Pax Christi’s greatest asset—our members!

It is not easy to convey the breadth and depth of engagement of our members. For this Justpeace we invited three members, with very different lengths of involvement, to reflect on what being a member means to them and HOW they engage with Pax Christi as a movement.

Our publications worker Peter Hickey is at the frontline of requests and support for members when it comes to our materials. Peter writes of the opportunities for all members and supporters to use our peace-making resources more fully and so multiply the message in simple and effective ways.

Please, please let us know what YOUR peacemaking looks like, in your family, school, parish or workplace. We would love to share more of the good news and approaches of our members.

Making visible a personal commitment to peace

I am 62 this year and Pax Christi has been part of my life for almost 40 years.

Being committed to peacemaking has meant speaking out, and making visible my commitment to peace. It’s meant being involved in so many different types of action including: demonstrations, awareness-raising days, days of reflection, acts of witness, lobbying (for example about Diocesan investments in the arms trade), stalls in the city centre, a conference with business on arms manufacturing. So many different ways to work for peace.

Highlights have included:

- The monthly prayer service at Menwith Hill, the American spy base, which we organised throughout much of the 1980s.
- Being ejected from the British Aerospace AGM in 1996 for protesting against the sale of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia, which at the time was occupying East Timor.
- Commitment to understanding the Palestine/Israel conflict through speakers from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine & Israel (EAPPI) and links with Yesh Guval, resisters of conscription into the Israeli army.
- The chance to hear international speakers from other parts of the world, including recently Bishop Kevin Dowling, our international Co-President.

But you can’t do all these things on your own and my local Pax Christi group (and friends from other denominations in the Inter-Church Peace group) has been the place of friendship and solidarity often when peace issues have felt marginalised in the Church.

It’s been somewhere to discuss in a safe place the doubts, uncertainties and difficulties of working for peace. It’s been a place for prayer and reflection and ensured my peacemaking was solidly rooted in the gospel.

Nationally the resources of Pax Christi both spiritual and factual have been invaluable. The sharing of Franz Jägerstätter’s life and the commissioning of the Pax Christi Peace Icon to the Diocese are just two examples. Pat Gaffney’s willingness to come and speak to support our work and to be at the end of a phone for wise advice has made such a difference. As important has been the witness for peace that others in Pax Christi have shown. Inspirational and feeding hope at the same time.

Being part of a national and international movement has been vital to my commitment. I continue to be proud to say I am part of an international Catholic peace movement, especially when others have lost trust in the Catholic Church.

Carol Burns, Leeds

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www.paxchristi.org.uk
**Teaching peace — a member reflects on the opportunities with her role**

Last November, I attended the Christian Peace Education Fund anniversary celebration. It was wonderful to hear a little more about the history of peace education work in schools. The event also made me reflect on how valuable the work of Pax Christi has been for me in my own classroom practice.

Recently, I have been reflecting on how to encourage pupils to think deeply and critically. This is where I have found being a member of Pax Christi particularly useful. Images from the DSEI Arms Fair in September 2017 sparked a discussion among a Year 9 group about the difference between a crime and sin - and whether being a faithful Christian could ever involve breaking the law. Joining the Pax Christi section on the Women’s March in London last year gave me some interesting stories to tell pupils the following week - as well as helping me to practise what I teach. And the Pax Christi Peace Icon helped Year 10 pupils to understand and experience the importance of icons in the Catholic tradition.

The high-quality education resources provided by Pax Christi are, of course, another way in which Pax Christi supports teachers. I can particularly recommend the ‘Christian responses to conflict’ lesson when teaching the Sermon on the Mount. A couple of years ago, when looking at how to further enhance the Catholic life of our School, I approached an event which would have a different feel about it to other school events - something which would see the pupils discussing it long after they returned home. We created conference packs which contained free gifts and resources. We invited Bishop Peter Doyle to a question and answer session with pupils, and we put on a series of workshops and discussion events to get pupils thinking about how they can make a difference to the world around them. The feedback from staff and pupils was overwhelmingly positive. We are already busy planning our 2018 event!

Jennifer Rowlands  
St Paul’s Catholic School, Milton Keynes.

**Promoting peace where you are — with our Pax Christi resources**

Pax Christi has always relied on its members to bring the work of Pax Christi into their daily lives and local communities. The question ‘What can we do?’ is something we hear with increasing frequency from our members who seem more and more eager to get involved in local initiatives and events.

