

*The monthly e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com
Download earlier bulletins at: <http://jpshrewsbury.wordpress.com/e-bulletins/>*

VISITING THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN IRAQ – a report from L'Arche International

Since June, more than a million people have left their homes in northern Iraq to seek refuge in Kurdistan – including 125,000 Christians who were asked to choose between renouncing their faith, exile or death.

Ankawa, a suburb of Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, has become a refuge for these Christian exiles. Some have been taken in by family members, others have been able to find a room to rent in an apartment. But for most of the refugees, home is now a tent in a camp, or the mobile homes that are being hastily set up before winter arrives. Church leaders are at the frontline of this emergency management – their priority right now being to find a roof for as many people as possible, warm clothes for winter, and to organise schooling for the children.

In October, L'Arche and other organisations were invited to accompany a delegation of L'Oeuvre d'Orient that was going to Erbil to show solidarity and assess needs. L'Oeuvre d'Orient is a French organisation set up to help Christians in the Middle East.

"Under what conditions will you be able to go home? Are you thinking about settling here permanently?" The people who we meet are still in shock at what has just happened to them. Many talk about leaving the country. "There is no future for us here, their children will do the same thing to our children in 20, 30 years." A person with a disability announces that they have finally got a passport. Another person says that she wants to go home, to Qaraqosh. "We need to be safe at home," she says. In such a chaotic situation, no one – not even us who are visiting them – can really understand what is happening, nor can they predict how the situation will evolve in the medium term.

A camp was set up in one of the community centres, in which partitions were put up to create rooms. Fifty people live here, including Belsam, who smiles as she tells us how she became involved in organising life in the camp. Schedules, taking turns to prepare meals, instructions not to eat in the rooms.... Sandy, a person with a severe disability, lives here with her mother. She does not talk and stays bedridden. But it seems that perhaps her fragility is creating something quite special in this makeshift community. Belsam says that people passing in the hallway say always "Hello" to Sandy from across the partition, and that every evening, there is a moment of silence while the community thinks of her and another person who has mental difficulties.

There are many difficulties, which are inherent in life in the camps: many people talk to us about problems of promiscuity, mobile homes that house up to three families, people without jobs. There is one camp, set up in a building that is still under construction, where the rooms are prone to flooding, where the numerous children are left to their own devices, and living conditions are barely decent – leaving much sadness and bitterness. And also much discomfort between those who live here and those of us who are just visiting – how can we avoid being mere spectators of their distress?

Almost 200 people have gathered in one of the community centres of Ankawa: people with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends, many youths. They are members of the Joy and Charity movement (Al-Mahabba wal-Farah), a cousin of L'Arche and the Faith and Light movement, which was founded by Bishop Rahho, the Chaldean bishop of Mosul who was assassinated in 2008.

Of the 30 Joy and Charity movements set up in Iraq, 13 were displaced by this summer's events. The meeting that we were invited to has brought together members from Erbil and refugees, to celebrate the anniversary of one of the displaced communities. Prayer, games, dancing, laughter... in the midst of such a difficult and absurd situation, it is very surprising to see so much life and strength here. Their force seems to stem from a group of people with disabilities, who are living to the full what is given to them in the present moment. After spending a few days with these men and women, who are still standing strong despite the unimaginably difficult situation that they have been dealt, it is impossible not to be profoundly moved.

We hear of successive exiles in Bassora, Fallujah, Bagdad and Erbil, from Samra. A Little Sister of Jesus tells us that she would like to go back to Bagdad. "If we start to think about the danger, we stop living," she says. Belsam adds: "If you want to help us... stay longer next time, we can visit the families of people with disabilities. For them, being refugees is even harder."

PRAY AND FAST FOR THE CLIMATE

Ellen Teague writes: Christian organisations launched a year of prayer and fasting for climate action at special ecumenical services across the country on 1 November 2014. The initiative of the Faith for the Climate Network calls on Christians to pray and fast on the first day of every month to urge more significant measures to stabilise Earth's climate. Their website contains useful prayer resources. The coming year is a crucial time for faith communities to act as momentum builds towards a new international climate agreement to be signed in Paris in December 2015. The unrestricted use of fossil fuels should be phased out by 2100 if the world is to avoid dangerous climate change, a UN-backed expert panel said at the weekend.

In London, the main launch service took place at St John's Waterloo, hosted by Christian charity Operation Noah with support from other members of the Faith for the Climate network, including A Rocha, Christian Aid, Christian Ecology Link, OurVoices, Hope for the Future, Shrinking the Footprint and Tearfund. The Baptist Union, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church all support the initiative. Barbara Kentish of Westminster J&P, Ellen Teague of Columban JPIC and Reggie Norton of Christian Climate Action were among the Catholics attending. In line with the commitment to fasting on the first of the month, only drinks were available afterwards as refreshments.

The opening hymn was an ecological one to the tune of Kingsfold, called 'The God who set the stars in space' and written by retired Church of England bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith. Canon Giles Goddard, priest at St John's Waterloo and board member of Operation Noah said during his welcome: "The need for change is urgent and everyone can help bring it about. This is an initiative about hope. Praying and fasting for the climate will inspire action and encourage people to think about what needs to happen. We are calling for justice for all those impacted by climate change now and in the future, and for an ambitious outcome at next year's climate talks in Paris. We hope people across the country will support the initiative and tell others about it."

The main speaker, Revd Steve Chalke, Oasis Trust founder, picked up on the first reading from Genesis 1. "A self-centred approach to our planet which picks the riches of the Earth for us and not for others is not in keeping with Genesis 1" he said. "We pray and fast because we are part of this ecosystem gifted to us in Genesis 1" he added "and real prayer moves out of the head and into campaigning and out on the street". There was a prayer at the service for "positive media coverage", highlighting that the media has not always underlined that 98% of the world's scientists are saying that global warming is happening and is human-induced.

