

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly within the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

PROSPECTS FOR LASTING PEACE UNDER THE TRUMP PLAN: 'THE IMPERIAL PEACE BOARD'

By Brian Brivati, Executive Director, Britain Palestine Project, writing in a personal capacity with his reflections on the Trump Plan

1 October 2025: Trump's plan for Gaza is simple to describe. Twenty points.* A ceasefire. Hostages exchanged for prisoners. Israeli forces pull back in stages. Hamas lays down its arms and leaves power. An international "Board of Peace" decides the big questions. Foreign soldiers guard the borders, aid trucks roll in, money is poured into rebuilding the ruins.

The political legitimacy of these steps and who owes and benefits from what is rebuilt to be decided later. As Trump said in his press conference with Bibi, enough now: the killing should stop. The plan is a framework for trying to make that happen. Much will now develop in the negotiations and the internal politics of Israel and Hamas.

We have come to the point in the political discourse of our age when this can sound like common sense. People stop dying. (Or rather they stop being killed by bombs.) Families get their loved ones back: Israel hostages both living and dead, some Palestinians in administrative detention since 7 Oct 2023. (Only a fraction of the 15, 000 held and tortured.) The hungry are fed. (But why were they starved?). The famine stops: trucks lined up with three months of food are let in. (As they had been in January 2025.) The rubble is cleared. (And how many dead are buried there?) Israel can say it has broken Hamas, the Arab capitals can say the bloodshed is over, Washington can say it still has power to make peace, Trump might win a Donald fixed it for you prize.

Common sense can be deceptive. This plan, for all its neatness, does not answer the only question that matters in the long run: will Palestinians govern themselves, or will they be governed by others in perpetuity? It is the only question that matters for Palestinians and for Israelis, unless Palestinians have agency and their own viable state, Israel will never have security. The text is plain on this point: this is not yet a Palestinian state.

Self-determination, sovereignty: words that are malleable. The reality is Israeli control

The Imperial Peace Board that manages Gaza is chosen, not elected, and is chaired by Trump. Its laws and budgets must be approved by outsiders. The Palestinian Authority is kept at arm's length until it reforms – the list of reforms being demanded is long and there is no timetable for when that might be achieved or precise outline of how it might be achieved. Elections are promised in theory, but no dates are given. In the meantime, Gaza is treated as an isolated project—administered by foreigners, supervised by donors, patrolled by soldiers from abroad, developed by real estate speculators.

In this looking glass world, self-determination and sovereignty, once words that gave people dignity and freedom, are here twisted into things that are vague and malleable. In Trump's earlier plan of 2020, sovereignty was openly described as "an amorphous concept," and defined down until it meant little more than self-administration under Israeli control of airspace, borders and sea. That same spirit haunts this new plan. The reality is management, not independence. Symbols of statehood without substance.

Of course, there are arguments for such an arrangement. Israel wants security. Foreign governments want order. Donors want guarantees that their money will not vanish into corruption or buy rockets or better still will profit their own national companies. After years of blood and gold and misery, who would not welcome a breathing space? If this plan is implemented, thousands of lives may be spared in the coming months. That fact alone makes it hard to dismiss. The Israelis killed over 100 people in Gaza today, they killed about the same yesterday and they will do so tomorrow.

A breath spacing maybe simply be a pause before a new quagmire. Trump was clear that this would be a matter for Israel if Hamas said no to this plan.

And the moral trade-off is stark. What value is peace if it is built on the denial of political rights? What kind of justice is it that restores buildings that a few Palestinians may be allowed to work in but not own. What sort of order is it when laws are written in Washington and London, not Ramallah or Gaza City? What does this peace do for the structural violence of military occupation and creeping annexation of the West Bank?

The United Nations' New York Declaration at least confronted most, if not, all of this. It set a clear deadline—15 months—for elections, reunification of Gaza and the West Bank, and the birth of a Palestinian state. That was ambitious, maybe too ambitious, but it recognised that without sovereignty, all else is temporary. The Trump plan avoids that step. It offers calm now, but defers freedom to some undefined later day.

Tony Blair's blueprint for a transitional authority in Gaza has supplied the skeleton for one way in which this arrangement can be put into practice. **See the full text of the proposed Institutional Structure for Gaza International Transitional Authority (GITA) here:** <https://britainpalestineproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/GITA.pdf>

Blairite pragmatism, neat on paper: below the international board at the top, Palestinian technocrats running services, foreign troops on the ground, private capital funding the rebuild. A management system more suited to a colony than a people seeking self-rule. It avoided the very questions that bridge politics to people's lives: economic agency, accountability, the right to decide.

Not a word on the genocide or war crimes, not on 7 October, not on the military deployment of bombardment and famine

And yes justice? Barely a word in any of these documents on transitional or restorative justice, let alone crimes of genocide or war crimes. This has not just been a war. This latest cycle of violence started with the largest massacre of Jewish people since the holocaust by Hamas on 7 Oct 2023. This was followed by a war of disproportionate destruction against the apparatus of Hamas – social, political and military – beyond self-defence and fully embracing collective punishment. It then extended month on month into a full-scale genocidal war driven by bombardment and famine against the people of Gaza. As a people, because they were a people. The destruction in whole or in part. The denial of the necessities for life. 65,000 bodies found. 20,000 children, 10,000s more under the rubble and not, perhaps, never recovered.

To stop the war is good. To rebuild homes, schools, infrastructure and hospitals is necessary. But to imagine that this alone is peace is a dangerous illusion. For Palestinians, the fear is that once again they will be treated as subjects, not citizens. They will live under administrators, not leaders of their own choosing. Their right to return, to vote, to seek justice for their dead, will be pushed aside in the name of order.

The moral ambiguity is inescapable. Do you accept an imposed calm that saves lives but freezes your political future? Or do you reject it, knowing that rejection may bring more bombs, more hunger, more mass graves under rubble?

Israelis, too, face a choice.

Do they want Gaza pacified at any cost, even if it means an indefinite trusteeship that leaves their neighbours permanently resentful? Or do they understand that real security comes not from domination but from a neighbour who is free and recognised?

The international community, Britain especially because of its colonial past and contemporary responsibility, faces its own question. Will it back a plan that offers short-term relief but strips sovereignty of meaning? Or will it use its weight to insist that any interim deal leads to elections, justice and a state that Palestinians can call their own – that follows the framework and principles outlined in the New York Declaration rather than the 20-point Trump plan.

The Palestinians will be managers of their poverty, not masters of their fate

The real courage is not in building another system of control, however efficient. It is in trusting Palestinians to govern themselves, and in accepting the risks that come with their freedom. Without that, Gaza will be rebuilt, but its people will remain trapped—managers of their poverty, but not masters of their fate.

And freedom is not only a question of votes or parliaments. It is also the ability to build and own an economy: economic agency is power. Under the Trump plan and its earlier iteration in 2020 as from Peace to Prosperity, Gaza becomes a market for foreign contracts and aid convoys, rather than a place where Palestinians shape their own livelihoods. Economic agency is part of sovereignty.

If the world is serious about peace, it must be serious about sovereignty: political, legal, and economic. That means not just ending the war but enabling Palestinians to own the peace. It means foreign powers stepping back once stability is restored and letting a new Palestinian leadership rise based on a popular mandate. For the true measure of courage is not in drafting plans in foreign capitals but in allowing a people long denied it to take control of their destiny.

Only then will Gaza's people cease to be managers of their poverty and become, at last, masters of their fate. And only then will Israel have security.

*It had been 21 points last week but the clause where Israel pledged not to attack Qatar was deleted after Trump-Bibi meeting.

<https://britainpalestineproject.org/trumpplan/>

VIEWPOINT: NO DECISION ABOUT ME WITHOUT ME: CHEAP PEACE IN GAZA

Sr Katrina Alton 2 October 2025

As Donald Trump stood beside Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and announced a 20-point plan to "end" the war in Gaza, there were no Palestinians in the room. If Hamas fail to agree to the plan then the genocide continues.

This is not peace. It is "colonialism" rebranded. It echoes what Dietrich Bonhoeffer once called "cheap grace", a grace that demands nothing, changes nothing, costs nothing. Today, we face its cousin: cheap peace.

