common home. Maybe this is where Justice and Peace are embracing today around this existential concern we all share.

We need to be prepared to work and if appropriate pray together with all those who share this concern – as is often quoted now with ‘people of all faiths and of none’. This may sometimes be a challenge but one that we can surely cope with. I am pleased that this Spring Mouthpeace reflects this. It is this which gives me encouragement and cause for hope.

NB The picture was one of a set of cards made by Maureen Matthews who was for many years the Secretary of NJPN.

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The articles in MouthPeace are the views of the individual contributors or organisations concerned and do not necessarily reflect those of the Justice and Peace Commissions of the Dioceses of Lancaster and Liverpool



The NJPN 46th Annual conference on July 19th –21st at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick

JUST POLITICS building on the work of the past two years' conferences this conference will seek to explore the need for truth and integrity in the public place.

More details and booking form to download <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/>

NB Bookings made after Wednesday May 15th incur a booking surcharge.

NJPN are STILL looking for a new Treasurer. Do you know of anyone with financial experience that would be willing to take on this role? Please share with your parishes/organisations, and if anyone is interested, please email Sharon at admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

LIVERPOOL J & P COMMISSION

CARE FOR CREATION - ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE



Saturday, 9 March 2024 10:00am - 3:30pm

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Hardybutts Wigan Lancashire WN1 3RZ

This partnership event between Justice and Peace Commission and Liverpool Archdiocese will bring together parishioners and a space to reflect on climate issues and how our Catholic faith calls us to action.

Who is it for?

Workers/volunteers who can share experiences and services with others. Those involved in a project needing to develop next steps. Agencies wanting to create better impact through partnership working

How will it run? Series of short key note talks

Practical hands on workshops, on issues such as: Care for Creation leaders course; and What is Eco Conversion and Action

Speakers include:

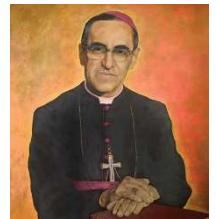
Bishop John Arnold: Currently the Environmental Lead for the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Bishop John Arnold wrote in 2019 to everyone in Salford diocese calling on them to play their part in responding to climate change in small ways. In his letter, he asked us all to 'think global, act local' and highlighted the impact that making small changes in our personal lives can have. In the same letter, Bishop John announced his plans to transform his home at Wardley Hall into an ambitious flagship project, that would become the Laudato Si' Centre. Just over 4 years later we will be hearing about the practical and spiritual journey that he and his parishioners have been on.

Sr Margaret Atkins (member of the Community of Augustinian Sisters at Boarbank Hall in Cumbria and a visiting Research Fellow of Blackfriars, Oxford).

N.B. 9.15am - Mass at St Patrick's Church, to start the day. Rt. Rev. Bishop John Arnold will be Principal Celebrant with Archbishop Malcom, Fr O'Shea and other celebrating clergy. Everyone from the conference is welcome for those who can make this time.

Book a place: www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/department/pastoral-development/environment

44th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. OSCAR ROMERO



Thursday 21st March Mass for St Oscar Romero 7:00 pm at St Oswald & St Edmund Arrowsmith, Ashton-in-Makerfield, with an opportunity to venerate the relics of St Romero.

8-9.00 pm 'Drawing us close to Christ and the saints: Relics and their meaning for us today'

Following the Romero Mass, Dr Jan Graffius will speak about relics and their significance for Catholics. This will include the opportunity to learn more about relics, such as those of St Edmund, and of St Oscar Romero, whose relic was gifted to the Archdiocese by the Romero Trust. Dr Graffius is the Curator of Collections for the College Museum, Library and Archives at Stonyhurst College, and Trustee of the Romero Trust.

Details of other events around the country: <http://www.romerotrusted.org.uk/news/romero-week-2024>

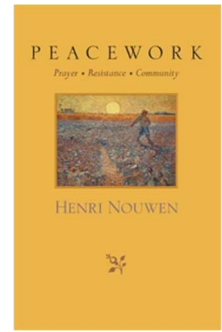


The Spring edition of Romero news is available filled with stories related to St Oscar Romero and El Salvador. There is also a memorial article about Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ by Clare Dixon, a book review of latest work by Jon Sobrino SJ, and an update on the current situation in El Salvador including information about their elections this year. <http://www.romerotrusted.org.uk/news/romero-news-spring-2024>

COULD YOU JOIN THE LIVERPOOL J & P COMMISSION?

Jennie Rowlands writes: We are still recruiting new members for the Justice and Peace Commission. This is an exciting time to join the Commission as we look to renew our way of working, centred around the see-judge-act model. We are looking for members to bring fresh perspectives and energy to our work. If you are interested, please contact j.rowlands@rcaol.org.uk

4th, 11th and 18th March at 7.00pm



Published in 2006 but written in the early 1980s at the height of Cold War tensions, 'Peacework' by Henri Nouwen has long been a powerful reminder of the call on all Christians to be peacemakers. As those tensions rise again, we are going to study the book in an online book club over 3 Monday evenings in March.

Reflecting on the book's themes of prayer, resistance to death and community, we'll see how it can help us develop our spirituality of peacemaking both as individuals and as a movement.