Barbara Echlin of Christian Ecology Link and Operation Noah reminded that the latter is celebrating its 10th anniversary. It was a decade ago that hundreds attended the launch event for the Christian Climate organisation in Coventry, which included a rainbow procession through the streets, a liturgy of repentance in the ruins of the old cathedral, and a service in the new Coventry cathedral. Catholic groups, including the National Board of Catholic Women, the National Justice and Peace Network and Columban JPIC, were present.

Other services took place on 1 November across the UK, including Brighton, Coventry, Lancaster and Southwell. People were encouraged to spread the movement far and wide by hosting monthly prayer and fasting events. Political pressure is being placed on UK politicians and church leaders to make bold commitments to tackle climate change ahead of the UK general election and beyond. This prayer movement builds upon the 'Fast for the Climate' initiative begun at the 2013 UN climate talks by Yeb Sano, the Filipino delegate, in the wake of the devastation caused in the Philippines by Typhoon Haiyan. Yeb has continued to fast on the first of every month, joined by people from all around the world.

Prayer resources and information about events can be found at: www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk

Operation Noah is an ecumenical Christian charity providing leadership, focus and inspiration in response to the growing threat of catastrophic climate change. www.operationnoah.org

News of the latest IPCC report at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-29855884>

Change of Name As from 1 January 2015 Christian Ecology Link will be known as Green Christian, a name felt to be more impacting which sends a clear message for those, especially young people, who may not be familiar with its work.

www.greenchristian.org.uk

PRAY AND FAST FOR THE CLIMATE Prayer Points – November 2014

UN Climate Summit in Lima, Peru (1-12 December 2014)

We pray for politicians and negotiators meeting in Lima, Peru. This will be the last opportunity for high-level government ministers from around the world to discuss and agree a credible draft climate agreement before the crucial Paris summit in 2015. It is critical for key issues to be resolved in Lima to prevent them derailing agreement in Paris. We pray for openness, clarity and a strong sense of purpose to make these talks a success. To read the rest of this reflection go to:

<http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/PAFFTC-November-Prayer-points.pdf>

On the first of each month you can pray and fast at any time of day, on your own or with others.

Consider forming small groups in your office, church, or home ... or arrange to pray or hold vigils in public areas.

You can join the growing movement to pray and fast by:

1. **Engaging in personal prayer** – pray each month on your own
2. **Joining an existing group** – Look on our interactive map (on the events page) for a group of Christians in your area who are joining together to pray and fast on the first of the month
3. **Setting up a new group** – If there's no group already in your area, find a venue in your community or workplace and make arrangements to pray and fast (ideally with a few others). Enter your venue on our map using the form below.
4. **Holding a monthly vigil** – plan a silent vigil: you can register these, too.

Choose a time that is appropriate for you. You may choose to fast and pray for the whole day, you may choose to pray with your home group, or you may choose simply to fast during your lunch break. You can be creative in your fasting, too: if health or other reasons prevent you fasting from food, you can try fasting from carbon, the internet, or something else as a sign of your prayerful commitment.

Worship outline for use on first of each month during prayer and fasting

<http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/PAFFTC-worship-outline.pdf>

AND NOTHING HAPPENED

Sunday 19 October. Children played and parents read the papers; fridges hummed, the internet connected and TVs buzzed with cooks and politicians; phones recharged, the heating kicked in and the lights went out at bed time. Everything was just as it should be. No one noticed that around nine million homes worth of electricity had simply 'disappeared' after four nuclear power stations had shut down and Didcot went up in flames. No one noticed because Britain's windmills carried on turning, powering almost 25% of our country. It was a historic event that went almost unnoticed; one revolution after another quietly secured our energy needs. The lights didn't go out. We have wind energy to thank for that.

... *A double page in the Guardian 7 November 2014 from ecotricity –worth noting.* Margaret McSherry, Lancaster J&P Worker.

CHRISTIAN AID TURNS TO PROPHETS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE HOPE

As the question of how we set about tackling climate change increasingly becomes not just an economic and political issue, but a moral one too, a new paper from Christian Aid draws inspiration from the Biblical prophets. *Song of the Prophets: A global theology on climate change* reflects the views of theologians from the global south where climate change is having its greatest impact. The paper says that the manner in which a number of Biblical prophets confronted opposition in their own times, gives hope in a demoralised and demotivated world. It coincides with latest synthesis report on the impact of global warming from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which warns that time for effective action against climate change is fast running out.

The paper's author, Rev Dr Susan Durber, said: "We all need those who will help us to see the truth from which we might be tempted to turn, to face things we can hardly bear, and to find a source of hope that is real. We have often called the people who can do this for us 'prophets'. They help us to discern the truth and to act upon it. Prophets are sometimes unpopular, especially with those who have much to lose if things change. But they consistently, and without fear, speak out. Sometimes people think them mad. Sometimes they are indulged as though they are naïve. All this happened to the prophets in the Bible, and it happens still to truth-tellers in the world today.

Prophetic voices, whether from the Scriptures, from climate science, or from people living in poverty today, sing a powerful song. We need to hear the challenging voices and the calls to repent and change, for the sake of those who are suffering now and for the sake of future generations. But we also need to imagine a redeemed and restored world, one marked by justice and hope and built on new foundations, for such a vision will overcome our fears and give us strength to change. It takes courage to listen to voices that go against our immediate and pressing self-interest, but if we shut down in the face of the challenge to 'repent!' we shall also shut down the possibility of receiving the gift of hope for a renewed earth. It is this gift that we need above all, a gift that faith can offer, in humility, to the world. Prophets are the ones who can reveal that "it doesn't have to be like this."