Cheap peace is a ceasefire without justice, reconstruction without repentance, and diplomacy without dignity. It offers superficial calm while silencing the cries beneath. It's peace on the terms of the powerful. A peace that leaves occupation intact and the oppressed voiceless.

The Gospel calls us not to manage violence politely, but to root it out with truth and mercy. Jesus did not come with empire-endorsed settlements; he stood with the crucified. Today, that means standing with the people of Gaza, not imposing a future upon them, but insisting they are the authors of their own.

Rev Dr Munther Isaac reminds us: "If you fail to call this a genocide, it is on you... a darkness you willingly embrace." His challenge to the Church, to the world, is clear: no neutrality in the face of structural sin.

"No decision about me without me" is not just a political slogan, it is a moral imperative, and it is at the very heart of Christian nonviolence. Real peace – costly peace – demands justice, repentance, and the full dignity of all.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53386>

PAX CHRISTI ENGLAND WALES join others in welcoming the decision of the UK Government to recognise the State of Palestine.

25 September 2025: Ann Farr, our former Chair and a member of Pax Christ International's Working Group for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel said: "The UK Government's recognition is a long-awaited and welcome symbolic act and a first step towards justice for Palestinians and Israelis. However, the daily lives of the people continue to be unbearable. We witness cruelty, violence, death and destruction in both Gaza and the West Bank; the Israeli hostages have been abandoned by their own government and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are held, without charge or trial, in Israeli prisons.

The recognition has resulted in retribution by the Israeli Government that includes increased violence and the closing of the Allenby Crossing, the only way out of the West Bank for Palestinians. This imprisons them even further and denies return by those out of the country. Yet another violation of international law.

The UK Government's recognition must now be followed by immediate, concrete action and we call again for:

- full access for humanitarian aid to all parts of Gaza, distributed humanely and safely;
- an end to the genocide in Gaza and the ethnic cleansing of the West Bank together with the withdrawal of all Israeli military;
- an end to all UK military cooperation with Israel;
- freedom of movement for Palestinians;
- a ban on trade with illegal settlements and all complicity in settlements;
- the publication of the UK response and its compliance with the ICJ opinion of July 19th 2024 – 'Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem'

We will continue to respond to the call of our Palestinian friends and partners to pray, take action and work in solidarity with all peacemakers who hope for peace and justice for everyone in Palestine and Israel."

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiEW>

LEAD BISHOP FOR THE HOLY LAND WELCOMES UK'S FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE

25 September 2025: Bishop Jim Curry, Lead Bishop for the Holy Land for the Bishops' Conference, has described the UK government's recognition of the State of Palestine as a "right and not a reward". Bishop Curry said: "As the Lead Bishop for the Holy Land, I welcome the UK government's decision to recognise the State of Palestine. This decision, which is a right and not a reward, affirms that the right to self-determination is fundamental to human dignity. It is right that the government has acted on this matter as originally intended by the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

"During the visit of the Holy Land Coordination group earlier this year, I met with Palestinian Christian communities in the West Bank – in Bethlehem, Aboud and Taybeh – and listened to their stories about the realities on the ground and the hardships they face every day. Their pain reinforced my conviction that the path to justice and peace can only be achieved when equal rights for all peoples – Jews, Christians and Muslims – are respected. I therefore echo the Holy See's conviction that the Two-State Solution remains the 'only viable path for Israel and Palestine', grounded in internationally recognised borders."

Bishop Curry added: "Recognition of a Palestinian state clearly does not bring an end to the suffering or loss. The war in Gaza continues unabated, a ceasefire is still urgently needed, the release of all hostages must be secured, and aid must reach the millions who require it. We pray that the international community continue to work unstintingly to bring the war and its suffering to an end."

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-welcomes-uk-recognition-of-state-of-palestine/>

CHRISTIAN AID STATEMENT ON GAZA

30 September 2025: Responding to the Gaza peace plan proposed by the White House, Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Policy & Advocacy, William Bell, said: "The conflict in Gaza has taken a devastating toll on the lives of people in Gaza, witnessed by our partners who have seen death and destruction on a scale of unimaginable proportions.

Christian Aid has consistently called on the international community to do everything in its power to force Israel to allow aid into Gaza, halt its brutal military campaign and implement a ceasefire that would both end the suffering and see the hostages released. The plan proposed by the White House answers some of those calls, in addition to the importance of interfaith dialogue. There is also a firm commitment to ensure no one is forced to leave Gaza and those who wish to do so will have the freedom to return.

However, a sustainable peace that secures justice, dignity and prosperity for all is not possible until the occupation of all Palestinian territory - including the West Bank and East Jerusalem - is ended, full accountability be implemented and Palestinians and Israelis are treated as equals. The Palestinian people must therefore be active participants in peace, not bystanders. That will require a clearer path to the international recognition of a state of Palestine."

<https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/gaza-peace-plan-must-treat-palestinians-and-israelis-as-equals-christian-aid-says/>

'GAZA SINGS' PROJECT WINS INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL MUSIC RIGHTS AWARD

Florence Lockheart 1 October 2025

The International Music Council (IMC) has awarded this year's IMC Music Rights Award to the 'Gaza Sings: Voices of Steadfastness and Hope' project from Palestine's Edward Said National Conservatory of Music. The Award will be presented during the opening of Worldwide Music Expo WOMEX, in Tampere, Finland on 22 October.

The project offers community-based music education, participatory performances and creative workshops to help displaced Gazans, particularly young people, find 'dignity, resilience, and healing' amid what the United Nations commission of inquiry is describing as a genocide. Since its launch in 2023, the project has reached nearly 40,000 participants across displacement shelters, public parks, tents, schools and community centres in Gaza, the West Bank and Cairo, where the project supports displaced Gazans.

Andre Le Roux, founding manager and director at IKS Cultural Consulting and chair of the advisory panel for the Music Rights Award, said: "I am deeply proud to have chaired this prestigious award at such a critical moment in history – when freedom of expression, human rights, and the Five Music Rights espoused by the IMC are increasingly under threat. In times like these, it is the arts that can help us erase the artificial boundaries that separate us. Music, culture, and creativity have the unique power to build harmony and counterpoint – not just in sound, but in society. Now is the perfect time to harness that power, and to let exemplary projects lead the way toward a more just, connected, and compassionate world."

The award is given in recognition of the 'Gaza Sings: Voices of Steadfastness and Hope' project's embodiment of the IMC's Five Music Rights. As the latest award-winner, the project joins previous winners including Nairobi's Santuri Electronic Music Academy, Dublin's Scoil Úna Naofa Violin and Orchestra Project, Tripoli's Fayha Choir social projects, Pakistan Special Education Centres' 'Teaching Music in Pakistan' project, Mali's Festival sur le Niger in Mali and the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth's 'Give Music a Future' project.

Manal Awwad, director of the Gaza branch of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, said: "The news that Gaza Sings had won the 2025 IMC Music Rights Award reached me at the very moment when Israeli warplanes were launching another stage in erasing the beautiful city of Gaza, demolishing its high towers, just as they had already done in Rafah, Khan Younis, Jabalia, Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia, Shuja'iya, and Zeitoun. At that moment, the award was not merely international recognition of our work; it was a stance against genocide and a refusal to accept erasure."

Founded by UNESCO in 1948, the IMC is the world's largest network of music organisations and institutions, counting among its 120 members the European Festivals Association, European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO), European Broadcasting Union and European Association of Conservatories as well as Live Music Now Scotland and the National Music Council of the USA.

<https://www.classical-music.uk/news/article/gaza-sings-project-wins-international-music-council-music-rights-award>

CARDINAL 'SHOCKED TO THE CORE' BY SYNAGOGUE ATTACK IN MANCHESTER

2 October 2025: Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has released a statement expressing his shock and assuring the Jewish community of his prayers after the terror attack on the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Manchester earlier today (2 October).