You can register for the meetings here tinyurl.com/5b86xhk3 Copies of the book are available from the online shop on our website <https://paxchristi.org.uk/product/peacework-henri-nouwen/> or direct from Eden Christian Books eden.co.uk

Saturday 1st June Pax Christi England and Wales AGM

Friends Meeting House, 22, School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT. For details see www.paxchristi.org.uk. Ring 020 8203 4884



The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists reset the Doomsday Clock on the 23rd January and it is still 90 seconds to midnight.

Whilst the clock remains at the same time as 2023 they warned that their decision: '..... should not be taken as a sign that the international security situation has eased. Instead, leaders and citizens around the world should take this statement as a stark warning and respond urgently, as if today were the most dangerous moment in modern history. Because it may well be.

In their 2024 Doomsday Clock Statement, the Bulletin's Science and Security Board raises four areas of concern: The many dimensions of nuclear threat, an ominous climate change outlook, evolving biological threats and the dangers of AI.

On Nuclear Weapons the statement talks of 'an undiminished nuclear threat and a new arms race': 'The last year was characterized by fraught relations among the world's great powers, who were engaged in vigorous nuclear modernization programs as the nuclear arms control regime continued to collapse. Within this general context, the contours of a peaceful and sustainable ending of Russia's war against Ukraine are difficult to discern, and concerns remain about Russia's possible use of nuclear weapons in this conflict'

On AI, the warning is of the accelerating military uses of AI: 'Extensive use of AI is already occurring in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, simulation, and training. Of particular concern are lethal autonomous weapons, which identify and destroy targets without human intervention. Decisions to put AI in control of important physical systems—in particular, nuclear weapons—could indeed pose a direct existential threat to humanity.'

And yet there is still time to turn the clock back.

You can read a full copy of the statement here <https://paxchristi.org.uk/?s=doomsday+clock>

PAX CHRISTI LIVERPOOL



Thursday March 14th. Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting 2.00pm at St Michael's Parish Centre, Horne St Liverpool L6 5EH contact Jan Harper 07591082195 email janharper20211@outlook.com

Thursday April 11th Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting 2.00pm at St Michael's Parish Centre, Horne St Liverpool L6 5EH contact Jan Harper above

Thursday 9th May Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting 2.00pm at St Michael's Parish Centre, Horne St Liverpool L6 5EH contact Jan Harper above

Thursday 13th June Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting 2.00pm at St Michael's Parish Centre, Horne St Liverpool L6 5EH contact Jan Harper above

Saturday 29th June Merseyside Pax Christi Retreat at The Irenaeus Project, Great Georges Rd, Liverpool L22 1RD. contact Jan Harper above

Sue Grubic invites you to save the date!

Saturday, 12th October 2024.

Lancaster Justice and Peace Commission will be holding an event at the Lancaster Cathedral Social Centre, Balmoral Road Lancaster, LA4 3BT. Speakers will include: Bishop John Paul, Sir John Battle and Clare Dixon from CAFOD

I know this seems a long time away but please put this date in your diaries. More details to follow in the Summer edition of Mouthpeace but do feel free to contact me if you would like to register your interest to come. (ldfjsue@gmail.com or by text on 07791444417)

BOARBANK HALL

Allithwaite, Grange Over Sands, Cumbria, LA11 7NH



Prayer - Study - Community - Hospitality - Peace - Relaxation
We welcome bookings from parish, school or student groups or any other groups who may benefit from our hospitality. We also work with schools to provide INSET days to suit each school, with the option of overnight stays.

Any group who would like help in arranging a programme or speakers for any kind of retreat or residential event should contact Sr Margaret Atkins on margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk or 015395-32288

See www.boarbankhall.org.uk

Sr Margaret Atkins from Boarbank Hall, warmly invites you to a number of events:



8-10 March Thinking Faith Lent Zoom weekend Evening sessions only. Theme: Fasting and Feasting
Time out for working Catholics (see also other Thinking Faith event).

13th-18th May Two Wings and Some Prayers Five nights
Week of prayer, walks and birdwatching, with a focus on learning birdsong.

25th May-1st June. Living Laudato Si' Residential week A week to explore how to live out Laudato Si' fully in our personal lives and within the Church. All welcome.

28th June-1st July. Catholic Social Teaching Residential weekend Theme: Revisiting the Basics.
A long weekend to revisit the basic ideas and some key texts of Catholic Social Teaching. Would suit especially anyone involved in work in Justice & Peace, Care for Creation, or with young people. All welcome.

27th July - 3rd August 2024. Thinking Faith Summer residential week Theme: What Catholics Really Believe
Time out for working Catholics (see also other Thinking Faith event).

5th-12th October Living Laudato Si' Residential week repeat of 25th May – 1st June

SLOW DOWN FOR THE PLANET

Sr. Margaret writes: I invite you to join us in signalling your support for phasing out fossil fuels through simple, peaceful but transformative action. Just adopt one or more of the following resolutions :

- 1) Drive at no more than 55 m.p.h. on major roads.
- 2) Drive at no more than 20 m.p.h. near homes, shops or schools.
- 3) Switch off your engine when idling.
- 4) Put in your car back window a notice saying: SLOW DOWN FOR THE PLANET.