Over the weekend of October 18-19 hundreds of churches around the UK took part in a weekend of prayer and action urging MPs to tackle climate change, and praying for their sisters and brothers around the world. As Christians around the world increasingly begin to grapple with the moral questions raised by climate change Christian Aid hopes that this paper may prove a useful tool in shaping a theology of climate change full of justice and hope. The full paper can be downloaded here:

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/song-of-the-prophets-a-global-theology-of-climate-change-november-2014.pdf>

CALL FOR ACTION TO END THE UNFAIR 'POVERTY PREMIUM'.

In the UK today, people on low incomes pay the highest prices for many essential goods and services: for food, for fuel, for finance, for furniture, and even funerals. This 'Poverty Premium' costs the average low-income family an extra £1,300 every year. The Scottish and UK Governments both need to take urgent action to end the injustice of the Poverty Premium. Please send an email today to urge them to do so. Click here to email the government and ask them to make plans for tackling the Poverty Premium:

<http://action.church-poverty.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=128&ea.campaign.id=32326&ea.url.id=315650&forwarded=true>

We've been working in Glasgow over the past year with partners including the Iona Community, Christian Aid Scotland and Faith in Community Scotland – and most importantly, with people who are themselves directly affected by the Poverty Premium. They have come up with creative solutions to the problems that affect them on a daily basis: expensive prepayment meters for gas and electricity; overpriced and poor-quality food; high-cost credit; and so on. On 1 December in Glasgow, we will launch *Food, Fuel, Finance* - a report which draws on this work, and sets out an agenda for action to tackle the Poverty Premium. Read the report and get informed about the Poverty Premium: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/foodfuelfinance/report/>

Some of this action can be taken at a local level – we've highlighted in the report a number of great initiatives that local communities in Glasgow and across the UK are already taking. But we also need action from the top - regulation to prevent companies from exploiting vulnerable customers; and support for practical solutions. We're therefore calling on both the Scottish and UK Governments to draw up plans for tackling the Poverty Premium, and ensure that markets for food, fuel and finance work *for* people in poverty instead of against them.

If you're in Scotland we're asking you to email Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities. In the rest of the UK we're targeting Jo Swinson, Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs.

Please click use our simple e-action to contact the government now! <http://action.church-poverty.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=128&ea.campaign.id=32326&ea.url.id=315650&forwarded=true>

Liam Purcell, Church Action on Poverty 0161 236 9321 <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk>

AVOID SHOPPING AT AMAZON THIS CHRISTMAS

Last Christmas over 55,000 of us told Amazon to pay their workers a Living Wage. All year we've been pestering them to pay their workers and to pay their fair share of tax. But Amazon is still dodging its responsibilities. So this Christmas we're taking things up a notch. Together, let's hit them where it hurts: their pockets. Can you avoid shopping at Amazon this Christmas? Sign up to the Amazon Free Challenge and show them that if they don't pay their workers or pay their fair share of tax, we won't pay them. Amazon claim to be the world's most 'customer-centric' company, but tens of thousands of us disagree: and when it comes to their own employees, they get nothing but one star reviews. Amazon can and should be a better company by treating their workers, society and other businesses fairly. So let's use our consumer power against them and support shops more deserving of our cash this Christmas. <http://www.amazonanonymous.org/>

ALTERNATIVES TO AMAZON?

Many of us would like to boycott Amazon due to their tax avoidance and staff treatment issues but where?

www.hive.co.uk is one good alternative which allows you to shop on line but then either have your books delivered, or arrange to be collected from your local bookstore so you can also give them your support.

www.globalseesaw.co.uk is an ethically run social business that seeks to make a difference, especially to women exploited by human trafficking and prostitution. All profits are reinvested to bring greater change.

www.madecloser.co.uk makes it easy for people to buy a wide range of goods made near to them supporting the growth of local businesses and reducing air miles.

* Suggestions taken with permission from the Southwark Archdiocese Summer newsletter for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of

Creation www.southwarkjandp.co.uk from an article in the July/August 2014 edition of the magazine *Ethical Consumer*

<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/latestnews/entryid/1638/consumers-angry-over-tax-avoidance.aspx>

SECOND HAND BOOKS

If you want to buy and read second hand books but don't want to support Amazon Marketplace go to www.greenmetropolis.com All books cost £3.75 to buy (no extra for postage) and you can sell books too and receive £3 in your account. By re-using and recycling books you keep them in circulation for longer which in turn helps reduce demand for new books and helps save existing trees. Green Metropolis works with the Woodland Trust and has already raised over £25,000 from book sales and created over 22 acres of new forest. The Woodland Trust protects existing woodlands, create new woodland and bring about improved biodiversity. Trees and forest are crucial to life. They stabilise the soil, generate oxygen, store carbon and play host to a spectacular variety of wildlife. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

CATHOLIC CHURCH WELCOMES NEW RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROPOSALS

The Catholic Education Service (CES) has welcomed the Government's proposals for a new academically rigorous Religious Education GCSE and Religious Education A Level. The proposals, which are out for public consultation, put forward a more academically rigorous GCSE which includes the teaching of two religions. The widely welcomed A Level reforms propose increased religious content to ensure the right breadth and depth of study to support students progressing to higher education.

The Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool, and Chairman of CES said: "Theologically rigorous RE is a core part of Catholic education. These reforms to GCSE RE and A Level RE provide us with an opportunity to ensure that Religious Education at GCSE and A Level in Catholic schools is academically and theologically rigorous in accordance with Canon Law. Catholic schools account for 25% of the entries at RE GCSE and 20% of the entries at RE A Level. As the single largest provider of entries to both RE GCSE and RE A Level, we have worked in partnership with the Government to ensure that these proposals are fit for purpose in Catholic schools. We welcome the assurances from the Secretary of State that these proposals do not undermine the autonomy of the Catholic Bishops to determine and inspect religious education in Catholic schools. All Catholic schools are required by Church teachings to raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to understand and respect them. These new proposals will facilitate Catholic schools in this duty."

* RE must make up at least 10% of curriculum time in a Catholic school and is inspected separately under long-standing arrangements currently set out in the 2005 Education Act. *Source: CES*

FORMER BRITAIN FIRST MEMBER DENOUNCES GROUP AND VISITS MOSQUE TO APOLOGISE

Britain First rose to prominence through a series of attempts to stir up anti-Muslim hatred. Matthew Lester, 25, joined the group six months ago to protest radical preachers such as Anjem Choudry but soon became disillusioned with the group. He said "They're not just going after extremists, they're going after Muslims." To make amends Lester visited Crayford Mosque to apologise. He said: "I went in there and took my shoes and hat off and they said Allah knows what's in your heart and we can tell by the way you came down here and apologised." The experience has spurred him to further action and he has plans about to how to make an even bigger difference. He said: "I want to speak to Sikhs, Hindus and Jews now to show that we're all united together. We're all human and we all have separate beliefs and that's fine."

INFLATABLE INCUBATOR WINS THE JAMES DYSON AWARD

An inflatable incubating system designed by a recent graduate and costing 90% less than a standard incubator has won the James Dyson Award. More than one in 10 babies worldwide are born prematurely, and the World Health Organisation says that 75% of deaths resulting from premature birth could be avoided – if inexpensive treatments were available more easily around the globe. MOM is a low cost, inflatable incubator for the developing world. It has the same performance as a £30,000 modern incubation system, but costs just £250 to manufacture, test and transport. It can be collapsed for transportation and its battery lasts 24 hours. The incubator is blown up manually and heated using ceramic heating elements, while a screen shows the temperature and humidity, which can be custom set depending on the gestation age. If the temperature changes, an alarm will sound. For babies who suffer from Jaundice, there's a phototherapy unit that is also collapsible.

The man behind MOM is James Roberts, a 23-year-old recent graduate from Loughborough University. James's brief for the awards was to "design something that solves a problem," and he was inspired to solve this particular problem after watching a documentary on Syria. The design will go through government testing, and James hopes there'll be versions for refugee camps, disaster zones, hospitals and even a version to be used in remote areas close to home like the Scottish Highlands, where they can be hours from a hospital. He said: "The dream would be to meet a child that my incubator has saved – living proof that my design has made a difference."

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

12 December is Save the Children's third annual Christmas Jumper Day which has raised more than £1.6 million to date. Wear a jumper and donate £1 for children or £2 for adults. This year, the UK government will match every gift you give, pound for pound (up to £5 million), doubling your donations. Your donations will help children all over the world get the chance to fulfil their potential. Funds matched by the government will help save mothers' and babies' lives through our work in Kenya. So, give between 1 Oct and 31 Dec and your money will make an even bigger difference. <http://jumpers.savethechildren.org.uk/>

SLIPPERS FOR SHELTER: WEAR YOUR SLIPPERS AT WORK

On 18 December, in offices and other workplaces across the country, employees will be ditching their usual footwear and taking part in Slippers for Shelter. Simply by wearing your slippers at work and donating £2, you can help Shelter support families facing homelessness at Christmas. Tens of thousands of children will be homeless this Christmas. But you won't see them. They'll be hidden away in temporary, overcrowded or dangerous accommodation. Your £2 could help a family facing homelessness. Get your Slippers for Shelter fundraising kit. Sign up now to get involved.

http://www.shelter.org.uk/slippers?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1465

RESOURCES

BRITAIN ISN'T EATING

A politician learns an uncomfortable truth about food-bank Britain. Katherine Parkinson stars in a microplay written by Laura Wade. Britain Isn't Eating is the first in a series of plays made in collaboration between Guardian journalists and Royal Court theatre-makers.

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/video/2014/nov/17/britain-isnt-eating-microplay-guardian-royal-court-video>

Britain Isn't Eating satirises the coalition government's approach to food banks and the 'feckless poor'. Director Carrie Cracknell and social affairs writer Amelia Gentleman explain how they worked with Laura Wade and food blogger Jack Monroe agircalledjack.com/ to cook up the play's store-cupboard challenge. The bleakest moment of this play comes when the politician turned TV chef realises that she cannot actually cook the austerity meal she is trying to promote as wholesome fare – because she has no electricity, because it has been cut off for non-payment of bills. This is a grim nod to an Oxfam report released earlier this year, which noted that food bank users have been giving back items which require cooking – rice, spaghetti, soup – because with no money to pay the bills, they have no means of cooking it.

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/nov/17/britain-isnt-eating-microplay-off-the-page-royal-court>

Watch the film on Church Action on Poverty's blog: <http://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/2014/11/18/britain-isnt-eating-the-movie/>

J&P COLUMN IN *THE UNIVERSE*

A new weekly J&P column in *The Universe* - contributors include Pat Gaffney, Pax Christi; Niall Cooper, Church Action on Poverty; Alison Gelder, Housing Justice; Daniel Hale, Progressio; Ellen Teague and Peter Hughes, Columbans; Louise Zanré, Jesuit Refugee Service; Peace activist Bruce Kent; broadcaster; environmentalist Mary Colwell; Phil Kingston and e bulletin editor Anne O'Connor.