"The killing of two Jewish worshippers, the injuries inflicted on others, and the attempt to drive a car into a crowd in Manchester today are expressions of utter hatred that must not be tolerated in this land. That such an attack is directed at the Jewish community, and on Yom Kippur, this most solemn of days, shocks me to the core. Jewish and Christian people are closely bound together in our common faith in God. Indeed, in the Catholic tradition, Jewish people are held to be the 'elder brothers' in faith of our Christian family. My prayers, and those of the Catholic community, are heartfelt and profound: for those who have died, the bereaved, the injured, and those who will feel less safe tonight. It is a duty of us all to work together to ensure a more cohesive and respectful society, one in which such violence and inhumanity have no place."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/cardinal-shocked-to-the-core-by-synagogue-attack-in-manchester/>

BISHOP ARNOLD'S STATEMENT ON THE MANCHESTER SYNAGOGUE ATTACK

2 October 2025: Bishop John Arnold, Bishop of Salford, has shared a statement following the devastating stabbing attack at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue earlier today:

"The local Catholic community stand united in our prayers for the Jewish community following the tragic attack on a synagogue in Manchester, especially on this sacred day of Yom Kippur. We condemn such acts and pray for those who have died, the injured, emergency responders, and all affected. Let us work together in hope to strengthen our community solidarity. We must remain united in our common beliefs against those who sow hatred and division. We also pray for peace and tolerance around the UK and the world."

Right Reverend John Arnold, Bishop of Salford
<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-arnolds-statement-on-the-manchester-synagogue-attack/>

PRESIDENTS OF CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND CONDEMN MANCHESTER SYNAGOGUE ATTACK AND ANTISEMITISM

3 October 2025: In a statement, the Presidents offer prayers for the Jewish community and commit to working for positive relationships between faiths and communities:

"We are horrified at the terror attack at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Manchester on Yom Kippur, a Holy Day for the Jewish community. We stand with the Jewish community at this time and categorically reject all forms of antisemitism. Those who hold this ideology must be challenged and must never be allowed to win."

We pray for the Jewish community, who will be deeply traumatised by this event. We pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones. We thank the emergency services for their swift response, and we recognise with respect how, once again, they have put themselves in harm's way to protect the community. We pray that all will come together in condemning this senseless attack. An attack against one faith community is an attack against us all. We commit ourselves to work for positive relationships between faiths and communities in our nation, now and always."

Presidents of Churches Together in England (CTE)

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster
Bishop Tedroy Powell CTE Pentecostal & Charismatic President, National Bishop of the Church of God of Prophecy UK
Rev Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, Moderator of the Free Churches Group
Bishop Paulina Hławiczka-Trotman, CTE President for the Fourth Presidency Group, Head of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain
His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas, CTE President for the Orthodox Churches
Archbishop of the Oecumenical Patriarchate (Diocese of Thyateira and Great Britain)
The Archbishop of Canterbury
<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/presidents-of-churches-together-in-england-condemn-synagogue-attack-and-antisemitism/>

NJPN STATEMENT

"NJPN is shocked and saddened by the horrific attack in Manchester on the Jewish Holy Day of Yom Kippur. Violence, from wherever it comes, is never the answer, it is neither inevitable nor acceptable. There is another way – the way of deep listening and respectful dialogue. The deliberate targeting of others can never be right. We must continue to strive for a just and equitable world where the common humanity of all people is valued."

MUSLIM AND JEWISH LEADERS CONDEMN THE ATTACK

Reports taken from *The Yorkshire Post* 3 October 2025

"I am horrified by the violent attack outside Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Manchester on Yom Kippur. My thoughts are with the victims, their families and British Jewish community, who are understandably shaken and hurt.

This act of violence is utterly abhorrent and has no place in our society. Places of worship must always be sanctuaries of peace and safety – not scenes of fear and hatred. We cannot ignore the growing tide of religious hatred in our country. Whether it is Islamophobia, antisemitism or any form of bigotry, we must confront it together – with unity and courage, not silence. As a British Muslim leader let me be clear – antisemitism in all its forms is totally unacceptable.

The bloodshed and violence in the Middle East – which is excruciatingly painful to witness for all of us – must not be allowed to poison our streets in Britain. We must never let pain abroad be used to justify hatred and violence against anyone at home. British Jews, British Muslims, and all communities must be able to live together without violence, intimidation and the fear of being targeted because of their faith.

Together, we must reject hatred, resist division, and reaffirm our shared commitment to peace, human dignity, and coexistence. We urge all communities to remain vigilant and supportive, in particular around places of worship. There is a risk of reprisals; we ask all people to remain alert and report any suspicious activity to the police. This is a moment for all communities to come together, and build a future rooted in respect, understanding and shared values."

Imam Qari Asim, Leeds-based Co-chair of British Muslim Network

The British Muslim Trust described the attack as "despicable" and "cowardly" and said it stands with the Jewish community.

Rabbi Jonathan Romain, emeritus rabbi of Maidenhead Synagogue, said tensions over the war in Gaza had "spilled over to the UK, despite efforts to stop that happening. He said: "For the last two years, we were desperately trying to make sure that whatever was going on in the Middle East was not imported here."

<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/yorkshire-post/20251003/281659671227166>

IF I MUST VANISH

3 October 2025 **Heather Kiernan writes:** The continuous bombardment of Gaza City has razed the territory's largest urban centre, killing dozens of people daily, destroying numerous residential buildings and schools, and forcing tens of thousands of Palestinians to flee to an unknown fate to the south, often targeted on the way.

On Wednesday when my dear Rida was visiting her mother-in-law Israeli warplanes struck inside the walls of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah. She was only a few meters away. The attack caused severe injuries and extensive damage and endangered the lives of dozens of patients as well as more than 70 journalists. A few months ago, Rida asked me to plant an olive tree in her memory in my orchard if anything happened to her...

IF I MUST VANISH

~Haneen Abo Ghrara

If I must vanish—
let it not be in silence,
not beneath the rubble,
not behind numbers on a screen
that flicker and fade.

Let me be a name
a voice
a breath caught in a child's prayer
a lullaby of resistance
hummed over empty plates
beneath shattered skies.

If I must vanish,
let my story walk barefoot
through streets that remember
the scent of thyme
and the sound of laughter
before sirens broke the dawn.

Let my hands, worn by holding,
speak of how I cradled dreams
even as the earth forgot to bloom—
how I fed my child with hope
when the world gave us none.



If I must vanish,
let it be a spark
in the mind of a stranger
who refuses to forget
who turns my memory
into a kite
into a poem
into a cry that echoes
through every border
built to erase me.

Let them say—
She did not vanish.
She became
a tale
a truth
a torch.



Sabeel-Kairos

Taking Action for Palestine



UK ADVOCACY TOUR: OCTOBER 2025

WITH REVD ASHRAF TANNOUS & SAHAR FRANCIS

Manchester: Wednesday 15 October Luther King House 7pm-8.30 PM (Ashraf & Sahar) Online and in-person RSVP/ZOOM LINK: commitmentforlife@urc.org.uk

Southport: Saturday 18 October 10am-11.30am St Peter and St Paul with Wesley Church PR6 6QF coffee morning, listen to Ashraf speak and ask him any questions!

Sabeel-Kairos
Taking Action for Palestine

Come and discover what life is like for Christians in Palestine
Hear first-hand from a Palestinian Pastor

SF OP

In person talk with Q & A
Tea, Coffee & Cake
Donations Welcome

WHEN: Saturday 18th October 10am-11.30am
SPEAKER: Revd Ashraf Tannous, Bethlehem & Beit Sahour, Palestine
WHERE: St Philip and St Paul with Wesley Church, Southport, PR6 6QF

Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for Global Conflict and Social Justice

LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH
OUR LADY & ST NICHOLAS

Sabeel-Kairos
Taking Action for Palestine

A prayer vigil & conversation with Revd Ashraf Tannous, Lutheran Pastor Bethlehem & Beit Sahour, Palestine

WHEN: Saturday 18th October, 6pm
WHERE: Liverpool Parish Church, Old Churchyard, L2 8TZ

Commitment Life

Sabeel-Kairos
Taking Action for Palestine

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH WITH SABEEL-KAIROS UK

The 'Palestine in Crisis' Event

LUTHER KING HOUSE, MANCHESTER
15TH OCT 2025
7PM-8.30 PM

You are warmly invited to meet **Revd Ashraf Tannous**, Pastor of the Lutheran Churches in Bethlehem and Beit Sahour, and the wonderful **Sahar Francis**, the renowned human rights lawyer who for decades has worked to support Palestinian human rights bodies and NGO's.

At this critical time in the history of Palestine, people in the UK must grasp the enormity of the challenges faced by Palestinian faith communities. We are privileged to hear from Ashraf and Sahar.

