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***Every day, somewhere in the world, the nativity scene is alive***

***Lord God,***

***open our ears to hear your voice of peace and open our hearts to work for an end to violence and conflict in our world.***

***Amen.***

*(Prayer taken from CAFOD's Advent Reflection for the 5th December)*

Dear Friends,

Thanks to those of you who sent good wishes following the last e-bulletin, when I thought I had Covid. Would you believe I didn't then, but finally tested positive a week ago! I have been really lucky and not had much in the way of symptoms, apart from extreme tiredness. I get to about lunchtime and have had enough! (some might say that is my age, rather than Covid!).

On a more serious note, my downer of the week was hearing that the Government have given the go ahead for the Coal Mine in Cumbria. You will see an Action about that. Obviously that, and the numerous strikes we are all facing in the coming weeks.

Having said that, I am grateful for the roof over my head, and food on my table, and a loving family around me. Those who are fleeing war or persecution are not so lucky, and that was brought home to me by the above slogan that I saw on Facebook, along with a similar photograph.

At this time of year, much as we want it to be a joyful time, as Christian people we need to remember those whose life is not as easy as our own.

Our Action of the Week is based around that little town that we sing about at Christmas, Bethlehem, and the struggle that the Palestinian Christians face daily.

This is the last e-bulletin before Christmas and the New Year, so I wish you a peaceful and joyful time, but most of all, keep well and safe. The next issue will be out around the 8th January, so if you can bear that in mind when sending articles to be included.

Thanks very much for your continued support over the past year,

Sharon

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**\*\*\* ACTION OF THE WEEK \*\*\***

***No Silent Night in Bethlehem***

Use this link to register : [www.balfourproject.org/bethlehem](http://www.balfourproject.org/bethlehem)

**“Oh little town of Bethlehem”**  
Palestinian Christians, Reality, Challenges and Prospects



**Wednesday 7th December**  
3PM UK Time

SPEAKER: **Revd Dr Munther Isaac**

Please support our work with a donation - [www.tinyurl.com/donatetoBP](http://www.tinyurl.com/donatetoBP)

Balfour Project is a Scottish Registered Charity (SC 047090)

*Balfour  
Project*

**The above Webinar, “Oh little town of Bethlehem” – Palestinian Christians, Reality, Challenges and Prospects” by Revd Dr Munther Isaac took place on the 7th December.**

*If you were not able to watch it live, we would like to encourage you to watch it through [The Balfour Project](#) website.*

***They write: The world turns to Bethlehem during Christmas, but they have a fairytale image of the little town. However, this is a real community with real challenges. This webinar gives an insight into the reality and challenges of Palestinians and Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land.***

***Revd Dr Munther Isaac is a Palestinian Christian pastor and theologian. He now pastors the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem. He is also the academic dean of Bethlehem Bible College, and is the director of the highly acclaimed and influential Christ at the Checkpoint conferences.***

**Thank you!**

**Articles on the same theme of Palestine/Israel**

**Pope Francis appeals for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue**

[Vatican News](#) report that Pope Francis has expressed concern at the escalating violence in the State of Palestine and Israel and he has called on the authorities to find ways of moving the dialogue forward towards a lasting peace.

**'Jerusalem is a Jewish City, a Christian City, a Muslim City'**

Bishop Nicholas Hudson is quoted as saying the above, through Independent Catholic News, after attending the Holy Land Coordination in Jerusalem earlier in the year. He says that '*many of the Christian Communities that they visited are being threatened by occupation and injustice.*' The full article is available [here](#).

## **Watch the Silent Night Carol**

Again through [ICN](#), you can read about the group of believers from around the world who have come together in a Christmas carol music video by Sat-7 to highlight how believers in the region are silenced and unable to celebrate Jesus' birth.

You can see listen to Silent Night and read about Sat-7 [here](#).

## **NEWS AND COMMENT**

### **1. Climate/Environment (includes **Actions**)**

#### **A new coal mine for Cumbria (with an **Action**)**

I thought this had all gone away, so when I heard that Michael Gove had approved the opening of a new mine at Whitehaven I couldn't quite believe it. My presumption was that it was something to do with the energy crisis, so that we could be more self-sufficient in fossil fuels (although that obviously is not a good thing). Apparently, though, it is going to be providing fuel for making steel.

The Guardian, in their Long Reads this weekend, has brought out this article by Rebecca Willis, which was published in May, which gives the history of what has been happening - ['Dig coal to save the climate': the folly of Cumbria's plans for a new coalmine](#).

As would be expected, our friends at Greenpeace have a petition to Rishi Sunak, asking him to stop the mine going ahead. I urge you to add your name to it [here](#).

### **UN head opens COP15 with stark warning of declining biodiversity**

COP15 opened in Montreal on the 6th December, and UN General Secretary, Antonio Guterres, started his opening address with the following:

-

*Nature is humanity's best friend.*

*Without nature, we have nothing.*

*Without nature, we are nothing.*

*Nature is our life-support system.*

*It is the source and sustainer of the air we breathe, the food we eat, the energy we use, the jobs and economic activity we count on, the species that enrich human life, and the landscapes and waterscapes we call home.*

*And yet humanity seems hellbent on destruction.*

*We are waging war on nature.*

The rest of the Secretary General's words are reported through [Independent Catholic News](#).

### **Take 'uncompromising stance' against iron ore mining in Ghana: Catholic Bishop to Chiefs**

ACI Africa report that *The Catholic Bishop of Jasikan in Ghana has called upon traditional leaders in Oti and Volta regions to take “a determined and uncompromising stance” demonstrating their opposition to the mining of iron ore and other minerals “yet to be discovered”.*

*Iron ore has been discovered in five districts in the Oti region and the mining of it will be very destructive to the environment. The full article is available [here](#).*

### **Become a Laudato Si' Animator**

If you have ever thought about finding out more, you can register your interest through the [Laudato Si' Movement's website](#). Join them in caring for our common home.

### **Climate Jobs: Building a workforce for the climate emergency**

Campaign Against Climate Change's trade union group have produced this book which *'demonstrates that there are many more than a million good, well paid, skilled jobs that could be created if we get serious and urgently tackle the climate emergency, as the science demands.'*

You can either buy or download copies through their [website](#).

## **Double your bean intake to save cost and climate**

You can trust [Wicked Leeks](#) to have something interesting and useful, and a bit out of the ordinary. This article talks about a new campaign 'Beans is How' which was launched at COP27 to encourage people to double their intake of beans as a sustainable food solution. Nina Pullman writes: - *The group claims that beans can sustainably and affordably reduce malnutrition while helping those struggling during the cost-of-living crisis.*

I won't go into details, but as someone who likes beans, but struggles with digesting them, the thought is excellent, but it is not something I will be doing anytime soon.

(for a few suggestions on swapping in beans for other food items, see their article ['Best of British Beans.'](#))

## **Regret that COP27 was progress was not enough**

Ellen Teague wrote this article for [The Tablet](#), giving the opinions of various organisations on COP27.

## **Action - Stop Sewage Pollution**

Greenpeace write the following: - *Raw sewage is destroying our beaches, rivers and waterways. Swimmers have been urged to stay out of the water and our fragile ecosystems are struggling to cope. Our waters have reached crisis point after years of budget cuts and deregulation.*

They have a petition for Rishi Sunak to clean up our waterways and properly fund the environmental agencies. The full details are available through their [website](#).

## **Do you want an ethical chocolate industry?**

Again, I am sharing an article from the Injustice Advent Calendar. Did you know that there is a website called [The Chocolate Scorecard](#)! They look at modern slavery, pesticides and environmental damage when scoring the different manufacturers. I was very disappointed to see that some of my favourites are very low down on the Scorecard.



When buying Christmas chocolates this year, have a look and see what you can do to help the producers and the planet.

### **I'm dreaming of a green Christmas...**

Rather fortuitously, this article dropped into my inbox from [CAFOD](#) this morning! It's got some good little tips on how to have a more eco-friendly Christmas.

Last year I bought Gift bags and wrapping made of recycled Sari material. They were not overly expensive and everyone was really taken with them. Obviously they can be reused. Also, for the last couple of years, my daughter and I have cut up our old Christmas cards to make Gift tags for the following Christmas. My daughter has a set of scissors which cut with different edges (wavy, pointed etc.). They make a really good job of cutting the tags.

If you are unsure about your tree, the debate concerning Real Tree vs. Artificial Tree comes to the fore at this time of year. The Soil Association have a good article about it [here](#).

## **2. Refugees/Migrants (includes an Action and Event)**

### **Action - Demand justice for the victims and families of the 24th November 2021 tragedy in the Channel**

Care4Calais (on the anniversary of the deaths in the Channel) wrote:  
*- Along with other refugee organisations, we have co-signed a letter to Rishi Sunak, written by the bereaved relatives of those we lost.*

*In it, we urge him to change this Government's approach and offer safe passage for all refugees, so that nobody needs to risk their life crossing the Channel.*

*No one should have to risk their life to seek safety. We warned time and time again of the dangers of refugees not having safe routes to the UK, but the Government repeatedly ignored these warnings.*

*This tragedy must not happen again. We need a complete reset from the Government on how it welcomes and support refugees. It's truly painful that these losses appear forgotten in this Government's approach to refugees*

*and Channel crossings.*

*We urgently need safe routes so that people in dire need of protection are not forced to undertake such dangerous journeys to safety.*

Please read their letter [here](#) and forward it to friends and family.

## **Home Office Vigil 15 months on**

Barbara Kentish, for [ICN](#), writes: - *The list grows. Border names become more familiar. The deaths more shocking.*

*Every month for 15 months, a small group of Christians has gathered outside the Home Office in London's West End to remember and pray for those who died the year before while trying to reach the UK and mainland Europe to seek sanctuary. A dedicated group in the Netherlands, United Against Racism, scours the media for tiny incidents - a capsized boat here, an accident there, a river drowning, and compiles the shocking statistics, so that we can remember the huge price that thousands are paying for seeking safety from persecution, war or starvation. The incidents are so easily disregarded, till assembled into a terrifying list.*

Every month there is an increase in the roll-call of names. Many of the migrants are leaving their homes due to the effect of climate change. Fr. Martin Newell is quoted as saying '*An injustice in one place will become an injustice elsewhere.*'

Barbara finishes with: - *Every month Christians meet in front of the Home Office, rain, hail or shine, to witness to the victims of that injustice. Join us, keep in touch, find out more. Contact [barbarakentish@talktalk.net](mailto:barbarakentish@talktalk.net) or [johanmaertens@hotmail.com](mailto:johanmaertens@hotmail.com)*

## **Event - Building the future with migrants and refugees**

The last two online events take place on Thursday 15th and Thursday 22nd December. You can register for them [here](#).



**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

*The Extreme Suffering of the People of Tigray*

**Companion ~ Alistair Dutton**

**Chief Executive of SCIAF**

Alistair will explain the background to the conflict in Tigray and SCIAF's response to the letter of + Abune Tesfascalie Medhin, Bishop of Adigrat Eparchy, Tigray-Ethiopia. He will also share on the recent agreement on a 'permanent cessation of hostilities' and the role the church can play in peace building.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

*People from the Border*

**Companion ~ Fiona Kendall**

**Mission co-worker with Mediterranean Hope**

Fiona will share with us on *Mediterranean Hope*, a project based in Italy, and how it has developed since 2013 when it began welcoming migrants who landed at Lampedusa. It will be an opportunity to hear the stories of migrants and refugees and those who have sought to welcome and integrate them into their country and the challenges in doing this.

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

*Forced to Flee*

**Companion ~ Alison Phipps Co-Convenor of Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network**

Alison will share stories of those who are *forced to flee* - their journey, their challenges, their hopes and how with people and networks of solidarity they are together building the future.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

*Liturgy of Solidarity and Hope*

**Companions ~ Alison Phipps and Friends**

An opportunity to pray and reflect together as we seek to welcome the Christ-child by being a people who *Build the Future with Migrants and Refugees*.

**Registration Form:** <https://forms.gle/b7t2iK2z76GS4KTJ6>

Image: "Angels Unaware" a sculpture, in St Peter's Square, by Timothy Schmalz representing displaced people throughout history. Rough Seas Photo by [Tim Marshall](#) on [Unsplash](#)

### 3. Cost of Living/Energy Crisis

#### 50 of the best energy saving tips

Friends of the Earth have put together 50 of the best ways to save on

your energy bills. You can read it [here](#).

### **Feed your Family**

I came across this website through the powers of Facebook. The lady who runs it is Lorna Cooper and you can sign up for free weekly meal plans which gives you ideas of how to cook proper food on a budget. She shows you how you can feed your family for around £20 per week (and tells you the best places to buy the food in the recipes). If you are struggling, or know a family who is finding things hard, please pass the details onto them. The link is [here](#).

### **4. A better kind of politics**

The above was the title of the Networking meeting that NJPN held in London in November. Like a lot of people, I was unable to make it (there were lots of events taking place on that same day). Stephen, our Tech Wizard, has managed to put a recording of the day on [YouTube](#). I will look forward to listening to it once I have sent this e-bulletin out later today.

### **5. London: Urgent appeal for homeless shelter volunteers**

According to this article in ICN yesterday, Shelter has reported that there has been a 24% increase in the number of people sleeping on the streets of London between June and September this year.

Due to the forecasted icy weather conditions, volunteers at Farm Street Church in Mayfair are opening an emergency night shelter from Monday 12th December.

For more details on this service and how you can get involved, please see the [ICN website](#).

### **6. News from Pact - Call for support for prisoners at Pact Carol Services**

Theresa Alessandro, through ICN, writes about the Carol Services that Pact has hosted in London and Nottingham. Details are available [here](#).

## 7. Peace

Human Rights Day took place on the 10th December, and Justice and Peace Europe took the opportunity of calling for sustainable peace in Ukraine. You can read their full statement on the [Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales website](#).

### **Pax Christi International hosts Non-Violence Conference**

Around 75 people met in Rome last week for a Conference entitled '*Pope Francis, nonviolence, and the fullness of Pacem in Terris.*'

More details are available through [ICN](#), or through the [Catholic Nonviolence Initiative](#) website.

### **Hunger could be eradicated with the money spent on arms in a year**

[Vatican News](#) has reported that Pope Francis, during a meeting, spoke of his '*pain for the war in Ukraine, and for other wars wounding humanity and reiterates his condemnation of the armaments race and the testing of weapons that takes place "at the expense of people who are dying."*'

## 8. Down's Syndrome babies can be aborted up to birth

I was very shocked when Heidi Crowter lost her legal challenge when the Court of Appeal decreed that babies with Down's Syndrome or another disability, can be aborted up to birth. Even if you are pro-choice, surely this goes beyond what is acceptable. Heidi's argument is that people with Down's Syndrome are being treated as if they are of less value than anyone else, and that it is a clear "instance of inequality".

Bishop Sherrington has commented on the case through the [CBCEW website](#), and there is an article on it through [ICN](#).

## Newsletters/Reports

## **9. NW NJPN E-Bulletin December 2022**

Anne leads with the 'six core conditions of conscious hope' by David Gee, and there are lots of interesting articles, including one on the World Cup and the Iranian Team's incredible courage in refusing to sing their National Anthem in solidarity with oppressed women and protesters in their country. You can read it through the [NJPN website](#).

## **10. CSAN Advent Newsletter**

Caritas Social Action Network have produced a newsletter, but it is not available on its website - however, all of the articles included in it are. You can have a good read of them [here](#).

## **11. Refugees at Home November 2022**

News about their work and how to get involved. You can read it through their [website](#).

## **12. Green Christian News No. 218**

News on the failure of COP27, and their Annual Meeting, plus some events coming up. Read it [here](#).

## **13. Operation Noah November 2022**

News about their report on Church investment in climate solutions, plus resources and opportunities to get involved. It is available on their [website](#).

## **14. Journey to 2030 News**

Lots of news about what they have been doing, plus events and resources. Click [here](#) to read.

## **15. Pax Christi Advent E-Bulletin**

This doesn't appear to be on their [website](#), but all of the articles are, including the announcement that they will have a new CEO, Andrew

Jackson, from January.

### **16. London Mining Network**

Their last mail-out of 2022, you can read it [here](#).

### **17. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland**

Resources and news. Available [here](#).

### **18. Mouthpeace Winter 2022**

Some very interesting articles and resources from the Diocese of Lancaster Faith and Justice Commission. Read it through the [NJPN website](#).

### **19. The Peace Museum**

No copy on their website, but again the articles can be found there nonetheless. Read what they have been doing [here](#).

## **EVENTS (in chronological order where applicable)**

### **20. 12th December- 12.45pm - Southern Dioceses Environment Network**

[Feedback on COP27, Advent and Planning for 2023](#)

### **21. 15th December - 6.30pm - Climate Justice Coalition**

[We have a World to Win - Online Rally](#)

### **22. 20th December - 7pm - Jesuit Refugee Service**

[Advent Service](#)

### **23. 9th January - 12.45pm - Southern Dioceses Environment Network**

[Joint meeting with the Northern Dioceses Environment Group](#)

## 24. NJPN Save the Dates for 2023



*National Justice and Peace Network*

### Open Networking Days 2023



Saturday 25 February: Zoom meeting

Saturday 13 May: Open Meeting and AGM, London

Saturday 23 September: Open Meeting, West Midlands (venue tbc)

Saturday 18 November: Open Meeting, London (venue tbc)

There will also be opportunity to hear about justice and peace activities from groups around the country. Representatives from agencies and organisations working for peace and social justice will report on their work and suggest practical ways of becoming involved in campaigning for social justice.

For further details contact:

Geoff Thompson Tel: 020 7901 4864

Email: [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)





## 25. 10th February - Columban Schools Competition Deadline Building Peaceful Futures

**SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION**

Columban Missionaries are looking for students (aged 13-18 inclusive) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

- ✓ Is conflict inevitable?
- ✓ Where and how is peacebuilding taking place?
- ✓ What role can faith play in peacemaking?

**“Our proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus challenges us to build communities of peace.”**  
From the Columban Statement on Peace

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:**  
**FRIDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

For more information see:  
[www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)

**PRINT PRIZES**  
1<sup>ST</sup> £300  
2<sup>ND</sup> £150 • 3<sup>RD</sup> £100

**IMAGE PRIZES**  
1<sup>ST</sup> £300  
2<sup>ND</sup> £150 • 3<sup>RD</sup> £100

**COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES BRITAIN**

### Actions

#### 26. Sign the official record of support for people-centred trade

Transform Trade writes: - *Trade shouldn't be an injustice. Trade should be an opportunity. Right now trade doesn't value people. CEOs are taking home the lifetime earnings of a worker in 4 days, businesses get away with destroying lives, and governments block climate action.*

*But it doesn't have to be this way. People centred trade has the power to transform lives and protect the planet we all rely on.*

Add your name and call for trade which values people and the planet over profit.

#### 27. Stop Ocean Poison

Marine Conservation Society writes: - *Chemical pollution is now found in all water on Earth, harming wildlife from the North to South Pole and*

*everywhere in between, fuelling the biodiversity crisis.*

*Global chemical production is predicted to double by 2030, with an increase in chemical pollution likely to follow.*

Marine Conservation are looking for a Chemical Strategy and are asking the Government to deliver on their promise to put one in place.

For the future of our ocean, please fill in the petition [here](#).

## **THE LAST WORD**

### **28. The original foster care story at the heart of Christmas**

My favourite Christmas advert is that heart-warming one from John Lewis that shows a man, very badly, trying to skate board. It is only at the end of it that it is all explained, and that he is doing it ready to welcome a foster child into his family home. As someone who knows a bit about fostering and adoption, I thought how great it was that fostering was getting some Press. (ok, so John Lewis was also using it for their own ends - but I think it was an important message to put out there).

Ian Butcher, through [Grace + Truth](#), highlights the fact that male foster carers are often seen in a negative light, and yet surely the greatest of these was Joseph, Mary's husband. Ian makes some good points, and at the end of the article there are links about how to get involved.

I know our local authority are desperate for Foster Carers right now. There are just so many children whose lives need a steadying influence and lots of love and attention. If you have a spare room and the energy, why not consider it?



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### **NEWS LINKS**

#### **Independent Catholic News**

Find Justice and Peace stories at:

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/justice-peace-environment>

[Sign up](#) to receive these regularly.

#### **Catholic Communications Network**

Find news stories at [www.catholicnews.org.uk](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk)

Latest Zenit Headlines [here](#)

Vatican News homepage: [www.vaticannews.va](http://www.vaticannews.va)

**World Council of Churches**  
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/>

**UK Parliament News**  
<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/>

Follow us on Twitter: @NJandPNetwork

Follow us on Facebook: National Justice and Peace Network

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#### **About these E-BULLETINS**

The items above are emails received from around the Network which may be of interest to those involved in working for justice and peace.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of NJPN.

To **unsubscribe** from these mailings, email [ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org) with “unsubscribe” in the subject box. We also welcome your **feedback** at the same address.

**Forwarding these emails:** Please feel free to forward these emails on to your contacts – *but please remember to tell them to contact YOU if they want to unsubscribe!*

#### **Urgent Actions:**

We sometimes receive emails that need immediate action and cannot wait for the weekly bulletin. To receive these items email the same address with “**urgent actions**” in the subject box.

***If you appreciate these bulletins, help to keep them coming by donating to NJPN:***

*Send cheques payable to NJPN to: NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX.*

*Make a regular donation by **standing order**: Download standing order/membership forms from <http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/>*

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As a small charity NJPN relies on donations from its members and friends, as well as grants for specific work or projects, if you feel you are able to make a contribution you can either: make a bacs payment to our account: Sort code 16-31-15 account 10089516 reference Donation

with your surname or our CAF donate

page: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/8130#!/DonationDetails>