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN MUIR BY MARY COLWELL

This year is the centenary of the death of John Muir – 'the Scotsman who saved America's wild places'. Muir is regarded as the 'father of America's national parks' and is a towering figure in the history of that country's involvement with ecology. Born into a harsh home in Dunbar, Scotland he would often escape to revel in the birds and wildlife of the area. When his father suddenly uprooted the family and moved to the United States, the oppression he associated with his childhood continued - and so did his involvement with the natural world. Despite the difficulty of his formative years Muir grew up to be a man of great joy - first an inventor and then an explorer, he found his haven in the mountains of Sierra Nevada. He was a fascinating character: on the one hand a recluse, who sought solitude, and on the other a passionate activist, determined to save the places he loved. A strong believer in both God and the essential goodness of humanity, he was the founder and first president of the Sierra Club. This memoir pays tribute to a giant of ecology and is essential reading for lovers of natural history.

Mary Colwell is one of the producers of the BBC Radio 4 programme, Shared Planet.

<http://bookshop.theguardian.com/john-muir.html>

SUSTAINABLE FAITH: A GREEN GOSPEL FOR THE AGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

By Nicola L Bull and Mark McAllister ISBN: 978-1-291-90020-0 £4.25. Foreword by Revd Steve Chalke. Bible-based, this book demonstrates that an important element of 21st century Christian faith is about engaging with the big challenges of climate change and sustainable living. A duty of loving care for the planet and all its inhabitants should be a central feature of the Christian message in today's church, accompanied by scriptural backing and practical guidance, encouraging God's people to be at the forefront of change. Available from: www.lulu.com

ADVENT RESOURCES

Advent is a time of joyful anticipation: a time to look forward to the birth of our Saviour. It is also a time of preparation: a time to make sure we are ready and well-equipped to welcome Jesus into our hearts. Just as we care lovingly for a new baby, so too we are invited by God, our loving Father, to show our love for the Christ child by caring lovingly and responsibly for everything God has created. Our Advent prayer and study provides an opportunity to slow down, to make space in our busy lives to sit quietly in the presence of God, to put to one side the frenetic Christmas rush. Refreshed and renewed, we can then truly enjoy our Christmas celebrations. As we get ready to welcome the Christ child into our midst, we are challenged to reflect on the truth Jesus brings and to consider our response, prompted by Mary's unconditional 'Yes' to God's plan. *I am the handmaid of The Lord. May what you have said be done to me.* (Luke 1:38). May we too say 'Yes' to his message and respond to his calling with cheerful hearts.

A series of four A4 sheets for Advent containing Scripture verses, reflections, examination of conscience and ideas for further action. Available to download from: www.jpshrewsbury.wordpress.com/resources

KAIROS PALESTINE CHRISTMAS ALERT 2014

Kairos Palestine is a group of Palestinian Christians who authored "*A moment of Truth*" – Christian Palestinians' word to the world about the occupation of Palestine, an expression "of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering", and a call for solidarity in ending over six decades of oppression.

Rifat Odeh Kassis *Kairos Palestine – A moment of truth*, General Coordinator writes:

Another Christmas is approaching, and injustice in the land of peace remains rampant. This time again, we pray that the coming year will be different: that violence will cease, impunity will end, and peace with justice will begin to flourish. On 26 November 2013, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (IYSPP). But it has turned out to be one of the bloodiest and most painful years for Palestine. As I write these words, the government of Israel is waging a brutal war against Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinian civilians have been killed, including scores of children – the death toll today exceeds 1,400 with more than 8, 000 injured. The destruction is staggering. The killing of a child, of a son or daughter, of a mother or father, can never be compensated or reversed. These wounds will ache forever.

But at times like these, we must also pay attention to what we can do, not just to what we can't. Let's think of the millions of Palestinian refugees around the world and how we can support them, advocate for them, and demand their right of return. Let's think of the millions of Palestinian families separated by Israel's land-grabbing, wall-constructing, movement restrictions, residency revocations, and how we can campaign for their reunification. And let's think, too, of all the Palestinians imprisoned by Israel – many of them children, women, and the elderly; many of whom have never been charged or tried; many of whom have been incarcerated for years upon years. They have suffered immensely, and so have their families. I am focusing on this latter plight because the World Council of Churches "World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel" (WCC/WWPPI) has chosen 2014 to be the year of prisoners, a year dedicated to solidarity with them. Indeed, we can do a lot for prisoners: we can work to reverse the injustices committed against them. We can pray for them and their loved ones, we can demand better treatment for them, we can advocate and lobby for their legal rights and for their release. Many countries all over the world will be taking part in this Week of 21-28 September, carrying out activities in solidarity with prisoners and their families.

In this Christmas alert, we choose one Sunday during Advent to do the same: to shed light on the situation they face and to express compassion and support in the name of peace with justice. Special attention must be paid to the situation of minors in detention. It is unacceptable that, in the twenty-first century, children as young as 12 are being arrested, detained, and tried in military courts. But this is exactly what is happening in Israel – an average of two children are arrested and abused there every night – and this reality must be changed. We know it can be changed if we come together against oppression; if we settle for nothing less than true equality; if we unite in faith, hope and love. Your solidarity is essential, and we are grateful for it. Read the report in full: <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/images/English%20Christmas%20Alert%202014.pdf>

SILENT VOICES

A thought-provoking photography exhibition showing everyday life in the village of Bil'in in the Occupied West Bank of Palestine as seen through the eyes of the children who live there. Displayed at Heswall Methodist Church, Telegraph Road. Open Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm from 2-22 December. Free entry, refreshments available. www.heswallmethodist.org.uk

Photographer Elaine Stapleton writes:

In September 2012 a group of more than 80 children aged between 6 and 16 years of age from Bil'in, Palestine took part in a photography workshop. Each of the workshops represented an age group and enabled them to work alongside their peers. Each group was introduced to a basic camera and we discussed the aims of the project. Individuals were encouraged to take on the role of ambassador representing their village. After discussing the aims of the project they were asked: "what are the messages you would like people to hear about your world and what do you want them to learn about your life." Photography is an exciting and creative form of storytelling and one that will hopefully bring young people together, to share experiences, develop understanding, celebrate difference and unite us in the struggle to eliminate prejudice and violence against children.