ONLINE & IN-PERSON **RSVP/ZOOM LINK:** commitmentforlife@urc.org.uk

Sahar Francis is a human rights lawyer with 27 years of experience as a Palestinian Human Rights Defender. This has included counselling and representing Palestinian prisoners and advising organisations on legal issues. Sahar earned her law degree from the University of Haifa in the 1990s and has sought tirelessly to expose Israel's human rights abuses in the occupation ever since. She is a renowned expert on human rights, having addressed both the European Parliament and recently the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Sahar has been active for many years in civil society networks such as PNGO (Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations) and PHROC (Palestinian human rights organizations council) and is currently an active member of the Palestinian Christian Kairos Palestine network.

Liverpool: Saturday 18 October Parish Church Old Churchyard L2 8TZ 6pm prayer vigil and conversation with Ashraf

Reverend Ashraf Tannous was born in Jerusalem and raised in Ramallah. He did his undergraduate studies at the Near Eastern School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon, then went into seminary at the Bossey Seminary in Geneva, Switzerland. He was ordained into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in 2012 and was first called as an associate pastor in Jerusalem. Since then, Reverend Ashraf has served congregations in Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and since June 2025 he has been installed at Christmas Lutheran church in Bethlehem. For nine years, Reverend Ashraf led the Youth work in ELCJHL until 2021. He now serves as the Chief Justice in the Ecclesiastic Court. Reverend Ashraf lives with his wife and three boys in Jerusalem. In his (spare!) time he is working toward a Doctorate of Ministry from the United Lutheran Seminary of Philadelphia, PA, which he hopes to complete in 2026.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL AWARDED ‘SANCTUARY’ STATUS AT LAUNCH EVENT FOR NEW REFUGEE HUB

The University of Liverpool has been awarded ‘University of Sanctuary’ status by City of Sanctuary UK¹, reflecting its efforts to make the institution a place of safety, solidarity and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary. It has also officially launched its new Refugee Hub. The Hub is a collaborative network that connects people with lived experience, the University’s staff and student community, and local organisations. It creates opportunities to share resources, contribute voices to the University’s work, and embody the principles of the Sanctuary award. Together, these milestones confirm the University’s commitment to collaboration with refugee communities, widening access to higher education and amplifying the voices of people with lived experience of displacement. The Hub has been developed internally by researchers from the Institute of Population Health, with support from the University’s Widening Participation Team, and benefited from engagement across the University’s staff and student community. Significantly, the hub is co-led by Asylum Link Merseyside², with the involvement of other local organisations including Action Asylum³, Merseyside Refugee Support Network⁴ and Bridge2⁵, who have played a vital role.

Professor Richard Black, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor said: “The University of Liverpool is a truly inclusive institution, and we take pride in the life-transforming opportunities we provide for all our students, regardless of their background or circumstances. I am immensely proud that we have been awarded University of Sanctuary status. This recognition reflects our ongoing commitment to creating a safe, stimulating and welcoming community in particular for students whose studies have been interrupted by war and persecution. Students who have benefitted from our Sanctuary scholarships speak powerfully about their transformative impact, and it is crucial that we continue to expand these opportunities for those facing such challenging circumstances. I am immensely grateful to those who have contributed their energy, enthusiasm and external funding to help make this possible”

Omar*, a 20-year-old Computer Science student at the University of Liverpool underlined the life-changing impact of Sanctuary Scholarships in practice: “Fleeing the war in Syria and arriving in the UK left me with some harsh realities; the most painful being my lack of access to student finance. It felt as though my dreams of higher education were crumbling. Receiving the University of Liverpool’s Asylum Seeker Scholarship was a pivotal turning point in my life, transforming fear and uncertainty into opportunity and hope. The support extended far beyond financial help, as it included understanding and welcoming staff, and an encouraging environment that made me feel truly valued. This support has not only funded my studies but has allowed me to participate fully in university life.”

A spokesperson from City of Sanctuary UK said: “City of Sanctuary UK is proud to recognise the University of Liverpool as a University of Sanctuary. This award highlights the university’s strong commitment to creating a culture of welcome and opportunity, ensuring that people seeking sanctuary are supported to learn, thrive, and contribute as valued members of the university community.” To secure this award, the University pledged to uphold the City of Sanctuary charter values and principles and signed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Pledge to expand refugee access to higher education. The University now provides up to four Sanctuary Scholarships each year for undergraduate students seeking asylum in the UK, and two to three Humanitarian Scholarships for master’s students with refugee status outside the UK. One of these scholarships is dedicated to law, funded by the School of Law and Social Justice.

Since 2009, the University has been a member of the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara), offering sanctuary to six fellows, some of whom have gone on to join the University as permanent staff. The University also maintains a twinning arrangement with Sumy State University in Ukraine, regularly hosting staff for conferences and workshops. In addition, it has provided placements for three British Academy Researchers at Risk Fellows from Ukraine, enabling them to continue their academic work in a peaceful environment. Since the start of the summer 2025, the University has been working closely with Universities UK and the UK Government to support scholarship holders from Gaza so that they can take up university places. Lal Bakht Sharifi, Asylum Link volunteer and Hub co-developer, summed up the significance of the new network: “I believe discussions about asylum seekers and refugees in places such as the Refugee Hub can raise awareness about the challenges they face and debunk some of the myths surrounding them. This can be helpful in the way people may treat or think about them. Hopefully some of its outcomes can solve some refugee problems.” The Refugee Hub has been supported by the Participatory Research Fund⁶ (Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Public Engagement Team) and will serve as a cornerstone of the University’s work as a University of Sanctuary, ensuring that collaboration, inclusion, and the perspectives of people with lived experience continue to guide its future direction.

*Omar’s name has been changed to protect their identity. This award is down to the huge amount of work done to make the institution a place of safety, solidarity and empowerment for everyone.

<https://news.liverpool.ac.uk/2025/09/29/university-awarded-sanctuary-status-at-launch-event-for-new-refugee-hub/>

¹ <https://cityofsanctuary.org/> ² <https://www.asylumlink.org.uk/> ³ <https://actionasylum.uk/> ⁴ <https://mrsliverpool.org.uk/>

⁵ <https://bridge2.co.uk/> ⁶ <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/health-and-life-sciences/engage-with-us/public-engagement/opportunities-and-support/funding/participatory-research-funding/>

CHARLES JAMES KIRK: PATRIOT, PILGRIM OR PARIAH?

Ian Linden 19 September 2025

I was living in New York in Spring 1968 and recall the sense of threat that April on hearing the sound of police sirens going up to Harlem after Martin Luther King was shot, and then news of Robert Kennedy's killing just two months later. Assassinations lurk in America's DNA like a deadly mutant gene. It is hard to predict, or describe, their impact on a society.

Whatever anyone thinks of Charlie Kirk, patriot, pilgrim or pariah, he leaves a grieving wife, a mother and father and a fatherless young son and daughter. Along with thousands of other families in the USA, bereaved because of the easy accessibility of guns, they deserve sympathy for their loss. Charlie Kirk's was a short but, what might be called, a 'consequential' life.

The tenets, themes and tropes of right-wing extremism and Christian nationalism range through the arguable to the offensive to the dangerous and morally abhorrent. During his last five years, Charlie Kirk deployed elements of the full range with great panache and significant effect, promoting lethal conspiracy theories, including an Islamic-Leftist threat to the West, modifying elements of his rhetoric keeping in step with Trump's xenophobia and racism. Kirk added to the smog that swirls through the politics of the USA today.

The key word in his obituaries is "dialogue". But he didn't always out-argue or out-reason his opponents. Edited recordings of his debates which he broadcast widely omitted exchanges or moments in which he lost. Kirk was no Yankee Socrates. He just had a masterful grasp of political communication.

Unlike President Trump's ponderous ramblings and coarse abuse, Kirk was a smart, fast-talker who could and did direct Biblical references like a howitzer at his opponents. He built up his audience on social media such as Tik Tok into the tens of millions, worked through a variety of organisations, starring in campus debates, podcasts, talk radio, television shows, and rallies. His performances and preaching were exciting and attractive to youth, compelling for some, particularly young men, and particularly young men like himself who were without a college education. Into the bargain, he dovetailed Trump's version of American political discourse with evangelical Christianity and, for many, normalized it.

