



# PEACELINKS

News from the Fellowship of Reconciliation

*building peace, seeking justice, bringing hope*

Summer 2022

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**Reconciling God,  
we pray for communities fractured by gunfire and bombs;  
for all those who have lost loved ones and their homes.**

**Bring shelter to those who are homeless.  
Teach us all to seek the Truth,  
love Mercy,  
do Justice and work for Peace  
so that we may live in reconciling ways.**

**Heal the hurts of war  
and touch their lives with Hope.**

## Prayers for Ukraine

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also inside ...

Ukraine responses

International

EuFOR branches  
& Church & Peace  
conferences

Resources & Events

Peace Sunday  
Methodist meeting  
Books and more



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# Director's Diary

It was January that we last issued an issue of Peacelinks and a lot has happened since then. We have seen war break out in Ukraine and our own government is currently changing its leader. This combined with an increasing cost of living crisis and continued global food insecurity due to climate change means we are facing some turbulent waters.

So what could our message of peace be at this time? My first thought is to recognise that our message of peace is sometimes found in simply asking the question. Various politicians are eagerly calling for increased military spending. Yet who dares speak up and ask if that truly builds lasting peace?

My second thought is to recognise that even in times of warfare we all lose if we allow ourselves to fall into the easy trap of demonising the opponent. It was disappointing to hear of Coventry re-examining its twinning of a Russian city in response to the invasion. The hard work of reconciliation reminds us of our shared humanity and anything that denies someone's humanity ultimately weakens us all.

My third thought is one borne out of experience. The weekly prayers for peace, happening every Friday, have become a source of strength and challenge for all who attend. While a group of 30 people around the world praying for peace may not sound big, it is 30 people who are further enabled to act for peace. And from those 30 people who knows what could emerge?

Finally, I write this after a summer of church conferences continue to meet. In among the paperwork of legislation and conversation points, there are small glimmers of interest in issues of peace and justice.

Historically we have challenged and changed the church to really consider what its theology and practice is in relation to peace. Maybe we need to think more carefully and plan some resolutions for next year?

*John Cooper*

I'm happy to come and lead worship, speak in bible studies, give general talks on peace and more. Contact me direct: john@for.org.uk or write via Peace House.



## Week of Prayer for World Peace 16 - 23 October

For leaflets, other resources and details of the annual online gathering:

<https://weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk/>

### PEACELINKS

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***"We are one in Christ  
and can never be at war."***

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We welcome members' news and details of events for Peacelinks and our website. Please send your articles and images, or questions to [office@for.org.uk](mailto:office@for.org.uk)

Members and supporters have received this edition either through the post or via email. If you would rather receive it the opposite way to which you have done please write to, call or email the office, and we will change it for the next time.

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Front cover: prayer .... Rev Clive Fowle from Touch of Hope

# News Round Up

## New Chair and Trustees for Movement

The Annual Council of the Fellowship met online in May 2022. The meeting heard a review of the last year and shared thoughts about themes emerging in the new strategy. A key part of the meeting was to elect new trustees and a new chair. Methodist minister, and someone often heard on BBC Radio 4, Rev Mark Wakelin was elected as the new chair. Activist Annie Sharples and Rosalind Graham-Hunt were also newly elected while URC minister Rev Robert Western was re-elected.

Mark said “I’m very excited to be involved in the FoR. It has been very much part of my family’s life, both my father and grandfather were COs and my dad found much support from FOR when he was in The Friends Ambulance Unit in WW2. My parents first met at a fellowship in Birmingham. I am looking forward to learning about the trustees and their hopes as well as those of the wider Fellowship”.

## Peace Is A Doing Word

Rev Dr Barbara Glasson has recently published a book of daily peace reflections called ‘Peace is a Doing Word:’. This compendium of reflections and prayers challenges the reader to seek and build peace in the everyday, while not shying away from big questions of peace and justice in the world. It’s already gone to reprint and is not only a very useful resource for individual and group use but profits from the publication will support the work of the Fellowship. Get your copy today from Sacristy Press.

- The Methodist Peace Fellowship held their annual AGM on June 4th and have been pleased to welcome Deacon Angie Allport as their secretary. Supporters were invited to take part in a ‘Walking with Micah’ justice conversation.
- FOR joined the wider peace community on July 4th at a mass to give thanks for the life of veteran peace campaigner, Bruce Kent, who died on 8th June, aged 92.
- Peacelinks forerunner ‘The Christian Pacifist’ was a key journal of FOR. The London School of Economics, who host our archive, have now digitised copies of the journal covering World War 2. Read them for yourself now: <https://access.lse.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1pi01005>.
- FOR members Tim Gee and Victoria Turner have had a busy time writing books. Tim Gee’s latest book ‘Open for Liberation: An Activist Reads the Bible’ explores a liberation reading of the Bible. Victoria Turner’s ‘Young, Woke and Christian’ brings together a wide range of prophetic voices to challenge the church on its journey to justice. One contributor, Annie Sharples, who wrote about peace has since joined the board of FOR.
- FOR joined with others to mark International Conscientious Objectors’ Day on 15th May. Zaira Zafarana who is the UN Co-ordinator on Human Rights for IFOR joined the Leicester commemoration to share about her work.



Dunbar Churches held a vigil service to pray for peace and remember the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



John Cooper, Director of FOR, joined with Redditch FOR Group to talk War, Peace and Climate Change at their annual Peace Party.



Members of European Branches of IFOR stop outside the former Paris home of the Goss-Mayrs during the annual EuFOR meeting.

# Ukraine Responses

The Friday after the Russia-Ukraine War started, in February this year, FOR members gathered online for Fellowship and to pray for peace. We have continued to meet every Friday and have invited guests who help us explore questions of war and peace that are raised by the conflict.

You are welcome to join us either by contacting the office or looking on social media where we regularly promote the registration details.

We will continue to meet as long as the war continues, with an additional week giving thanks for peace and praying for reconciliation between nations and peoples when the war ends.

We start at 7.30 pm with prayers, music and a short presentation. At the end of the main half an hour, people are offered the option of chatting to a few of the others in a breakout room.

Some of the sessions have been joint events with other peace organisations including Cymdeithas y Cymod (FOR Wales), Church and Peace, Christian CND, the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, and the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

There has been a truly international participation, with individuals joining us from USA, Uruguay, France, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Spain, Australia, Netherlands, Sweden. When the EuFOR conference was on, we co-ordinated the prayers from Paris (*see page 6*), and we hope to do similarly at Greenbelt.

## NATO and Ukraine

A major impact of the War has been to make traditionally neutral nations consider if they wish to join NATO. Sweden has been pressured to apply to join. Kristna Fredsrörelsen (FOR Sweden) made statements about NATO membership and the war. See [tinyurl.com/5n87e4yr](https://tinyurl.com/5n87e4yr).

## Generosity of our Fellowship Towards Ukraine

Shortly after the war started in Ukraine the FOR put an appeal out for financial support. It helped ensure the Fellowship could advocate for peace in the UK by creating and distributing resources and running online prayer sessions and campaigns. A third of the income was earmarked to support humanitarian relief in the Ukraine, provided by our IFOR partner the Mennonites. So far we have transferred over £2,000. We are grateful for all donations.



## Ruslan Kotsaba

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation, via its Geneva Office, has been advocating within the United Nations during the period of the conflict.

When the War broke out Ukraine introduced a form of conscription, with no space for those whose conscience leads them to reject the call.

Zaira, the UN Coordinator for IFOR, has advocated in general terms and also picked up on the specific case of Ruslan Kotsaba, a Ukrainian journalist, pacifist and conscientious objector. He was arrested simply because he publicly expressed his pacifist views. His case went for trial on 19 July 2022, with at least one further hearing scheduled for September.

## Looking to the Future

What should your Fellowship look like in 2026 and how do we want to ferment a culture of peace and nonviolence in the world? Over the last few years we've begun to lay out plans to navigate the future. This includes a focus on environment and peace, challenging increasing military spending and building international links for joint opportunities of solidarity. We will be doing this by strengthening and growing the fellowship so that it continues to meet and support each other online and in person. These priorities were defined during a period in which the world was radically changed first by Covid19 then by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This redefined what normality was and reminded us a strategy is only a guide for the future, so join with us as we travel together.



# Members Shape new Logo and Define Our Values



The story of the foundation of FOR centres on a handshake between Henry Hodgkin and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, a German, in 1914. As they prepared to depart to different places on Cologne railway station platform they shook hands and declared they were “one in Christ and would never be at war”. This commitment to building bridges between nations and working together in Fellowship is seen as an inspiration for peacemakers today and so the handshake is the new logo.

John Cooper, Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation said:

“Henry’s pioneering spirit of peace, ecumenical encounter and anti-militarism is a vital part of the FOR story. It reminds us we are playing our part in a journey of peace with other people. In our modern era, where divisions are accentuated for political gain, it is good to remind people that peace begins by breaking down barriers, increasing encounters and calling for peace and justice”

The new logo is accompanied by a strapline which draws on our theology and vision to promote us as a movement that is building peace, seeking justice and spreading the hope found in nonviolence.

## Values of the Fellowship

The Fellowship has reflected on member feedback and its broader history to define the values it works by. We hope these will become clear markers through all of our work about the nature of movement that we wish to be:

- **Faith-based** We are rooted in the Christian Faith and recognise the distinctive value that faiths bring to peacebuilding.
- **Partnership** We work in partnership with members, supporters, churches, other faiths and secular movements and agencies where our aims are consistent.
- **Fellowship** We believe that working together, in mutual support and Fellowship, provides the community of support that’s needed to enable practical peacemaking.
- **Diversity** The Fellowship is at its best when it celebrates the diversity of everyone already involved and take positive steps to increase the diversity of those wishing to join or work alongside our fellowship.
- **Creativity** We encourage creative responses to the call to be peacemakers.

## Visit or Hire Peace House

“Peace House on Paradise Street” is a poetical address, and the reality does not disappoint.

Our beautiful Georgian building has Tardis-like properties and is ideally situated in central Oxford, behind the Castle Quarter and adjacent to the Westgate Shopping Centre, less than 10 minutes’ walk from train and coach stations.

FOR members are always welcome to visit our Oxford home by appointment so do get in touch if you’re in the area. We’d love for you to see the redecoration, have a cup of tea, and check out the spaces available for hire.



Meeting rooms and offices are available for immediate use at very reasonable rates. Rooms/ desks can be hired for a day/ week/month on a fixed or rolling basis with long-term hire also available. We’re sensitive to the needs of community groups and are pleased to provide a base for two brilliant local charities.

You can find us on the FOR website, and on twitter @PeaceHouseOx.

To enquire about hiring a room, email [emma.office@for.org.uk](mailto:emma.office@for.org.uk) or call the office on 01865 250781. All proceeds from room hire support the peace work of FOR, so we would really appreciate your help in spreading the word.

# Reconciliation in Turbulent Times

“We are Creation’s possible people” is a line from a prayerful poem shared in one of the keynote speeches of the conference “Reconciliation in Turbulent Times” in Birmingham on 2 July 2022. The day event was the latest to be organised by two ecumenical organisations, Church and Peace with the Fellowship of Reconciliation of England and Scotland. It recognised we live in turbulent times and encouraged participants to explore actions and focus on hope through Christ. This was the first hybrid conference with many people attending in-person. The gathering had happened online only for the last two years and there was a sense of energy in the room.

The day started with a keynote by Rev Sam McBratney, a Methodist minister and experienced reconciler titled “The Long Road to Reconciliation”.



He shared from his personal experience of exclusion and harm done when Church and society deal with conflicts in a pastoral rather than a justice-driven approach. He highlighted that conflicts arise if there are power imbalances at play before going on to explore ‘resurrection’ as a key word for the churches’ furthering of reconciliation. Focussing on this opens the horizon for new life and transformation being possible.

While some participants afterwards continued discussing these reflections with Sam, others joined a very different workshop. Ana Raffai shared her experience of reconciliation and building peace in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. As a founder of the organisation “Regional Address for Nonviolent Actions” in Croatia and “Believers for Peace” in the region, Ana shared the ongoing commitment and need for reconciliation after the wars, ethnic and religious divides and displacement of the late 90s still impact on the societies. Almost 30 years after the conflict was hot, spaces to meet and mutual respect were still needing to be created and enable reconciliation to happen. “Giving hope

to others is peace work,” Ana said, encouraging participants to explore their own sources of hope and sharing those perspectives with others. A powerful example of the long road it takes to truly build peace and foster reconciliation.

The afternoon started with Rev Dr Barbara Glasson presenting passages from her recent book “Peace is a Doing Word”. With prayerful poetry or poetic prayers, her talk highlighted that peace is not wishful thinking but rather a vocation that’s engraved in the hearts and minds of Christ’s followers who allow themselves to be disquieted by this vocation. To love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us in community, according to Barbara. As is taking peace as the measure and rule and the one thing that will make a difference and change the world.



Additional to continuing the conversation with Barbara, two more workshops were offered. In her workshop “Choosing Peace in Times of Fear and Division” Carolyn Merry encouraged the participants to view times of turmoil and chaos – which are terms that continue to describe current situation in the UK and globally – as the transformative period of a caterpillar in a cocoon. It is the most important time of the development into a butterfly that just takes time. Crucial to continue to choose to be driven by peace rather than fear, is self-care. In order to not burn out, regular pauses, rooting ourselves in our spiritual foundation, shifting from reacting from fear to acting out of love, as well as trusting in God and the power of community is important.

Deacon Angie Allport shared her experience of working in a diverse coalition to highlight local concerns for peace in her workshop “Building Peace when the Arms Fair Comes to Town”. The Three Counties Showground in Malvern is usually associated with flower and livestock shows, however it has become more recently associated with an annual Arms Fair (Three Counties Defence and Security Expo, 3CDSE) that has started to hire the venue. *(continued on next page)*

# EuFOR Gathering urges peace efforts



On June 12 there gathered in Paris for the annual meeting of the European branches of the International FOR, representatives from Austria, England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Wales, Switzerland and The Netherlands. They expressed their profound concern for the increasing of armament and military expenditures in response to the ongoing warfare, and stated:

**H**istory teaches that militaristic response leads to the increase of the armed conflict and that war is a disaster for humanity and for the entire planet. This attitude is dangerous and creates the illusionary assumption to maintain peace using the violence of weapons.

The war in Ukraine demonstrates once more that violence creates more violence and we need an efficient alternative way to transform conflict and ensure lasting peace. Active nonviolence is the alternative which can ensure a future for our community. We acknowledge the several nonviolent efforts by people in Ukraine as well as by those peacefully protesting against war in Russia and being jailed.

IFOR started in 1914 with an explicit commitment to refuse to engage in WWI. As members of IFOR we invite you to learn from the past and support nonviolent resistance, dialogue, peace negotiations, civilian intervention, reconciliation

process in order to de-escalate the violent conflict.

We stand in solidarity with those who refuse to engage in the war in Ukraine and in all other wars, and with those who object and look for protection in other countries.

We call on all European countries to work for peace, through nonviolence and not to search for peace through arms. We urge the European Union to genuinely pursue peace in practice and deeds. We need peace alliance not military alliance.

We extend our warm invitation as well to Church leaders and religious groups to expressively join efforts in supporting peace and refusing war.

We call on our governments to urgently engage in peace efforts and refrain from supporting the military system and the war through military expenditures, weapons production and trade.

The EuFOR statement concluded with a call ahead of the historical Conference which took place from 21-23 June in Vienna concerning the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The gathering urged all remaining European countries to sign the UN Treaty, and commit to free the world from this pending threaten to life on earth. NATO members Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Norway sent observers.

## Reconciliation in Turbulent Times *(continued)*

As with other towns and cities around the UK, when local people hear about the fair and the types of weapons discussed they are outraged and mobilise a range of groups to take action. Often this has led to the invitation to hold the fair being withdrawn. On this occasion the showground still holds the fair and so participants were invited to sign campaign postcards and raise their own concerns about the booking.

Following a brief wrap up plenary conversation, during which people reflected on ideas and challenges heard during the day, the meeting closed in worship. Lizzy Norman-Sargent from the Student Christian Movement spoke about some of what challenges her to stay active for peace before sharing a prayer she had written for the UN International Day of Peace.

Videos of the keynotes are available: <https://tinyurl.com/forpeacemaker>





# Peace Sunday

## 18th September 2022



The nearest Sunday to the UN International Day of Peace.  
The 2022 theme is A Harvest of Peace

Each year FOR publishes a service outline and sermon notes. These are available as a download from the FOR website.

[www.for.org.uk/peacesunday](http://www.for.org.uk/peacesunday)

# WHAT DOES PEACE MEAN?

**Saturday**  
**17 September 2022**

The Methodist Peace Fellowship invite people to an open conversation that will explore what peace means and how we can work together to create it.

**Online from 10.30 am**  
[www.for.org.uk/events](http://www.for.org.uk/events)

**Registration:** <https://bit.ly/3O9we8K>



**I enclose a donation in support of the Fellowship's work**

[ ] (please write) £.....

**I enclose a donation in support of the International Peacemakers' Fund**

[ ] (please write) £.....

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*giftaid it*

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- [ ] to update my contact details
- [ ] to receive our short regular email newsletter
- [ ] to receive information about becoming a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation
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**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form to**  
Fellowship of Reconciliation:  
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