I was asked to facilitate this project by the Liverpool "Friends of Bil'in" in order to raise awareness of the struggles this community face. Specifically we wanted to highlight the Friday demonstrations that have taken place for the last eight years and have led to some bitter sweet successes around the return of their land. We wanted this project to continue to educate beyond my visit.

This has been a very personal journey for me. I have been in situations that were unfamiliar and sometimes very distressing to me. I was also privileged to meet and share family life with extraordinary people whose generosity, dignity and resilience were impressive and humbling. In much the same way as the children and young people my images reflect one day and a particular event and are not meant to be representative of the full Palestinian story. This is the beginning of my journey in understanding *life beyond the wall*.

SETTING THE MESSAGE FREE

The Angels seem to be silent in our modern nativity plays. These fierce creatures, who have been stereotyped as celestial choir members, once spoke hard words with love, honesty and insistence. *ALTERNativity's* newly re-packaged resource *Setting the Message Free* examines who these angels were, what their role was and how they walk among us today. Their messages are sometimes difficult, sometimes challenging but always life changing. The meditations, poetry and conversation starters are suitable for individual and group reflections. The CD includes materials for individual reflection, for group study and for worship and comes in a handmade box from a women's co-operative in Bangkok.

http://www.alternativity.org.uk/resources/?slug=product_info&products_id=44

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS CARDS: ADDRESSES AND ADVICE FOR 2014

Liverpool J&P Commission have sent the following information: We are again following advice from Fr Mark Madden never to post a letter directly to a Palestinian Parish. For each of the last four years, the thousands of cards sent using this method have reached the parishes in the Holy Land. Fr Humam Khzouz has told us that the cards are greatly appreciated. Fr Humam suggests that we send a covering letter or extra card with each set of cards for the parish priest to read out to his congregation. This will help them to realise where the cards have come from and why they have been sent. This material is available on our web site <http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk> from 27 October. The J&P page can be found in the Commissions section. The addresses for prisoners of conscience and persecuted Christians are available on the website or contact LACE 0151 522 1000.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Campaign Against Arms Trade: A range of cards, mugs, t-shirts and other gifts

<https://secure.artezglobal.com/registrator/TicketingCatalog.aspx?eventid=16036>

CAFOD World Gifts: <http://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/> Each World Gift belongs to one of five funds we have created, covering different types of work: Education and Skills Training; Livestock, Agriculture and Livelihoods; Water and Food; Health and Care (including HIV and AIDS); Emergency, Conflict and Rehabilitation. http://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/wg_moneyinaction

Pax Christi Greetings and Christmas Cards: New designs include St Francis: design by Pax Christi member, Maggie Organ; Newborn Hope: designed for by Anne Gregson with the greeting 'Peace' in 8 languages; Peace Child created by Pax Christi member Trudie Thompson; Isaiah: card for based on stunning photograph of lighted candles from Jacinta O'Driscoll OP; Song of the Angels: message inside *'The work of Christmas begins: to find the lost; to heal the broken; to feed the hungry; release the prisoner; to rebuild the nations; to bring peace among people; to make music in the heart';* and Virgin of Loving Kindness: ICON written by Maureen Cantwell based on 13 cent original in St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai.

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/pax-christi-promotional-resources/>

War on Want: As well as supporting War on Want directly through buying our own cards and goodies, New Internationalist, who host our shop, have an enormous range of gifts for everyone - with a percentage going to War on Want too! Our cards with the Three Wise Men trying to get to Palestine, are flying off the shelves, and we're running out of our final stock of Palestine t-shirts. New 'Poverty is Political' t-shirts are on the way and we'll shortly have a new design of 'NO TTIP' t-shirts available. Whatever you buy you'll be supporting the fight for workers' rights, justice for Palestinians, food sovereignty and sustainability, and the battle for a fairer world for the 99%.

http://shop.newint.org.uk/our-partners/war-on-want.html?mw_oref=81d80cf2485e35996ab35972676b50c8

Good Gifts: Knit For Peace is one of the many gifts on sale from Good Gifts, an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust. It has brought together Hutu and Tutsi war widows in Rwanda; Hindus and Muslims in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. Here in the UK 11,000 volunteers donate knitting to those in need, both in the UK and abroad, including children of Afghanistan. We are delighted that a Knit for Peace Group is to be set up bringing together Jews and Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Browse this and other ideas: http://www.goodgifts.org/browse-gifts?dm_i=DXG,2UHHE,EBFKNA,ABOK3,1

The Olive Tree Project: Sponsor an Olive Tree for £15 - through the Olive Tree Project you can help Palestinians maintain their ancient ties to their land and preserve an important source of income and sustenance. Trees can be bought as a gift. Full details from: <http://embraceme.org/olive-tree-project#sthash.XTOaNzT9.dpuf>

2015 HOUSMANS PEACE DIARY

2015 Housmans Peace Diary with dates, anniversaries and quotes, feature article 'A Century of Women Resisting War' and the founding of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's Peace Crusade and 'The Peace Ship'. Order by post (cheque made payable to Network for Peace) for £10.45. Network for Peace, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DY 07794 036602 mail@networkforpeace.org.uk web: www.networkforpeace.org.uk