In his teens Kirk became a secular activist forming Turning Point USA (TPUSA) in 2012, promoting the Republican Right in the educational sector with seed money from the Christian philanthropist, canny investor and Republican donor, Foster Friess. By 2016 TPUSA was compiling and publishing a Professor List of college teachers allegedly spreading leftist propaganda in the classroom, hoping either to get them removed or forced to repent and preach the far right Republican Gospel. To feature on the list being black helped. Kirk did not seem to find such witch-hunts incompatible with presenting free speech as his central political tenet.

By the end of the decade, Kirk had moved to more perilous ground. In 2020 he promised 80 bus-loads of students for the 6 January rally outside Congress, though it is not clear how many turned up. He was cleared of any complicity in the subsequent mayhem and deaths during the assault on the Capitol by the subsequent inquiry.

Kirk's eclectic religious beliefs are difficult to categorise but put him amongst a significant number of US conservative, mainly white, evangelical Christians. These beliefs included: Christian Zionism, expectation of a thousand year reign of Jesus from Jerusalem, heralded by the creation of the Jewish State; a final 'tribulation' in which the elect would be spared the world's destruction and miraculously saved; promoted by Trump's former spiritual adviser, Paula White, the 'Seven Mountains Mandate' – a 'revelation' to two evangelicals in the 1970s – that Christians are mandated by the Bible to conquer seven social spheres from family life to government; hence the idea that a triumphant Trump was leading the take-over of a 'satanic' Federal Government.

Some of Kirk's reflections were less outlandish with wider appeal. He preached passionately on the importance of Sabbath rest in the frenetic pace of modern life – reportedly – honoured by himself on Saturday, the Jewish Shabbat. In Netanyahu's words, a "lion-hearted friend of Israel" who "fought the lies and stood tall for Judaeo-Christian civilization", he had because of Gaza, though, become more critical in his last months on moral grounds. He remarkably described the Virgin Mary in a recent broadcast as "a counter to so much of the toxicity of feminism in the modern era" – perhaps influenced by his wife, a fellow evangelical, who was brought up a Catholic.

How much the content of Kirk's messages mattered, or was it his charismatic personality, expressing a general anger at the Washington elite that resonated with his audiences, is hard to judge. Considering Trump's electoral appeal in the 2024 elections, exit polls suggest Kirk did draw in young men who subsequently voted Republican. Trump increased his share of young men's vote by 8% and took 57% of the votes of young men without a college education compared to the Democrats' 40%. In the five previous Federal Presidential elections the Democrats never won less than 60% of young people's vote. Kamala Harris did hold on to 60% of young women's votes. Kirk's views on 'toxic feminism' do seem to have been heard - by both sexes.

What next? The immediate response to Kirk's death from his religious constituency has been to declare him a martyr. If he died because of his religious beliefs, the term is at best understandable. But the political response from the White House – linking his assassination to a 'vast, domestic terrorist network' funded by liberal charities, before any objective evidence emerged as to the motive of Kirk's killing – is deeply worrying. The most hopeful interpretation is that much of the rhetoric coming out of the White House is merely performative. But much of it in Trump's second presidency clearly isn't.

Nonetheless, this assassination has provided a pretext for harassing those posting critical comment about Kirk. At Vice-President J.D. Vance's bidding, those expressing pleasure at Kirk's death on social media risk being denounced to their employers and some losing their jobs. This is the same J.D. Vance who on grounds of freedom of speech 'called out' the UK for prosecuting Hate crimes. In this worldview President Joe Biden and George Soros (the philanthropist and businessman who has given over \$32 billion to his Open Society foundations dedicated to democracy and justice) were criminals who should be imprisoned.

At Kirk's Memorial in Phoenix, Arizona this Sunday, there will be abundant sympathy for his bereaved family and lavish praise bordering on beatification for Kirk himself. The populist Right in Europe are already using his death as a rallying cry against a sinister international 'Islamic-Leftist' threat. Condolence is an important expression of community and a shared humanity. But it should not be 'weaponised'. In a divided nation, the USA will be fortunate if this man's untimely death heralds a common understanding of patriotism, peace and unity.

<https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs>

• *Professor Ian Linden is Visiting Professor at St Mary's University, Strawberry Hill, London. A past director of the Catholic Institute for International Relations, he was awarded a CMG for his work for human rights in 2000. He has also been an adviser on Europe and Justice and Peace issues to the Department of International Affairs of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. Ian chairs a new charity for After-school schooling in Beirut for Syrian refugees and Lebanese kids in danger of dropping out partnering with CARITAS Lebanon and work on board of Las Casas Institute in Oxford with Richard Finn OP. His latest book was Global Catholicism published by Hurst in 2009.*

THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY IS BISHOP SARAH MULLALLY, CHAIR OF CHRISTIAN AID

3 October 2025: Patrick Watt, the Chief Executive of Christian Aid, said: "Christian Aid wholeheartedly welcomes Bishop Sarah's appointment as the Archbishop of Canterbury, and we look forward to working with her to strengthen the partnership between the Anglican Communion and Christian Aid's work to fight poverty and injustice.

"I have had the privilege of working closely with her in her role as Chair of Christian Aid for the last 16 months. During that time, she has given wise and assured direction and support, demonstrating her deep commitment to a more just world, and to building bridges with people of all faiths and beliefs in pursuit of the common good. Bishop Sarah has also spent time meeting churches and supporters, visiting partners in Colombia to see first-hand the impact of their work. Bishop Sarah has used her platform at Christian Aid to urge the UK Government to "reject the false choice between defence and development" in the wake of international aid cuts. Just last month, she joined other faith leaders in calling on world leaders to adopt a legally binding international treaty that holds corporations accountable for human rights abuses and environmental destruction.

"At Christian Aid's 80th anniversary service at Westminster Abbey in June this year, Bishop Sarah reflected on how the moral leadership of churches contributed to the post-war development of international law and the United Nations. She highlighted how challenges like the climate crisis inequality, war and nationalism, are putting pressure on these institutions and called for a recommitment to the cause of equality, justice, and human dignity, and for the church to continue to draw on hope from God.

"We wish her well and are praying for her as she prepares for this vitally important position, which serves not only the Church of England and the global Anglican Communion, but also plays such an important role in British society at large. I would also like to celebrate Bishop Sarah's historic appointment as the first woman bishop to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Having blazed a trail as the first woman Bishop of London and with her clear commitment to equality, her appointment will reverberate beyond church walls."

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/about-us/christian-aid-welcomes-new-archbishop-canterbury>

CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS WELCOMES ARCHBISHOP SARAH MULLALLY

3 October 2025: Cardinal Vincent Nichols said in a statement: "On behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, I welcome the news of the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. "She will bring many personal gifts and experience to her new role. The challenges and opportunities facing the new Archbishop are many and significant. On behalf of our Catholic community, I assure her of our prayers. Together we will be responsive to the prayer of Jesus that we 'may all be one' (John 17:21) and seek to develop the bonds of friendship and shared mission between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53394>

NJPN WEBINAR ON CHILD POVERTY IN THE UK

Brian O'Toole 23 September 2025: On 18 September, the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) hosted the latest in its Jubilee Year webinar series, focusing on one of the most urgent challenges of our time: child poverty in the UK. Entitled, 'Throwing Open the Doors to Children Living in Poverty in the UK,' the event brought together leading voices in the fight against inequality, offering both hard truths and practical ways forward. More than 70 people attended. It was an evening that was not only informative but deeply moving. Participants came away with a clearer understanding of the scale of the problem and a renewed determination to speak out for justice understanding that we can make timely interventions with respect to the imminent Child Poverty Strategy by making contact with MPs.

The NJPN was honoured to welcome three powerful speakers: Liam Purcell, Chief Executive of Church Action on Poverty; Paul Morrison, Policy Advisor for the Joint Public Issues Team; and Carol Cross, Trustee of the CAUSE Foundation, which supports families in Teesside. Together, they presented a compelling mix of evidence, lived experience, and stories of resilience. Each emphasised that poverty is not just a statistic but a daily reality for millions of children who lack secure housing, nutritious food, and fair opportunities.

Carol Cross's contributions highlighted the devastating effects of financial hardship on families in the North East, while also showing the extraordinary courage of parents determined to give their children the best possible start despite systemic barriers.

In 'Child Poverty: A Policy Choice, Not an Inevitability,' Paul Morrison delivered a clear and sobering message: child poverty is not inevitable. It stems from political and policy choices, from economic structures that prioritise some while leaving others behind, and from a society that too often ignores the voices of the most vulnerable. He challenged those present to recognise the moral responsibility we all share. Communities, churches, faith groups, and individuals must not only provide support but also advocate for fairer policies. The injustice of child poverty, he argued, is a collective problem that demands collective solutions.

In 'The Work of Church Action on Poverty,' Liam Purcell spoke about the practical work of Church Action on Poverty, an ecumenical organisation dedicated to challenging the root causes of deprivation. A key part of their mission is amplifying the voices of those who know poverty first-hand. He particularly emphasised the role of young people engaged in the Right to Food campaign. These youth ambassadors, supported by the Food Foundation's Children's Right2Food initiative, have shared their experiences of food insecurity while calling for meaningful action. Their testimonies underline the urgent need for systemic change, ensuring that no child in this country is left hungry.

A Collective Call to Action: The webinar ended with a sense of urgency and hope. Participants recognised that although the challenge is great, change is possible if we act together. Ending child poverty requires both compassion and political will, and both are within our reach if we refuse to accept injustice as normal. This is a crucial moment to raise our voices and influence decision-makers. Policies such as the two-child limit continue to push families into hardship. Scrapping this unjust policy is one of the most immediate steps we can take to improve children's lives. We urge everyone to contact their MPs and demand change. One easy way to take action is to join the End Child Poverty Coalition's email action at <https://act.cpag.org.uk/page/172351/action/1>

You can watch this important Webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxhW-9vhcWs>

Throwing open the doors to important issues is important but the challenge now is to keep these doors open - even if we have to stick our foot in every door! This is the call of the Jubilee Year.

• **Brian O'Toole is Director of the Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk**

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53321>

NJPN: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/

Church Action on Poverty: www.church-poverty.org.uk

End Child Poverty: <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/>

£5K GRANTS AVAILABLE TO RESPOND TO THE 'SIGNS OF THE TIMES' TO BUILD SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE UK

11 September 2025: Bishop Richard Moth, chair of Catholic grant-making charity, The Charles Plater Trust (CPT), has announced the opening of the funder's 2025 small grants programme. Opening the grant funding opportunity, Bishop Richard Moth said: "We face profound social justice challenges as a society today. Marking the papacy of Pope Leo XIV and, also, with a relatively new government in place in this country, it is timely to offer a new funding opportunity to charity partners to pioneer new ways in which Catholic social teaching in action can contribute to a new vision for our society, where all belong and can flourish. CPT launched its small grants programme in 2021, and funds projects that contribute to social justice through education in its broadest sense. Charities and CICs with an annual income below £100,000 are eligible to apply for a small grant of up to £5,000 on the Charles Plater Trust website.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Thursday 9 October 2025. Grant application details can be found at: www.plater.org.uk/apply or for an informal chat about the funding opportunity, please contact Philomena Cullen, Trust manager, email: plater@cbcew.org.uk Plater Trust: www.plater.org.uk

RAISING HOPE CLIMATE CONFERENCE: "THAT ICEBERG DID NOT DIE IN VAIN"

Ellen Teague 3 October 2025

A photo of Pope Leo blessing a melting piece of iceberg from Greenland has gone viral. He was lamenting the diminishment of glaciers globally due to global warming, while attending the Laudato Si' Movement's 'Raising Hope for Climate Justice' Conference in Italy on Wednesday.

On the final day of the conference two days later, when the iceberg was reduced by half, Dr Lorna Gold, Executive of the Movement, suggested "that iceberg did not die in vain." She hinted that its fate communicated one of the most dangerous impacts of the climate crisis – reduction of ice cover and the disruption of water systems.

There was hope this visual presentation would stimulate increased global awareness of the climate crisis and spur urgent responses.

Building resilience and hope were themes of the third and final day of the conference in the Focolare Centre at Castel Gandolfo.

An inspirational talk was given by South African Kumi Naidoo, a decades-long climate activist and currently President of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. He had to ask the audience – his "comrades in hope" – to stop constant clapping in order to get through his dynamic presentation! But he could hardly silence us when he pointed out that 86% of climate change is caused by fossil fuel pollution – "we have been in a flooded room mopping the floor instead of turning off the taps," he said. "Exactly" exclaimed the Kenyan woman next to me. It should be noted that 88% of the world's population lives in the global south and Naidoo highlighted they are both paying the highest price of the climate crisis, but also leading with solutions. He listed, for example, nations supporting the UN's COP process – from Kiribati and Bahamas to Timor Leste, Pakistan and Colombia.

Naidoo urged us to see coal, oil and gas as "enemies" and responded bluntly to the mantra that transitioning to a green economy would cost jobs; "there are no jobs on a dead planet; there are no people on a dead planet; clinging to fossil fuels will not protect livelihoods." He called for support for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, as a part of the campaign to "turn off the tap at the source." He suggested that, "hope is a verb and a mission and everyone of us has a role."

Another moving presentation was given by Dr Maina Talia, the Climate Minister of the small Pacific Island of Tuvalu and a theologian, who lamented, "climate change is about the very survival of our people." He compared being outside the circle of big players dominating the world's economic system to, "swimming outside of the arc trying to get on." He too called for more faith communities to give priority to disinvesting from fossil fuels. And he deplored the lack of finance available for climate adaption and mitigation, compared to "the amount of finance that is allocated "to war."

This was picked up by Svitlana Romanko, a Ukrainian lawyer and climate activist, who pointed out that military buildups – including that of Russia – are based on fossil fuels and they ignore climate impacts, international law and human rights. Hope for Ukraine's future would be built around a transition to a green economy while rebuilding that half of Ukraine that has been destroyed since Russia's invasion three years ago. The Laudato Si' call "to hear 'the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor' resonates deeply as our habitats, species and human livelihoods have been destroyed," she said.

The issue of tensions around mounting numbers of migrants in many countries – especially with the increasing push factors of climate change and conflict – was addressed by Catherine Coleman Flowers of the US, former Vice-Chair of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council. She said of the Church response, "the Church institutions should stand up for justice, but many of them are much too shy." The concept of community was broadened by Dr Maina Talia who suggested that in today's world, "Christians are asked to love our neighbour, but neighbour is transboundary – we must have a geopolitical concept of neighbour."

The conference spent its final hours identifying positive action to tackle the climate crisis and promote integral ecology. Monsignor Robert Vitillo of the Laudato Si Action Platform, which is sponsored by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, listed examples of positive initiatives: planting trees in Nigeria to reduce desertification, restoring mangroves in Kiribati to reduce sea incursion, Catholic universities divesting from fossil fuels, and Catholic hospitals greening their operations. "The Laudato Si Action Platform is a rich treasure," he said, "especially when we act as communities."

Over 120 pledges were made that participants would take away from the conference. They included promoting the Laudato Si' Animators Programme and Laudato Si' Action Platform in their countries; supporting the Jubilee Debt Campaign of Caritas Internationalis; joining the next international public announcement of divestment from fossil fuels; and "raising our voice in a powerful way at Brazil's COP30 climate event next month."

There was a strong call from Yeb Sano, Chair of the Board of the Laudato Si Movement, to turn to our own hearts, "and nourish love and compassion." Building on that, faith communities have the power and moral compass to campaign for the political will, "to turn the climate crisis around." He highlighted the reach of the global Catholic population, which at around 1.4 billion represents about 17.7% of the world's population, and the Church also operates a vast and powerful network of schools, hospitals, and social welfare institutions. He reminded us to remember those missing from decision-making tables and conferences, particularly marginalised people, future generations and the natural world itself. And he suggested that in engendering hope we must always remember not only to be seen for what we are against, but for what we stand for. What is our dream?

Everybody was enthused, just as all of us had been when Laudato Si' was published ten years ago. We were proud of the ecological justice work of the Catholic Church, in liaison with other Churches and other faiths. Water from our melted glacier, blessed by Pope Leo – estimated to have been in there for 20,000 years – was distributed to participants keen to take it back to their home countries as sacred water. Also, as a reminder that in our own small ways we must support people on the front line of the climate crisis and protect our common home.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53397>

LINKS

Raising Hope Conference: <https://raisinghope.earth/conference/>

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty: <https://fossilfueltreaty.org/>

See also Pope Leo told he is an "action hero" on climate: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53383>

WORLD MUST COME TOGETHER TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE, POPE LEO SAYS

Catholic News Service, Rome 2 October 2025: Celebrating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical, 'Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home,' during an international conference on climate justice, Pope Leo XIV continued his predecessor's call for ecological conversion and concrete action to protect creation.

He warned against indifference, called the faithful to care for the earth and the poor, and he praised climate justice efforts across the globe.

People of faith cannot love God while despising his creatures, and people cannot call themselves Christians without caring for everything fragile and wounded, including the earth, Pope Leo told climate activists and political and religious leaders. "There is no room for indifference or resignation," he said, inaugurating an international conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home.'

Seated behind a slowly melting chunk of ice from a glacier in Greenland, the pope said, "God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created, for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters." "What will be our answer?" he asked.

Pope Leo noted, as Pope Francis did in his follow-up exhortation 'Laudate Deum,' that "some have chosen to deride the increasingly evident signs of climate change, to ridicule those who speak of global warming and even to blame the poor for the very thing that affects them the most." "What must be done now to ensure that caring for our common home and listening to the cry of the earth and the poor do not appear as mere passing trends or, worse still, are seen and felt as divisive issues?" he asked.

"The challenges identified in 'Laudato Si' are in fact even more relevant today than they were 10 years ago," he said, and these challenges, which are social, political and spiritual, "call for conversion." "It is only by returning to the heart that a true ecological conversion can take place," Pope Leo said, saying, "We must shift from collecting data to caring; and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles."

For believers, he said, "we cannot love God, whom we cannot see, while despising his creatures. Nor can we call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ without participating in his outlook on creation and his care for all that is fragile and wounded." "Integral ecology thrives on four relationships: with God, with others, with nature and with ourselves, he said. "Through our commitment to them, we can grow in hope by living out the interdisciplinary approach of 'Laudato Si' and the call to unity and collaboration that flows from it."

Read in full: <https://www.usccb.org/news/2025/world-must-come-together-fight-climate-change-pope-leo-says>

CLIMATE CAMPAIGNS: BROADER AND CHILD-FOCUSED

19 September 2025 **Tim Root, Joint Co-ordinator Haringey Friends of the Earth writes:**

Would you and other J & P friends like to join in exploring establishing a diverse climate campaign alliance? Research suggests this could be much more effective than the current campaigns. Time is not on our side!

Tom Brake, former LibDem MP and now director of Unlock Democracy, has offered to help. The Climate Coalition has member organisations representing a great many people. It, or an improved alliance, could potentially attract much more support and achieve much greater impact.

Read on to find out more: Rising temperatures are causing severe Earth system reactions, threatening to tip us into runaway heating. Frequent wildfires emit much carbon and reduce the number of trees absorbing carbon. Vicious spirals like this make reducing emissions urgent. However, most governments are permitting additional emissions, e.g. increasing aviation, ignoring the increasing frequency of extreme weather disasters. The death and destruction underline that campaigners should urgently re-evaluate their strategy. Three-quarters of climate scientists surveyed estimated that unless we increase emissions cuts, we face a cataclysmic 2.7°C temperature rise. So, let's look at appeals for campaign collaboration and research pointing to the need for a campaign alliance representing most of the political spectrum. One well-researched report, informed by climate insiders' views, called for campaigns to work together across "economic, political and cultural differences." Similarly, Caroline Lucas, Britain's first Green member of parliament, said environmental NGOs should "work together in a more deeply collaborative way."

Trump and the far right are attacking climate policy. Some mainstream conservatives, including Friedrich Merz, have copied this hostility to climate action. We must urgently reverse the decline in climate campaign activity and impact. Greenpeace International's most recent annual report was unable to mention any campaign victories in cutting existing greenhouse gas emissions. Former British Friends of the Earth director Jonathon Porritt recently criticised most "mainstream environmental organisations," stating that they habitually "double down on decades of demonstrably ineffective tactics."

Most people want strong climate action

New research suggests that we could harness huge support for climate campaigns if we can show people that, contrary to their perceptions, most other people share their wish for stronger climate action. A poll of 125 nations found that 89 per cent of people want their government to do more to tackle climate. The 2023 World Risk poll found that 72 per cent say climate change is a 'somewhat' or 'very' serious threat to people in their country in the next 20 years.

Globally, one and a third times more people rate themselves as being right of centre than those who rate themselves left of centre. In the 2024 European parliament elections, right-of-centre parties won 1.6 times more seats than left of centre parties. Our movement could become much weaker if the trend towards climate being perceived as chiefly a left wing issue continues. The Climate Majority Project point out that the radical climate "movement's tone, culture and appeal, appeal mainly to the "far left" – a small segment of the population." Climate campaigns must attract mass support across the political spectrum. This is possible; a 2023 international survey found that people who identify as being on the right are only 13 per cent less supportive of climate action than those who identify as left of centre.

Unity is strength

The Oxford University *Decisive Decade* report stated that achieving net-zero "will require an exponential increase in engagement and collaboration from businesses, civil society organisations, governments, and individual citizens around the globe." After comprehensive research on many social movements, Erica Chenoweth drew the conclusion that "the larger and more diverse the campaign's base of participants, the more likely it is to succeed."

We can learn from the exceptional success of the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign alliance, which brought together several hundred organisations. One insider said it showed that "unusual coalitions deliver change," partly as they cannot "be dismissed as just 'the usual suspects'." Other research finds that "broad coalitions have been recognised as particularly important given their advantage in mobilising larger numbers of people." Governments become more receptive, "as they recognise that they are not just dealing with routine opposition, but something broader and potentially more threatening." Research has found that most people believe that political parties should work together and compromise. Therefore, a campaign alliance fronted by people from different political parties would be likely to gain public confidence. It would show that climate is such an important issue that people from different political perspectives had decided that they need to work together. However, the climate campaign alliances which I have researched comprise almost entirely environmental or left of centre organisations, but hardly any right of centre, or mainstream religious organisations.

A more mainstream image would protect our movement's reputation from a perceived association with the tactics of groups such as Just Stop Oil, and Letzte Generation, which are regarded positively by only a sixth of their compatriots.

Youth climate activists could boost the success of a broad alliance. Research on X use showed that youth activists have "a remarkable discursive, moral power that allowed them to initiate normative change in collaboration" with others. In December 2024, I undertook a small survey in a demographically diverse range of locations in London, asking people to rate the effectiveness of a few climate campaign slogans. 59 per cent rated *Save our Kids' Climate* very effective, and a further 25 per cent rated it somewhat effective. It was the slogan considered most effective by quite a large margin. *Climate Justice* was rated very effective by only 10 per cent, and somewhat effective by 30 per cent. Analysis of climate hashtags found that #climateemergency was used in 27 per cent of hashtagged posts, and #climatejustice in only 7 per cent. Other research analysing reactions to climate messages found that "We owe our children a better future, but if we don't act, they will pay the price" was overwhelmingly the favourite.

Achieving a coalition of organisations representing people with different political outlooks may appear extremely difficult. However, very difficult goals have been achieved on many previous occasions, for example, same sex marriage, and international negotiations to protect the ozone layer. Research shows that groups which discuss the priorities they share and cannot achieve separately, known as superordinate goals, make better progress. There are a number of models for facilitating constructive collaboration among disparate groups and individuals.

Organising expert Hahrie Han advised that "the most successful movements are simultaneously bold and pragmatic." To build a successful campaign alliance, we need to harness the factors that unite participants rather than divide them. The alliance's message needs to be simple: that the climate disaster threatens all humanity. Getting sufficient support would be less likely if other goals, however important, were highlighted, as some potentially valuable partner groups would not join the alliance; many potential supporters would not relate to some of the goals; their inclusion would dilute the key message and its impact; their addition would make the campaign's objective appear even more difficult and hence unrealistic, in many people's eyes. Member organisations of the alliance would of course, be able to campaign separately on other issues. Martin Luther King said, in the pre-feminist era, "We must learn to live together as brothers, or perish together as fools." Climate campaigners need to work together, or suffer tragic failure.

• **Tim Root is active in Friends of the Earth London Network.** tim@timroot.net

Article plus comprehensive links HERE: <https://www.chartist.org.uk/climate-campaigns-broader-and-child-focused/>

JANE GOODALL, RENOWNED ETHOLOGIST, CONSERVATIONIST AND ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR EXPERT HAS DIED AT 91
Dr Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace, was a remarkable example of courage and conviction, working tirelessly throughout her life to raise awareness about threats to wildlife, promote conservation, and inspire a more harmonious, sustainable relationship between people, animals and the natural world.

Jane Goodall was born on April 3, 1934, in London. At the young age of 26, she followed her passion for African wildlife to Gombe, Tanzania, where she began her landmark study of chimpanzees in the wild, immersing herself in their habitat as a neighbour rather than a distant observer. Her discovery in 1960 that chimpanzees make and use tools rocked the scientific world and redefined the relationship between humans and animals. In 1960 Dr Goodall established the longest running wild chimpanzee study in Gombe National Park, Tanzania which continues to this day.

In 1977, she established the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) to advance her work around the world and for generations to come. JGI continues the field research at Gombe and builds on Dr Jane's innovative approach to conservation, which recognises the central role that people play in the well-being of animals and the environment. In 1991, she created Roots & Shoots¹, a global program that guides young people in 75 countries in becoming compassionate citizens and leaders in their daily lives.

Prior to her recent passing, Dr Goodall travelled the world nearly 300 days a year, speaking about the threats facing wildlife, environmental crises and her reasons for hope. In her books and speeches, she emphasized the interconnectedness of all living things and the collective power of individual action. Dr. Goodall was a UN Messenger of Peace and a Dame Commander of the British Empire. Most recently, she received the United States' Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2025, for her contributions to science and tireless advocacy for our planet.

¹ <https://rootsandshoots.global/>

Read in full: <https://janegoodall.org/jane-goodall-renowned-ethologist-conservationist-and-animal-behavior-expert-passes-away-at-age-91/>

Read Jane Goodall's lovely letter to children about how reading shaped her life – in this she shares her childhood dream as a 10-year old to go to Africa to live with animals and write books about them:

<https://www.themarginalian.org/2019/01/31/jane-goodalls-reading-a-velocity-of-being/>

COLUMBANS LAUNCH SCHOOLS COMPETITION 2026

Ellen Teague 22 September 2025

The Columban Missionaries in Britain are inviting students aged 13–18 to enter the 2026 Schools Media Competition.

The competition was launched on 21 September, World Peace Day with the theme: **"Becoming a refugee is never a choice. But how we respond is."** This is a quote from the United Nations Secretary General-Secretary, António Guterres, who is a Catholic.



Columban missionaries internationally have a mission priority of supporting Migrants and Refugees. This echoes Catholic Social Teaching which calls us to 'welcome the stranger'. Pope Leo told diplomats in May 2025: "My own story is that of a citizen, the descendant of immigrants, who in turn chose to emigrate..... All of us, in the course of our lives, can find ourselves healthy or sick, employed or unemployed, living in our native land or in a foreign country, yet our dignity always remains unchanged."

The Columbans are looking for students in Britain (aged 13-18 inclusive, parental permission required) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme. They invite young people to explore perceptions of people seeking sanctuary in Britain, considering practical examples of welcome and solidarity.

The competition aims to increase young people's compassion and understanding of journeys of displaced people seeking safety in another country. How can we respect diversity and respond with love to those seeking refuge and safety? Can we be inspired by real-life stories of resilience and hope, Scripture, or Catholic Social Teaching? How can we empathise with the experience of individuals and families being separated from the place they call home.

The competition closes on the 14th February 2026 and competition winners will be announced on the 9th March. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winners and the first prize is an impressive £300!

High-profile judges from the world of journalism have been secured and winning entries will be published in the Columbans' Far East magazine, Vocation for Justice newsletter, as well as on the Columban's in Britain website, on social media and in other Catholic media. The Columbans are delighted that Ruth Gledhill of The Tablet and Jo Siedlecka of Independent Catholic News, are judges in Britain. Former Society Superior General Columban Fr. Tim Mulroy and James Trewby, Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology Co-ordinator in Britain, are also on the judging panel.

Students will find the Columban Competition website a useful resource: <https://www.columbancompetition.com/> It includes information on the theme of "Becoming a refugee is never a choice. But how we respond is." There are examples of refugee projects and inspirational communities. There are also details on the submission of entries and a helpful FAQ page. The website provides material suitable for students, teachers and parents.

This is the ninth annual Columban Schools Media Competition. Past themes have focused on Migrants, Climate Change, Throwaway Culture, Racism, 21st Century Changemakers, Peacemaking, Biodiversity and 'Jubilee: Pilgrims of Hope.' Be inspired by some of the powerful articles written by young people in previous competitions – follow the link here: <https://columbans.co.uk/filter/schools-media-competition/>
<https://columbans.co.uk/education/17074/columbans-launch-schools-competition-2026/>

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53229>

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER Sharing Our Dreams

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>

19 November Church Action on Poverty's Annual General Meeting 7:00pm via Zoom Join us to hear about our plans to work with Pantries and churches and enable more people to be agents for change. **Register here:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-catalyst-for-change-church-action-on-poverty-agm-2025-tickets-1707603079779?aff=oddtcreator>

We are actively seeking new members to be elected to our Council of Management (Church Action on Poverty's board of trustees) at the AGM. We particularly welcome nominations of people with personal experience of poverty and people from black, Asian or other ethnic minority backgrounds. We are also looking for members who have experience of fundraising. If you are interested in becoming a member of Church Action on Poverty and joining the Council, or nominating someone else, please download the form below and send it in – or call us on 0161 872 9294 to ask for more information. <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Church-Action-on-Poverty-2025-AGM-papers.pdf>

DIARY

OCTOBER

9 Pax Christi Merseyside meeting (second Thursday of each month) from 2pm to 4pm at Quaker Meeting House School Lane Liverpool L1 3BT. All welcome. Contact Jan Harper 07591082195 janharper20211@outlook.com

10 CAFOD Quiz Night at Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port 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

13-19 Challenge Poverty Week <https://challengepoverty.co.uk/>

14 To mark the tenth anniversary of the publication of Laudato Si', the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is holding an event with the Church of England and Methodist Church at Methodist Central Hall, Manchester. The event will draw on the experiences of faith leaders and be opened by the Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham. Speakers - Bishop John Arnold of Salford, Rev Grace Thomas, Rev Ian Rutherford and Dr Emma Gardner - will reflect on the progress and achievements of the past decade, consider the road ahead, and answer questions from the audience. The event will celebrate the power of faith in action and consider how collaboration can sustain and amplify that impact while addressing the challenges and opportunities ahead. **Booking essential:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-decade-of-laudato-si-lessons-impact-and-the-road-ahead-tickets-1664309918769>

17 International Day for the Eradication on Poverty <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/poverty-eradication/events/povertyday2025>

18 Fairtrade Autumn Fair 11am-3pm Wesley Church Centre St. John Street, Chester. Fair Trade home wares, Luna Tree Jewellery, Chester Fairtrading food & other items, freshly baked treats from Bread Together. Admission free.

19 Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Theme: Sharing Our Dreams <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>

23 A Legacy of Hope and Joy: an information session on Zoom for Parish Volunteers 7pm-8.30pm. CAFOD's Director Christine Allen will explain why Gifts in Wills are so important in our work of being good neighbours around the world. https://cafod.formstack.com/forms/a_legacy_of_hope

31 NJPN Post Conference Catch-Up, 7.30-9pm Joining link contact Sharon Chambers admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

11 Pax Christi Merseyside meeting (second Thursday of each month) from 2pm to 4pm at Quaker Meeting House School Lane Liverpool L1 3BT. All welcome. Contact Jan Harper 07591082195 janharper20211@outlook.com

- See current NJPN news here: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/news/>

- Sign up for regular news and information from NJPN (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org 020 7901 4864

- Read the AUTUMN issue of **MOUTHPEACE** the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses: <https://jpschrewsbury.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/mouthpeace-autumn-2025.pdf>

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