As a membership organisation we have always encouraged members to carry our work and mission out to the wider community and to engage in the peace building opportunities around them. One of the leading ways we have seen this engagement in action is when people decided to host a Pax Christi stall. This is an effective way for one or two members to make such a difference. Looking back over the past year we have seen plenty of imaginative and varied initiatives that our members have taken.

Some highlights include selling goods at Diocesan Justice and Peace days, stalls for Hiroshima or GDAMS events, parish bookstalls, community fairs, conferences where members have taken the initiative to be present and promote who we are and what we offer.

Perhaps your local Church or place of worship already has a space where Pax Christi materials can be picked up or sold? Maybe your local community is already hosting occasions when the chance to hold a stall would be possible? Once you have identified the event or the place where you would like to represent Pax Christi get in touch and we will help you choose resources. Sale or return terms are available.

We have a fantastic range of seasonal goods for Lent and Advent. Our cards are always popular as well as olive wood goods from our partners in Bethlehem - a great way to highlight our solidarity work with Israel/Palestine! We can help you choose a relevant theme for your stall or if there is already a specific theme for the event then we can advise you which of our resources will be most suitable.

There are plenty of resources already available from our online shop: http://paxchristi.org.uk/shop/  
Otherwise you can call the office. Running a stall or resource space is something any of our members can take on and you don’t have to be alone. We are here ready to support you in your promotion of Pax Christi and to help you make the most of your local peace-building opportunities.

Peter Hickey, orders@paxchristi.org.uk
In early 2017 I became a member of Pax Christi and joined the Executive Committee. The organisation had always been on my radar growing up a Catholic and now as an adult I wanted to be part of something, to contribute to a movement, particularly in the face of the increasingly gloomy political situation!

To be a member means a number of things. Importantly, to me, it contributes to the running of the organisation that works tirelessly to promote nonviolence. The more members that we have the more that we can do. Pax Christi, however, does not just want to take our money. We hope for active and engaged members.

I marched with Pax Christi on the 2017 Women’s March in London with other women members. It gave me a sense of solidarity and purpose to participate with an organisation. Marching with a peace banner felt especially pertinent after the election of Donald Trump despite his behaviour to women.

Events that I have attended as a member include the AGM, which gathered members from across the country to take part in sessions about the work of Pax Christi and I co-presented the annual Peace Award to two very inspirational members. I also took part in a Pax Christi Advent service. It was a movingly curated service that related the period of Advent to current issues. The service guided the congregation through seasonal reflections on the issues of Israel Palestine, those seeking asylum, women and peacemaking in our world, all accompanied by beautiful music.

As a member of the Executive Committee I get to see the behind the scenes activity of the many events, publications and action of Pax Christi and to be involved in the structure of the organisation.

Each of the members of the Exec team brings something different to the board. I feel that what I can offer to the organisation is experience in a Human Resources department, an interest in social media and how the organisation can use these tools to engage people in our actions for peacemaking.

Being a member of Pax Christi gives you a way to contribute to building peace and promoting nonviolence. Being on the Exec allows you to have an input as to how the organisation will do this.

Laura Atherton, London. Executive Committee member

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**Diary**

**3 March (Sat) Perth**
‘Christianity & War: Reclaiming the nonviolence of Jesus’. A day of prayer, study and organising. 10.30-4pm Threshold Centre, St John the Baptist Church, Princes St PH2 8LJ. Speakers: Revd Dr Clive Barrett (Anglican Pacifist Fellowship / Peace Museum) and Revd David Mumford. Bring lunch to share. Info & registrations: dmumford@phonecoop.coop

**20 March (Tues) London**
Christian CND Embassies walk starts 11am with prayer in the Dick Sheppard Chapel, St Martin-in-the-Fields. Visit embassies to discuss implementing the International Nuclear Ban Treaty. Info: 020 7700 4200 christians@cnduk.org

**6-8 April (Fri-Sun) Rutland**
The Thomas Merton Society conference at Oakham School. ‘Facing the Life-and-Death Issues’ Keynote speakers: Pat Gaffney and Gordon Oyer. Details & bookings: www.thomasmertonsociety.org.uk or contact Liz Hanvey, bookings@thomasmertonsociety.org.uk

**Romero Week**

**17 March (Sat) London**
‘Peace - the Product of Justice and Love: The ongoing struggle for peace in Romero’s beloved El Salvador’. 11am Service at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, with address by Rubén Zamora

Talks by Rubén Zamora: ‘Romero and the Social Challenges of El Salvador Today’
**15 March (Thurs) Cardiff** 7.30pm, Jane Hodge Hall, Cornerstone Centre, Charles St, CF10 2SF
**16 March (Fri) Cambridge** venue and time tbc
**19 March (Mon) Liverpool** 1.00pm, Hope University; 4.00pm, Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King
**20 March (Tues) Leeds** 7.00pm, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square
**24 March (Sat) London**
Romero Feast Day Mass at 12.30pm, St George’s Cathedral, Southwark. Main celebrant: Archbishop Peter Smith
Contact: romerotrust@gmail.com

**20-22 April (Fri-Sun) Leeds**
‘Letting in the Light: positive steps for peace in a turbulent world’. Joint conference at Hinsley Hall of Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Church Peace Fellowships and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Details and bookings: Tilly Martin 01865 250781 membership@anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk

**2 June (Sat) Leicester**
Pax Christi annual general meeting. Put the date in your diary!

**21-24 June (Thurs-Sun) Hoddesdon**
Church and Peace AGM, followed by weekend conference, both at High Leigh. Theme: ‘Justice and Peace shall embrace (Ps 85:10) Journeying together for reconciliation in a fractured Europe’. Info: forbesbarbarae@yahoo.co.uk

**20-22 July (Fri-Sun) Derbyshire**
40th National Justice and Peace Swanwick Conference: ‘In the Shelter of each other the people live’. Speakers include Sarah Teather, and John Grogan MP. Info/booking forms: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or tel: 020 7901 4864
Peace Sunday 2018

There is a healthy flow of donations arriving daily from parishes around the country which responded to our Peace Sunday appeal. As of 9 February, income from Peace Sunday stands at £38,843 - a good start and well into our budget target of £115,000! We were greatly encouraged by a pre-Christmas mailing to parishes which have never given to Peace Sunday. Twelve responses brought initial donations of £1,960, and renewed contact too. As always, the best results often come from parishes where Pax Christi members are able to encourage and support. This year we heard that Holy Apostles parish in London involved their Catholic primary school in creating a peace walk through the church and children engaged with the Pax Christi prayer activity card. The Liverpool Pax Christi Group ran an information stall at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool on 14 January for the 10 am family Mass and again in the Crypt for the Student Mass. You can see more reports here http://paxchristi.org.uk/members-news-2018/

Women wanting peace say Thank you Pope Francis

A twist to our traditional International Women’s Day postcard this year. We are encouraging women to use the new card to write to Pope Francis to affirm his leadership on issues of peace, nonviolence and disarmament. We imagine how happy he will be on 8 March to receive hundreds of postcards and e-messages! More here: http://paxchristi.org.uk/2018/02/05/8-march-international-womens-day-and-thanks-to-pope-francis/

Arms fair protestors acquitted

The tide seems to be turning. The arms trade is becoming less and less palatable and the right to protest more fully recognised. This seems to be the case for Pax Christi members Chris Cole, Nick Cooper, Henrietta Cullinan and friends from the London Catholic Worker and Put Down the Sword. All were involved in nonviolent actions to stop the setting up of the DSEI arms fair during the ‘No Faith in War’ day in September 2017.

At their hearing in Stratford Magistrates Court they were able to show the lengths to which they had gone through letter-writing, petitions, dialogue with MPs, the organisers of the fair, and haulage companies delivering to DSEI, to communicate their concerns about the morality and legality of the arms trade. They also gave powerful personal testimonies — drawing on experiences of visits to Afghanistan and working in this country with refugees fleeing war zones — to make the very clear connection between policies and trade in this country and the lives of those who suffer at the receiving end of this horrible trade.

How can you help us?

Having read this issue perhaps you could consider standing for our Executive Committee? We are always looking for new members to bring their skills, life experience and interests to our work. If you want to know what this entails, contact us for a role description. Our Annual General Meeting takes place on 2 June in Leicester—when we would like to elect and welcome new members to our Committee.

Keep peace alive. Remember Pax Christi when making or updating your will

Please send me information on
Membership[ ] Resources[ ] Legacy[ ]

I enclose a donation of £ …… to support your work

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Pax Christi, St Joseph’s, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

Pax Christi—Our Values

Pax Christi members live by the biblically inspired values of Peace, Reconciliation, Nonviolence.

These values are supported by the witness of peacemakers down the ages and the experience of the Pax Christi community.

Pax Christi is rooted in Catholic Christianity but is open to all who are in sympathy with its values and work.

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