Multiple orders to sell available from Housmans Bookshop <http://www.housmans.com/diary.php>

JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

18 – 25 January Christian Unity Week: *The Well is Deep*

This year's theme comes to us from the churches of Brazil. Brazilians, who have traditionally been tolerant of their various social classes and ethnic groups, are now living through a time of growing intolerance made manifest in high levels of violence, especially against minorities and the vulnerable. Increasingly, in Brazil, some Christian groups compete with one another for a place on the mass media, for new members and for public funds. The Brazilian churches have begun to recognise that intolerance should be dealt with in a positive way - respecting diversity and promoting dialogue as a permanent path of reconciliation and peace in fidelity to the gospel. We can share this recognition. Although the competition between churches is less obvious in our islands, we are well aware that competition and violent discrimination lie beneath the surface of our lives together. Jesus challenges us to acknowledge that diversity is part of God's design, to approach one another in trust and to see the face of God in the face of all men and women. Resources from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland www.ctbi.org.uk/682

18 January Peace Sunday: *Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters*

The Press Notice from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace states: "Many people think that slavery is a thing of the past. In fact, this social plague remains all too real in today's world. Being children of God gives all human beings equal dignity as brothers and sisters."

Please put the date in your diary now. Contact your parish priest and those involved in liturgy/children's activity in the parish. Peace Sunday is the main opportunity that Pax Christi has to raise income for its on-going work. Invite your parish to have a second collection for Pax Christi or to make a donation to Pax Christi. Without this income our work cannot continue. Resource materials available from Pax Christi <http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/>

18 January World Day of Migrants and Refugees: *Church without Frontiers*

The theme chosen by Pope Francis to celebrate this event is *Church without Frontiers*. When allowing or not allowing people to cross the frontiers into our countries, or to enter our cultures, communities, or personal lives, do we effectively judge some people to be useless, out of place or disposable? People are not things to be used. Everyone has a place in the human family that cannot be filled by anyone else.

The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place or disposable.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20140903_world-migrants-day-2015.html

25 January World Religion Day

World Religion Day (third Sunday of January each year) aims to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony. Through a variety of events held around the globe, followers of every religion are encouraged to acknowledge the similarities that different faiths have.

27 January Holocaust Memorial Day: *Keep the Memory Alive*

'If something happens, I would want there to be somebody who would remember that someone named D. Berger had once lived. This will make things easier for me in the difficult moments.'

David Berger, in his last letter before being murdered by Nazis in Vilnius, 1941

27 January 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. 2015 will also be the 20th anniversary of the Genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia. Therefore it is particularly appropriate that the theme for this major anniversary year focuses on memory. See more at: <http://hmd.org.uk/resources/theme-papers/hmd-2015-keep-memory-alive#sthash.kWfLGTmh.dpuf>

8 February Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking

Catholics in England and Wales are invited to pray for all victims of human trafficking on the Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita, the Sudanese Saint who was kidnapped at the age of nine and sold into slavery. Human trafficking now ranks as the second most profitable worldwide criminal enterprise after the illegal arms trade. The practical response of the Church and its charities, led in the main by Women Religious, is to raise awareness of this horrendous crime and to provide help and support for the most vulnerable victims. The Office for Migration Policy (OMP) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service to raise awareness of the impact of human trafficking in the UK and the rest of the world. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/2015/Ordo-2015.pdf www.stophetraffik.org

8 February Autism Sunday

This special Sunday, also known as the International Day of Prayer for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, is observed annually on the second Sunday of February. There are over 60 million people with autism around the world. Many suffer without proper public services especially since the credit crunch and recession. www.autismsunday.co.uk

Pope Francis has said autistic disorders are nothing to be ashamed of, as he encouraged everyone to build solidarity to ensure that autistic persons are not isolated. "Everyone should be committed to promoting acceptance, encounter and solidarity through concrete support and by encouraging renewed hope," he told participants in his November 22 audience with autistic persons and their families. Through this support, he said, "we can contribute to breaking down the isolation and, in many cases, the stigma burdening people with autism spectrum disorders, and just as often their families." The Pope stressed the importance of accompanying autistic persons and their families in a personal way by listening to their needs, which "arise from the depths of a pathology which, all too often, struggles to be properly diagnosed and accepted without shame or withdrawing into solitude." <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-break-down-the-stigma-burdening-those-with-autism-32815/>

11 February World Day for the Sick: *Faith And Charity*

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains has developed resources to help with the planning and celebration of World Day of the Sick. The resources include suggestions and prayers that can be used by individuals as well as by dioceses, parishes, health care institutions, and other organizations. Go to <http://www.nacc.org/resources/Wds/>

15 February Church Action on Poverty Sunday

Church Action on Poverty believes in the unique value of every human being, created in the image of God. We know that if we work together, we can Close the Gap between rich and poor, and build a society which will be happier, healthier, safer and fairer. We know that people in all the UK's churches have that same vision. On Church Action on Poverty Sunday, we invite you to help us share it more widely.

Download our free resources to plan a worship service at www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

20 February UN World Day of Social Justice

Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. For the United Nations, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of our global mission to promote development and human dignity. Observance of World Day of Social Justice should support efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/socialjusticeday/>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

1 World Aids Day www.worldaidsday.org

2 Rose Castle Carlisle monthly ecumenical prayer meeting <http://www.rosecastle.org/>

4 Friends of Sabeel UK (North West) and Kairos Britain invite you to the film *The Stones Cry Out*, the untold story of the Palestinian Christians. Stockton Heath Methodist Church, Walton Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington, WA4 6NL 01925 268166 7:30 pm. Donations towards costs invited. Palestinian Crafts and goods for sale

3 & 10 "Becoming a dementia friendly church" (& 14 & 21 January), 1pm -- 5pm, St Cuthbert's Church Centre, Preston. Four half day sessions to explore the issues. Booking: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/dementia-friendly-churches-4-sessions-tickets-13326282269> or contact Ed Saville 01254 658914 Ed.saville@blackburn.anglican.org For clergy and laity alike.

