



**Justice and Peace Scotland**  
Ceartas agus Sith

# NEWSLETTER

September - November, 2024



## Your New Communique



Welcome to the first of your quarterly Justice and Peace Scotland newsletters – delivered straight to your mailbox. We hope you will find it informative and inspiring.

A snapshot of the work and activities going on across the J&P network we would encourage all supporters to become active in our work to create a more just and peaceful world. There are many opportunities to do so.

With Catholic Social Teaching our guiding light, we stage regular vigils at Dungavel (pictured above) and Faslane, challenge at-home poverty and the, sadly, many other inequities confronting us in these times. Together our faith in action can make a difference.



## Your Justice and Peace Team

Anne-Marie is our full-time Catholic Social Teaching Engagement Officer. Before joining Justice and Peace Scotland she worked for a number of years in the charity and voluntary sector, including at a community climate change project and with a Christian organisation advocating for a just peace in The Holy Land. Anne-Marie has a background in education and a master's degree in Human Rights and International Politics.

Commenting on her role, she said: "My favourite thing about working here is the opportunity to highlight the connections between the human rights and social justice issues of today and our Catholic faith, inspired by Jesus' Gospel message of love."

Andrew is our part-time Campaigns, Communications and Events Coordinator. A recent arrival, he joined in May having previously worked in print media for more than three decades and has varied experience of political campaign. He said of his new role: "This is a very different environment for me but I relish the opportunity to bring my passion and commitment to social justice into my working life. It is important to know we can have an effect with our advocacy in this domain."

## URGE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO RETHINK BUS PASS PILOT

The Scottish Government last month delivered the disappointing news of their plan to renege on their commitment to offer free bus travel for people seeking asylum in Scotland.

In 2023 leaders from across Scotland's faith traditions signed a statement calling for this policy. For people seeking asylum living on as little as £8.86 per week public transport is currently inaccessible (a day ticket in Glasgow costs £5.60). Free travel would allow people to attend important appointments, visit places of worship, stay connected with friends, and more. And have a transformational impact on their mental health and help make Scotland a more welcoming place for those seeking sanctuary.

Timing on the u-turn is exceptionally poor. Just a few weeks ago we witnessed the worst far-right violence the UK has seen in decades. People seeking asylum are already feeling afraid and isolated. This will only give them further grounds to feel marginalised and unwelcome.

So, we are asking for churches and faith groups to once again use their voices to call for this life changing policy. Together we ask the Scottish Government to recommit to a national pilot of free bus travel for people seeking asylum. We understand that budgets are not unlimited and difficult decisions are required; but this policy would cost a small fraction of the Scottish Government's budget, and in turn would deliver transformational change for some of the most marginalised people in our society.

Please consider writing to your MSP to ask them to support this policy. You can use our letter template, found on the SFAR Website as a basis or contact [rmoodie@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:rmoodie@churchofscotland.org.uk) for further advice and support.

**Rowan Moodie, SFAR**



# MAKING FAMILIES FEEL AT HOME

The Inverness Justice and Peace group have for four years now been working on a project with the Home Office called Community Sponsorship, to resettle a refugee family into the UK. The group was required to raise money and find a suitable home. We had to work with our local council to ensure they were also in support of the family moving into the area. We have just celebrated our one year anniversary of the family's arrival. We have helped them with English lessons, navigating the health care system, finding work and accessing local groups and services in our area.

Anyone who has moved to a new home will know how many challenges come with setting up in a new house. In addition the family has had to adapt to a completely different life than how they lived in South Sudan - a colder climate, a different language and a completely new culture.

Overall, it has been a very successful experience for all of us. It has been a real joy seeing the progress the family has made adapting to this new life. They feel grateful for all the support we have given them, and we feel grateful for the chance to get to know such a resilient family that takes nothing for granted.

A real highlight for me was attending the birthdays and hearing prayers sung in their native language, and recognising my name among the litany of things they are grateful for.

**Jill Kent, chair J&P Scotland and Inverness Commission**

## REFLECTION

“The most beautiful and important thing in our lives is always to love, and to welcome with open arms the love we receive from the people who love us.”

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**Pope Francis in Papa New Guinea last week.**



## Two-child Benefit Cap

It is estimated that 330,000 children could be lifted out of poverty by the UK government simply lifting the two-child benefit cap - one of the biggest drivers of poverty for families. As £54 billion is spent on arms and defence every year, it has been calculated this would cost under £2 billion. To end this cruel sanction sign the SPUC petition [here](#).

# Right To Recovery Bill



Justice and Peace Scotland recently offered support and prayers with FAVOR (Faces And Voices Of Recovery) UK and those impacted by the loss of loved ones to addiction at a memorial vigil and protest at George Square in Glasgow. On the day when figures released showed yearly drug deaths had risen 12% to 1,172, hearing heartbreaking testimonials of lost loved ones emphasised the desperate need for a policy change. Scotland tragically more afflicted by these issues other country in Europe.

That is why we are advocating for the Right to Recovery bill, drafted by FAVOR UK CEO Annemarie Ward. The Bill goes before the Scottish Parliament in the autumn. It would strengthen rights to obtain rehabilitation services, and place rehabilitation on the same standing as harm reduction measures, such as methadone prescription. To get involved in the letter writing campaign to MSPs, and find out more visit the FAVOR UK website at: [www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org). To read Anne-Marie Ward's blog written for Justice and Peace Scotland, [click here](#).

## Forthcoming Events



# SEASON OF CREATION

**Thursday, 19th September, Zoom Event, 7pm to 8.30pm - To Hope And Act With Creation...rooted in *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum***

A session to enable us to discern how the insights of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* and his 2023 apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum* can lead us to hope and act with creation. Companion for the session is Fr Josh Kureethadam who was the Coordinator of the Sector of "Ecology" at the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development from 2017-2023, where he continues to serve as a consultant.

Register for the event at <https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingId=98523456789>

**Friday, 4th October, Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Mannofield Aberdeen, 7pm - The Roman Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen Prayers for Creation, led by Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB**



A family looks at an apartment block destroyed by a missile strike. Gaza City, 21 February 2024. Credit: Christian Aid / Omar Al-Qattaa

### Christian Aid: Just Peace in the Middle East Events

Prayers for Peace in the Middle East returns on 24 September 7-8pm; come and pray and hear Nadia Giol and her colleague Anat Asia talk about Heart to Heart, an empathic listening space they have created for Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals. Also, there is a [Just Peace Webinar and Workshop](#) on 16th and 17th September, starting at 7:30pm, where you can bring your questions and be equipped to talk about peace in your churches and with politicians.

More info and resources available [here](#) or email Lucy Le Roux at [Lleroux@christian-aid.org](mailto:Lleroux@christian-aid.org)

### Other Events

**Saturday, 21st September, steps at top of Buchanan Street, Glasgow - Reclaim Our Clyde Campaign Gathering: 'Nair Mair Money for Nukes, Gie's Peace'**

In support of the ICAN Global Week of Action on Nuclear Spending and the United Nations International Day of Peace

**Saturday, 12th October, Renfield St Stephens, Glasgow, 10.15am to 3.45pm - Challenge Poverty Week: Advocating for Minimum Income Guarantee: a role for Christians in challenging poverty?**

An opportunity for people with a Christian faith to get into the same room and get on the same page. How do we envisage Minimum Income Guarantee as a tool to combat poverty? How do we do this together with faith and compassion to ensure security for our communities? It's a space to get into dialogue in Challenge Poverty Week, to network with like-minded people engaged in anti-poverty work and consider how we use our collective voice.

[To book a place click Eventbrite link here](#)

**Wednesday, 23rd October, St Leo's, Drumbreck, Glasgow, 7pm - AGM, Glasgow J&P Commission**



## THE PATH TO NUCLEAR-WEAPON FREE PLANET MUST BE ONE THAT WORLD LEADERS STOP IGNORING



A challenge was laid down to leaders of the nine countries that possess weapons of mass destruction by Archbishop William Nolan, President of Justice and Peace Scotland and Archbishop of Glasgow, at last month's Christian peace vigil at Faslane Naval Base.

The event, organised by Justice and Peace Scotland - and at which faith leaders Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev Dr Shaw Paterson and Bishop Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin Diocese, from the Scottish Episcopal Church also offer powerful reflections - saw Archbishop Nolan denounce the misguided perception that building nuclear arsenals provides those doing so with a "comfort blanket".

He instead called on them to demonstrate a genuine commitment to ridding the world of weapons both immoral and a colossal waste of resources.

Watch the service [here](#)

Read Andrew's Faslane blog [here](#)