Driving less hastily: * reduces GHG * saves money * avoids serious accident
* reduces respiratory diseases * reduces local pollution * makes driving less stressful
* shows that you are serious about fossil fuels.

Nothing to lose, everything to gain. Please join us yourselves and spread the word.

'Live or Let Die' A call to care for the poor and for the earth (from Pope Francis' Laudate Deum).

Report on NJPN Open Networking Day on Saturday 24 February on zoom



Marian Thompson writes: It was an interesting meeting with 40 + participants from all over the country. There were 4 main speakers and a chance to have our say in breakout groups.

Michael Chambers of Brentwood Diocese told us about his research with young people in schools ages 8 -18 and some others over 18. He asked them the questions 'How do you feel about the Climate Crisis? How does it affect you or the people around you? What is your vision for what needs to be done? How well do you feel the government is responding? What can NJPN do? (The first 4 questions are suggested by Greenpeace as introductions for their 'climate voter' door knockers (see page 7). Michael had chosen some of the most interesting replies in which many were calling for stronger more effective action from the government. He also sensed there was a general feeling among young people they were not being heard and listened to.

Ellen Teague of the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology Team looked at 'Environmental Justice' .

She started describing the "No Faith In Fossil Fuels" 240 hour vigil outside the Palace of Westminster that started on Ash Wednesday and ran for ten days. Christians of all persuasions took part, some coming at a set time on a rota basis and others just turning up to join in. They were calling the government to take bold action:

To move away from oil and gas;

To pay reparations to countries whose people usually, the poorest, are already suffering the severe effects of climate change

To invest much more in green energy.

Various people came out to see and maybe discuss. One person in particular commented that die back of groups of people, the poor people, was part of life. This collateral damage from climate change was inevitable. Such approach is the opposite of the Christian approach that God loves and cares about everyone of us. Later in the NJPN day it was referred to as 'die back of the vulnerable'.

Ellen went on to remind us of Laudate Deum v 58 'we are being more heard but not maybe fast enough'.

Some people now suggest that fossil fuel companies are moving away from fossil fuels, but Ellen insisted they are NOT. They use words like 'climate change', 'transition', 'emissions' and 'low carbon energy' in their annual reporting but this greenwash. According to research between 2009 and 2020 Exxonmobile generated no electricity from clean energy sources, Chevron generated just 65.5 megawatts. BP generated the most with around 2,000 megawatts which is the equivalent to two large gas fired power stations. Systemic change is needed in the economic and energy system as well as our individual actions.

What can we do now?

i. Call for Catholic Dioceses to divest from fossil fuels. Dioceses that have already are: Arundel and Brighton, Birmingham, Brentwood, Hallam, Hexham and Newcastle, Leeds, Lancaster, Middlesborough, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Southark, Salford. All these have promised not to invest in fossil fuels in future. Westminster has disinvested but not made this promise. Dioceses that still invest in fossil fuels are Cardiff, Clifton, East Anglia, Menevia, Liverpool, Nottingham, Plymouth, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Ellen commented that those who live in these Diocese still have work to do.

ii. Boycott banks funding fossil fuels...Barclays and HSBC are the worst in UK

iii. Be prepared to work with other groups – Christian and secular. You can learn from them. Look at Tearfund's 'Have you lost your Voice' campaign and send a letter to Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Environment (DEFRA), <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/rubbish-campaign/send-a-lemon>

iv. Notice and appreciate God's creation around you. Remember the indigenous peoples, environmental defenders, who have much more to lose than us, risk their lives when they try to protect vulnerable communities, water and biodiversity from destructive activities.

Finally **REMAIN HOPEFUL** .

Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive of Pax Christi England and Wales, spoke on 'Environmental issues as a cause of conflict'.

He started by asking which will annihilate us first- climate change or nuclear war? He suggested that both issues are interconnected and part of the same whole.

Climate change causes conflict because it intensifies competition over land and water, affects food production, and forces migration. Paragraph 57 of 'Laudato Si' says, "It is foreseeable that once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars." Where there is already tension, climate change exacerbates it for instance in conflict of between pastoral cultures and large scale farmers.

War and violent conflict damage the environment and cause widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure. Andrew showed pictures of the burning of oil fields in Kuwait as the Iraqi army retreated in 1991.

He suggested that the environment is the silent victim of conflict as we are seeing today in Ukraine and Gaza. He referred to Emily Anthes's article 'The Silent Victim- environmental impact on Ukraine' <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/20/ukraine-war-cost-for-nature-russia>.

Andrew pointed out that military greenhouse gas emissions are around 5.5% of total global emissions but they do not get included by any countries in their net zero carbon targets. There was a move to include these at COP 28 but it was not taken up. Something to be addressed at the COP this year?

Colette Joyce of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission and Coordinator of the Southern Dioceses Environmental Network started her presentation with a photo of Westminster Cathedral taken through the branches of a London Plane tree in the piazza. How many have barely noticed the London Plane trees outside the cathedral? There is a need for greater appreciation of and engagement with the natural world around us and for personal carbon reduction. But she stressed her belief in collective action and systemic change. Colette is working with Westminster Diocese for carbon neutrality by 2030

LENT PRACTICES OF LAUDATO SI' ANIMATORS

With thanks for Sue Gubric for this

V. Bell for the Laudato Si' Animators UK writes: Lent begins on 14th February this year, until 28th March.

My daughter, a very orthodox Catholic, and I have a difference of opinion about what are the best kinds of penances in Lent. She agrees with the traditional idea of temporarily giving up something one enjoys. I feel that this is a wasted opportunity. My daughter argues, as does the Church, that it strengthens one's will power as well as makes an offering to God. My choice is to give up something that one should not be consuming, getting into the habit of doing without it during Lent, then continuing without it after Lent. Or start doing something that you should be doing, and keep on after Lent.

This regular discussion with my daughter came about again this year, and caused me to wonder what were the thoughts of my fellow Animators concerning Lent. Did they have views about what people could or should be doing? If penance, what sort of penance? If resolutions, what sort of resolutions? Is it time to bring something new to Lent, or are the traditional actions the best? The Animators are people, mainly Catholics, who have been trained by the Vatican-backed Laudato Si' Movement to inform and inspire others to engage in dialogue and action on the current environmental crises. To register for the online Course here. <https://laudatosianimators.org>

I think my favourite option for living Lent, given the massive over-consumption that the world is drowning under, is to buy nothing at all that isn't essential. And if we carried that on after Lent, what a success!

Having garnered views from the Animators, I find that Anita shares my antipathy for over-consumption, and recommends that we don't buy more than we need. She has joined her parish's project of a community garden where they grow food for themselves! Clare, while appreciating the positive sacrifice of buying nothing, prefers "to do something extra, something which has often become a part of my everyday life". One example she gives is 'Meditation Monday', the aim of which is to manage stress, improve mood and find peace in one's daily life. Another extra she does is a 'Lenten Pilgrimage, where local people are invited to attend a different denominational church each Sunday afternoon'.

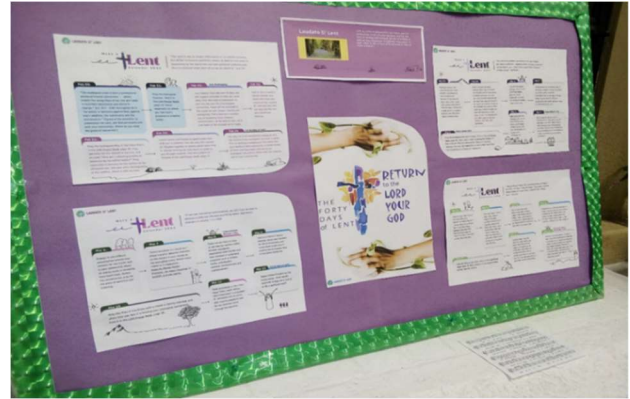
John likes to do a variety of positive things, so he joins ecumenical Lent groups and reads daily spiritual writings. To add to the variety, he also gives up alcohol. But he feels that the best thing would be to do practical action and outreach, such as helping refugees.

Geraldine is not so keen on "sudden, major change". She feels that slow, gradual change suits some people better, despite her having successfully given up things permanently after giving them up during Lent - sugar for example. She would encourage both sacrificial penance and doing something extra.

Susan believes that Lent is a good time "to examine our lifestyles and change our hearts so that love for God's creation is expanded". Especially, she says, to consider how ethical the products we buy are.

The Animators are agreed on restraint in buying being a good commitment for Lent, and Kevin adds that he tries not to buy anything new at all, reminding us that plenty of items, especially clothes, are available 'pre-loved'. Along with other Animators, he also likes to give something up - Guinness in his case - and to add spiritual activity, like going to Mass as much as possible.

Menchu is all for not buying anything unnecessary in Lent, and also for continuing the habit permanently. The Ignatian Solidarity Network has a Lenten No-Buy Challenge initiative which she joins in with. She previously committed to not eating processed food, and changed to a vegetarian diet, which she continued after Lent. She was very busy last Lent organising a Laudato Si' Lent Awareness Campaign and a Laudato Si' Lent Day in her parish, as well as presenting Laudato Si' Stations of the Cross online. She joined with several other Lenten activities as well! She encourages us to make our own poster display for Lent - see photos on next page 7,



Stephen agrees with the idea of Lent being about doing more. “Giving up our precious time for others can be penitential, but so often brings unexpected spiritual benefits”. He sees giving up treats as “an opportunity to give more resources to others”, which is making something negative into something positive. Like Susan, he thinks it’s important to find out how ethical the brands we buy are; he subscribes to Ethical Consumer magazine, and advises googling the name of a product or company followed by ownership.

I would recommend also, before buying a product, to google it adding the words ‘ecologically friendly’ to find the greenest version. David agrees with Stephen about positive thinking - “thinking in a positive way and creating awareness is the way to go”. He also likes to add a spiritual exercise – in his case, the Stations of the Cross. Another spiritual exercise that he recommends is a nature walk, as a “helpful reflection on creation”.

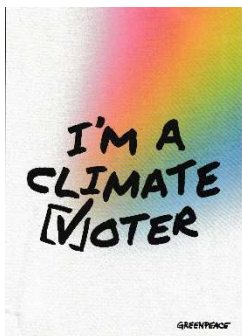
While Sean agrees with the tradition of almsgiving during Lent, and donates to various campaign and charity groups, he thinks Lent is also an opportunity to spend more time in prayer and discernment, for instance studying the Mass Readings. He prefers to think of resolutions as ‘objectives’, and to be realistic about them by using the SMART technique - Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic, Time Related.

He sounds a smart man! Not like me. I would rashly make a commitment, then find to my astonishment that it is doable, the hardest part having turned out to be the decision to make the commitment.

One surprise from this survey is that no-one seems keen on fasting. Not only is fasting traditional in Lent, it can have positive health benefits. Still, it’s not for me!

It seems to me that we Animators agree with each other in most ways – buying little, having a positive attitude when giving up things, continuing after Lent if we can, adding a spiritual activity. So, a mixture of the old and the new perhaps. It’s typical of the Animators that the new embraces concern for the natural environment.

ENGAGING WITH OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY



Marian Thompson writes: You may have noticed a few of these posters in windows near you. This is part of the Greenpeace pre- election campaign to encourage politicians to take the climate emergency seriously. You can read about it <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/take-action/project-climate-vote/> There are three ways you can get involved:

- i. taking the pledge online
- ii. telling others by talking to friends and if you get the chance politicians and by putting up a poster
- iii. joining a team to go out with others door knocking. Encouraged by members of Climate Action Marple (our local environmental group) I accepted this third challenge.

I have now been out twice. The first time I was a little nervous wondering what to expect. I had done the Greenpeace preparation zoom course a couple of evenings before but it is rather different meeting and talking face to face with strangers. We go in pairs to the individual houses and stay together as a group working in the same street. The idea is you engage people at the door with conversation about Climate Change. There are some suggested starter questions and if people show they are concerned, you ask if they will put up a poster in their window and as the General Election approaches be interested to receive by email information from Greenpeace about the local parliamentary candidates’ attitudes to climate issues. Helen our group leader had planned streets we would visit where there is a good footfall to see any posters that are put up.

During the six hours we were out, we knocked on 205 doors, had 58 conversations and signed up 27 climate voters.

Both times we seemed to knock on a large number of doors where people were out or chose not to answer so we pushed an information card through to say we had been. But both times some people were willing even eager to talk and I enjoyed the very varied conversations from 'not bothered about climate change' to 'very concerned and pleased to do something'. Also some people who answer positively to the opening question 'Are you concerned about the climate and our environment' then, during our conversation, explained why they cannot put up a poster. 'I have worked in the oil industry all my life (maybe 30 years?) and am afraid for my job' 'My concerns about the NHS which will affect the way I vote' 'Although I am concerned I don't think politicians will ever listen'. 'My husband will not have anything in the window...not even a Labour poster!'

We hope to continue this on a monthly basis until an election is called and hopefully there maybe more and more posters appearing. It seems to be a positive way to engage with local people about the climate emergency.

citizensUK Lancashire Citizens and Voter Registration Champions

Community Organising has a long history in creating change in civic society and with regards to social justice; and was influential in both the suffragette and Civil Rights Movements. Through the development and application of this method Citizens Alliances have developed across the UK, including Lancashire Citizens, to create lasting and tangible change within some of the poorest and most marginalized communities in the country. For Example, the Real Living Wage campaign and making misogyny as a hate crime was developed through community organising methods in the UK.



Citizens UK's mission is to build the capacity of the people to participate in public life, to act together for the common good, to win change and to strengthen civic institutions in the process. We aim to develop leaders and effective citizens, strengthen civic institutions, and create systemic change. We achieve this by building a broad and diverse alliance of civil society institutions (faith, community, and education) in a Chapter. Lancashire Citizens are in the developmental and growth stage of establishing a diverse and strong alliance of institutions across the county. As we develop this alliance, we will begin to hold thousands of conversations across the County to find out what is of greatest concern to residents.

As part of the development of the Lancashire Chapter we have recently held some online webinars to understand the relationship between different faiths and institutions and community organising. We welcomed a range of leaders from around the UK, such as Sir John Battle and Fr Chris Hughes, to share with us their learning and experiences. We also met key leaders from the URC, Methodists, and Salvation Army. This was the start of a series of webinars that we will be having in Lancashire and training sessions about community organising over the next 12 months. If you would like a link to watch the webinar on Catholic Social Teaching and community organising in Lancashire, please get in touch with Davinia whose details below. (page 9)

In Lancashire on 26 November 2023, a level 2 Devolution proposal and consultation period was announced. This aims to give communities and local authorities some autonomy on how to spend budget and deliver services such as transport. There is no better time to actively encourage local people to become active in civil society to make change for the common good and social justice. The people of Lancashire need to be able to feel involved and heard throughout the changes and events that occur over the coming months and years. They need to be offered a safe, structured, and supportive method in which to do so; community organising, and Citizens UK have a 30-year history of developing leaders through their methods and training. By building on our experience of accrediting a range of organisation's across the country with the Real living wage we are pleased to be able to apply this to the voter registration scheme and we need Voter Registration Champions!

As I am sure you are all aware, there will be a general election in the UK by January 2025. Research from the Electoral Commission suggests:

- 8 million eligible voters may not vote at the next General Election because they didn't register to vote in time.
 - 4 million eligible voters may not vote at the next General Election because they do not have appropriate Photo ID;
 - 14 million eligible voters may not vote at the next General Election because they are not motivated to turn out to vote on election day.
 - You are at greater risk of not being able to participate in the democratic process if you are: young, a non -UK national, rent your home, have moved recently, live in an economically - disadvantaged community, or are from an ethnic minority.
- (Source: Electoral Commission – 2023 Report: Electoral Registers in the UK)

All of this highlights the need for democratic education, especially with regards to understanding the need to be registered for voting correctly. Your church, school or organisation can help local people, including your staff, services users, congregation, students and parents or members to understand the requirements of voter registration and assisting them in doing so.



So what does becoming a voter registration Champion mean? There are many ways in which you can support local people to register and vote...this is completely non-partisan... who they vote for is up to the individual, but they might need support or advice in understanding how to vote or why voting is important.

You could:

- Run an annual Voter Registration campaign that aims to ensure that 100% of your organisation’s eligible membership are registered before the deadline (with a 90% success rate).
- Educate your members about the Voter ID requirements, and make sure they have the photo ID they need in order to vote before the deadline.
- Remind your members about the election date and encourage them to use

their vote.

- **VOTER REGISTRATION WEEK (MARCH 4th -10th 2024):** Help build the movement by participating in Voter Registration Week activities.

At present, there is no cost to becoming accredited. If you feel that this is something you and your organisation would like to consider being part of, please register your interest here: <https://www.voterchampion.org.uk/>

One of the Voter Registration Team at CUK team will then be in touch and advise you of the process.

Our Citizens Agenda is an overview of the issues our membership has agreed are the most important to organise around as we head into the General Election 2024. This Citizens Agenda focuses on the challenges our communities are facing and amplifies the voices of people who are experiencing the issues first-hand. We share our vision for change and solutions that could make a difference and hope this Citizens Agenda will contribute to shaping the political debate ahead of the next election. You can read more here: <https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/citizens-agenda/>

If you would like to know more about Community Organising, Citizens UK, the Real Living Wage or any of our other campaigns or training sessions, please contact Davinia, the Development Organiser for Lancashire and Co-ordinator of Northern Chapters, on Davinia.jackson@citizensuk.org or call 07961291687.

NEWS FROM CHURCHES TOGETHER IN LANCASHIRE

Online Services: World Day of Prayer Friday 1 st March Midday observance on Zoom
Annual General Meeting Thursday 7 th March at 7.30pm on Zoom (Short business meeting followed by time of prayer and guest speaker.
Please contact The Revd Anton Muller at antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk for both the links



Church Tent at the Royal Lancashire Show 19-21 st July 2024

This year the Church Tent will focus on Farming and Mental Health. Churches Together in Lancashire will be working in partnership with Lancashire Mind and will be joined by a range of volunteer organisations that provide community support in rural areas. Partners include the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Society, Farming Community Network, Arocha, Fair Preston, Christian Police Association, Hope for Justice, Street Pastors, Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership, No Whispers CIC, The Salvation Army.

It costs up to £3,000 to run the event over the three days. If your church or organisation is able to sponsor the event to help cover the costs your contribution would be most welcome. Please contact The Revd Anton Muller

antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk

Do take a look at the 2022 event which was featured that year on Songs of Praise with the Revd Kate Bottley.

<https://cte.org.uk/one-big-tent/>

Signpost for Social Prescribing in Lancashire Churches– an NHS funded Digital Catalogue

Churches Together in Lancashire is working with the Lancashire County Council and wider healthcare systems to create a directory of care and community services that take place in churches. If you run a coffee morning, lunch club, activities for families and children, debt or addiction advice, anything that supports community health and being, then please get in touch. The “Digital Catalogue” is an NHS initiative to collect and maintain information that can be accessed by local people, and useable by frontline workers as well as wider volunteers and workers inside the Voluntary, Faith and Social Enterprise sectors (VCFSE).

Working with the ‘faith sector’

Since the pandemic, there has been a discernible change in the attitude of public sector partners to work with the ‘faith sector’ (the “F” in the VCFSE – voluntary, community and faith sector), and there are a whole range of levels where members of faith groups can secure representation. The CVS (community and voluntary support), of which there are branches in East Lancashire, Hyndburn and in Lancaster, is a good infrastructure body to be part of, and simply requires a church / faith group to complete an application form.

At a district level, the newly formed Family Hub Networks are holding monthly 'partnership' meetings, at which representation from church / faith groups would be welcome, and provide a great opportunity for developing relationships. Again and again staff here, and in the health service, profess a desire to work with the faith sector, but confess an ignorance of who to make contact with. So, why not be pro-active and initiate these contacts ourselves.

The best initial contact for more information, dates, locations are the integrated service managers. For Lancashire, these are:

Preston – Tim Grose tim.grose@lancashire.gov.uk

Chorley, and South Ribble – Jo Latham joanne.latham2@lancashire.gov.uk

Lancaster, Fylde, Wyre – Louise Jefferson louise.jefferson@lancashire.gov.uk

West Lancs – vacant

Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Rossendale – Christine Nuttall Christine.nuttall2@lancashire.gov.uk

Burnley, Pendle – Karen Exell karen.exell@lancashire.gov.uk

ISRAEL / PALESTINE

Do you know the difference between UNRWA and UNHCR ?

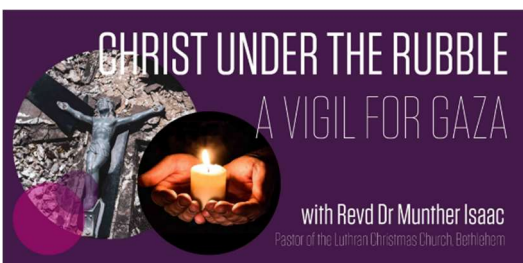
In the wake of several large donors withdrawing their support for UNRWA recently, Jonathan Cook examines the history of the organisation. He writes on X (formerly Twitter):

'UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East pronounced UN-rə) is separate from the UN's main refugee agency, the UNHCR, and deals only with Palestinian refugees. Although Israel does not want you to know it, the reason for there being two UN refugee agencies is because Israel and its western backers insisted on the division back in 1948.

Why? Because Israel was afraid of the Palestinians falling under the responsibility of the UNHCR's forerunner, the International Refugee Organisation. The IRO was established in the immediate wake of the Second World War in large part to cope with the millions of European Jews fleeing Nazi atrocities.

Israel did not want the two cases treated as comparable, because it was pushing hard for Jewish refugees to be settled on lands from which it had just expelled Palestinians. Part of the IRO's mission was to seek the repatriation of European Jews. Israel was worried that very principle might be used both to deny it the Jews it wanted to colonise Palestinian land and to force it to allow the Palestinian refugees to return to their former homes.'

To read on see: www.jonathan-cook.net/blog/2024-01-30/war-un-refugee-israel-genocide/



A Vigil for Gaza

A service of prayer, music, readings, poetry and silence held on Sunday February 19th at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, London. The service began with a 30-minute reflection by Revd Dr Munther Isaac, speaking about the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank and how the worldwide church should respond. "I am traveling to the UK to call the church to be the church, and to act in costly solidarity towards an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. This is a moral obligation. This is not the time for neutrality or soft diplomacy. "

View the full service or download the transcript of Revd Dr Munther's talk <https://embraceme.org/christ-under-the-rubble-a-vigil-for-gaza?> This event was held in partnership with Embrace Middle East, Sabeel-Kairos and Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church.

THE BALFOUR PROJECT

Peace with justice, security and equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis.

Acknowledging Britain's historic and continuing responsibilities, we work through education and advocacy to advance equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis. More details <https://balfourproject.org/>

Two recent helpful talks:

Destruction of Gaza's health system: need to restore hope with Dr Nick Maynard <https://balfourproject.org/gazahealth/>

Injustice to the defenceless: the plight of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. <https://balfourproject.org/injustice/>

BETHLEHEM BETWEEN DESPAIR AND HOPE This short film from the Media Office of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. shows the city of Bethlehem and its people after 100 days of war. The city which is dependent on pilgrims and tourists for its livelihood, was virtually closed for many months during the Covid pandemic. Things were just settling back to normal when the 7 October attack took place and the onslaught on Gaza and West Bank began. Christmas was 'cancelled' and the streets have been empty, shops and hotels closed ever since. In this video young people speak about their concerns, their prayers, hopes and trust in God for the future. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzLAn2nj8RM> Source: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Jan 30th 2024



DEMILITARISING THE UNIVERSITIES

UK universities are accepting money from the military and defence sector, building research around arms-trade needs, while also buying shares in arms companies and profiting from those shares. The UK government sees major advantage in hosting weapons-related research in universities, seeing arms development as falling in line with its economic and national security agendas. Research which could fuel peaceful, sustainable innovation can easily be crowded out, particularly given that defence research has more links to security policy making than research on human security. The truth is, our security relies on the health of the planet and people, not on the health of our militaries, and military spending is not based on a sound analysis of national security.

We, at Demilitarise Education, say that this research and these partnerships jeopardise what a university should seek to do. Instead of selling their research capabilities to arms companies, universities should broaden the minds of their students, working to produce knowledge that improves the health, wellbeing, and security of the world.

DED'S 2024 PLANS

'Universities Transform the World!' is touring campuses aiming to empower campaigns and strengthen students, academics and staff ability to address their university's unethical partnerships with military industrial complex. So far they are booking workshops at University College, London, University of Sussex, University of Edinburgh, Durham University, Goldsmith's, University of London, University of Portsmouth, King's College London. If you have contacts in any of these, please ask them to get in touch by email or social media to find out how to attend.

Learn about the Universities and Arms Database <https://ded1.co/data/university>

Watch the information video and sign the petition <https://ded1.co/>

COUNTING THE COST OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Counting the Cost
2023
A year of climate
breakdown



aid

A new analysis of the top 20 costliest extreme climate disasters over 2023 has revealed a "global postcode lottery stacked against the poor" where the relative economic impact of disasters varies considerably across countries.

Christian Aid, which published the analysis in their report Counting the Cost 2023: A year of climate breakdown, warns "more climate finance is desperately needed" including investment in early warning and early action.

The top 20 list of the costliest extreme disasters of 2023 across a range of 14 countries shows that some countries - through size, geography, or other factors - are more prone to experience disasters.

Read the synopsis here: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48796> Download the full report here

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/our-work/counting-cost-2023-year-climate-breakdown>



CHANGEMAKERS CONFERENCE. Saturday March 2 10.30 am – 1pm

Be a changemaker for love, equality, dignity, and justice by coming to our conference.

MAIN EVENT IN LONDON London at St James's Piccadilly . You'll have the opportunity to meet our Burundi Country Manager, Philip Galgalo, who'll give a personal insight into our Burundi

programmes. The event will also feature other key speakers, who'll share news, ideas, and resources in readiness for Christian Aid Week 2024. Followed by a free networking lunch.

JOIN A REGIONAL WATCH PARTY livestreaming with a chance to meet others, exchange ideas and join together for a free networking lunch .

Crewe (St Andrews, Bedford Street, Crewe, CW2 6LE

Kendal (Sandylands Methodist Church, Sandylands Rd, Kendal LA9 6EU)

Warrington (The Outset, Sankey Street, Warrington WA1 1NN)

JOIN AT HOME for livestream

Register for all these at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/changemakers-conference>

RESOURCES FOR LENT

Editor: With Easter coming very early this year we are already into Lent as I am putting together this Mouthpeace. But it is never to late to start good things. Download Anne o'Connor's latest NW J & P Bulletin which has a lot of suggestions and there is also a Stations of the Cross on this page <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-north-west/nw-njpn-e-bulletin-for-february/>

CAFOD's On line Lent Calendar allows you to join in now <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/lent-calendar?>

DIARY

MARCH

- 1 World Day of Prayer** prepared by Women of Palestine Find a service near you <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/services/> Online service at 12 noon contact The Revd Anton Muller at antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk for the link.
- 2 Christian Aid Change Makers Conference** see Page 11 to register for livestream
- 4-10 Voter Registration Week** Citizens Uk see page 8 & 9
- 8 International Women's Day** theme 2024 Inspire Inclusion <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/2024Theme>
- 9 Care for Creation – Environment and Sustainability Conference** 10:00am - 3:30pm St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Hardybutts Wigan Lancashire WN1 3RZ see page 2
- 11-17 Big Plastic Count** <https://thebigplasticcount.com/sign-up>
- 8-10 March. Boarbank Hall Thinking Faith Lent Zoom weekend** Evening sessions only. See page 4
- 15 CAFOD Quiz Night** at Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port Town Centre at 7.30 pm Entrance is £3 for adults and £1 for children and the usual raffle will take place with good prizes. Refreshments will be available at the interval. All proceeds will go towards Cafod's latest development project. Contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419
- 14 Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting** 2.00pm see page 3
- 21 Romero Mass** 7:00 pm followed by talk 8-9 pm at St Oswald & St Edmund Arrowsmith, Ashton-in-Makerfield see page 2
- 22 World Water Day** theme: Water for Peace <https://www.un.org/en/observances/water-day>

APRIL

- 11 Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting** 2.00pm see page 3
- 22 Earth Day** Planet vs. Plastics <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2024/>

MAY

- 9 Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting** 2.00pm see page 3
- 12 – 18 Christian Aid week** <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week?>
- 13 – 18 Boarbank Hall Week of prayer, walks and birdwatching,** See page 4
- 15 International Conscientious Objectors' Day** <https://nationaltoday.com/international-conscientious-objectors-day/>
- 21 Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter** Pax Christi's updated pack with biographical information and ready to use service and reflections £6 available from <https://paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/bl-franz-jagerstatter/>
- 25 May-1 June Boarbank Hall Living Laudato Si' Residential week** see page 4

JUNE

- 1 National Pax Christi AGM** Friends Meeting House, 22, School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT. For full details www.paxchristi.org.uk. Ring 020 8203 4884
- 5 World Environment Day** <https://www.un.org/en/observances/environment-day>
- 13 Merseyside Pax Christi Meeting** 2.00pm see page 3
- 29 Merseyside Pax Christi Retreat** at The Irenaeus Project, Great Georges Rd, Liverpool L22 1RD. see page 3
- 28 June-1 July. Boarbank Hall Catholic Social Teaching Residential weekend** see page 4

Advance notice: JULY 19 -21 'JUST POLITICS' NJPN Annual Conference at Swanwick see page 2

Copydate for Summer Mouthpeace May 20th 2024

EDITOR : THANKYOU TO THE FOLLOWING HELPFUL WEBSITES:

National Justice and Peace Network <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/>

Independent Catholic News <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/>

NW NJPN Bulletin produced by Anne O'Connor <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/category/njpn-northwest/>