6 Volunteer Mission Movement (VMM) dinner. Details: Van Garber on 0151 291 3438 or email vmm@hope.ac.uk

7 Shrewsbury Diocese J&P Commission Annual Advent Reflection Wistaston Hall CW2 8JS 4.30-6.30pm with guest speaker Liam Purcell from Church Action on Poverty "Why we need to close the gap between rich and poor" followed by shared food and fellowship. Details from Ged 01691 831374 gerard.cliffe@btinternet.com

7 Liverpool Santa Dash 9am, Pier Head. A 5k festive fun run. Details: christianaid.org.uk/run or contact Bex Turner 01925 582826 rturner@christian-aid.org

7 Wigan Santa Dash. To register visit wiganevents.co.uk

9 "Climate Change: impact on human responses" 6- 7pm, University of Chester, Department of Geography & Development Studies, Best Building, off Parkgate Road Chester, Cheshire CH1 4BJ. A talk by Andrew Jarvis, Associate Director of the University of Lancaster's Environment Centre. His work explores the climate –society interactions associated with avoiding dangerous climate change and, more recently, the use of adaptive decision making in the development of geoengineering responses to climate risks. This talk is one of a series of talks by visiting speakers arranged by the Department of Geography and Development Studies at the University of Chester. Visitors welcome. www.chesterwdf.org.uk

12 Romero Lecture Lord Rowan Williams (former Archbishop of Canterbury) will speak on "*A saint for the whole people of God: Romero and the ecumenical future*" 7pm at Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham. Dr Williams has been a Patron of the Romero Trust since its foundation in 2005. The evening will be hosted by Archbishop Bernard Longley, co-chair of ARCIC - the Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission. All are welcome.

12 Save the Children's third annual Christmas Jumper Day <http://jumpers.savethechildren.org.uk>

13 Carols 6.30pm All Saints Church, Daresbury WA4 4AE. Info: Eirlys Jessop 01925 582818 ejessop@christian-aid.org

14 Manchester Santa Dash, time tbc. Contact Bex Turner 01925 582826 rturner@christian-aid.org

18 CAFOD carol service 7.30pm at St Teresa's, Upholland. This is always an inspirational evening with a short piece of analysis, 3 school choirs, and prayer.

JANUARY

13 Chester World Development Forum Meeting 6.45- 9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. Our first bi-monthly Forum meeting of 2015, at The Unity Centre. Speaker Naomi Woodcock, who has recently been in South Africa on a joint DfID/ TearFund project, part of the International Citizen Service Programme. www.chesterwdf.org.uk

16 CAFOD Quiz for CAFOD's Connect 2 Ethiopia projects organised by Ellesmere Port LPA J&P Group 7.30pm Our Lady's Parish Centre. Fee £3 for adults £1 for children which includes interval refreshments. Teams are welcome or join a team on the night. Further quiz nights on 13 February & 13 March – details as for 16 January.

18 Peace Sunday: *Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters* Resource materials available from Pax Christi <http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/>

18 Liverpool J&P Annual Memorial Lecture at LACE. 'Together for the Common Good.' 2pm - 4pm. Speaker: Jenny Sinclair from T4CG on Catholic social thought and a shared understanding among Christians. Details 0151 522 1080 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

18 Slippers for Shelter http://www.shelter.org.uk/slippers?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1465

18 World Day of Migrants and Refugees: *Church without Frontiers*

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20140903_world-migrants-day-2015.html

18-25 Christian Unity Week: *The Well is Deep* Resources from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland www.ctbi.org.uk/682

19 "*After the honeymoon? The next decade of South-South Development Corporation*" 5-6pm, University of Chester, Chester Campus, Best Building, Chester, Cheshire CH1 4BQ. A talk by Dr Emma Mawdsley, covering themes covered in her recent book "*From recipients to donors – emerging powers and the changing development landscape*" published by Zed Books. Emma Mawdsley is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Cambridge University, and her sphere is human geography, with particular interest in the rising powers and the politics of development. Her talk is one of a series of talks by visiting speakers arranged by the Department of Geography and Development Studies at the University of Chester. Visitors welcome.

www.chesterwdf.org.uk

25 World Religion Day

27 Holocaust Memorial Day: *Keep the Memory Alive*

<http://hmd.org.uk/resources/theme-papers/hmd-2015-keep-memory-alive#sthash.kWfLGTmh.dpuf>

30 Concert in memory of Paul Goggins at St John's, Smith Square London SW1P 3HA: 7.30pm. Mozart Requiem and Beethoven Piano Concerto No 4. To raise funds for the Cardinal Hume Centre www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk Tickets from the Box Office 020 7222 1061 www.sjss.org.uk

FEBRUARY

8 Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking www.stopthetraffik.org

8 Autism Sunday, also known as the International Day of Prayer for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome www.autismsunday.co.uk

11 February World Day for the Sick <http://www.nacc.org/resources/Wds/>

15 Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Free resources to plan a worship service at www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

20 UN World Day of Social Justice <http://www.un.org/en/events/socialjusticeday/>

Many of the items featured in this and previous bulletins are taken from the daily e bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news and events. Sign up too for weekly bulletins from National J&P Network www.justice-and-peace.org - contact the Administrator 020 7901 4864, admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN