



# Pax Scotia

## Issue 29

### Contents:

Page 2: Fiona Kendall seeks safe routes for refugees

Page 3: Archie Willis thinks a new generation *is* drawn to ban the bomb

Page 4: Pax Christi Scotland - the year ahead

## 2023: New Year, New Hope, Renewed Campaigning for a Nonviolent World



*Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion!*

*For, here, I am coming; and I will live among you,"  
says Adonai. (Zechariah 2:14)*

We are on the threshold of a new way of being, a new paradigm, a new logic for life. What we are birthing will be closer to the beloved community. It will be richly, beautifully diverse and decidedly nonviolent. It will not depend on weapons or violent force. It will not perpetuate systemic or structural violence. This new way of being, this new paradigm will nurture inclusive human dignity, respect for the integrity of creation and the kind of right relationships toward which Zechariah was pointing.

May our celebration of the Christi Child's birth renew our hope in this possibility. Many blessings for the new year!

**Marie Dennis**

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative  
Pax Christi International



Let us walk with hope and courage in this new year, to strengthen compassion with those who struggle for a world without weapons, which only leave a trail of death, pain and destruction of all of God's Creation. Let us accompany communities that seek Climate Justice in the face of the abuses of the extractive industry - mining and others, from an Integral Ecology approach. Let us continue to promote evangelical nonviolence, opening our hearts to overcome indifference, polarisation and strengthen the paths of a Just Peace and Fraternity between Men and Women and with Nature.

**Martha Inés Romero**

Pax Christi International Secretary General  
Regional Coordinator for Latin America and Caribbean



**Pax Christi Scotland** asked some of the most influential peace voices around the world to give our members a message for 2023.

**Our** wish is that peace will prevail; that we will convince leaders to reach out to the marginalised, understanding that we are all brothers and sisters. And that we as Pax Christi Scotland members will follow what St Catherine of Sienna said: **'Speak the truth in a million ways. It is silence that kills.'**

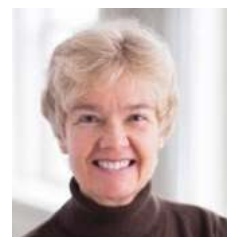
It's our job in 2023 to speak the truth to achieve a nonviolent world.

*Marian Pallister*, Pax Christi Scotland chair

My wish is that we could finally comprehend that each of us is a tiny but integral part of a larger community of beings — animal life and plant life — intrinsically connected. We cannot survive without each other. Every act of destruction hurts each of us; in protecting each other, we protect ourselves. And so we need to act with peace, care, empathy, and compassion for each other. Always.

**Mary T. Yelenick**

Pax Christi International UN-NGO Delegation  
[www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)



**R**efugees - and those who rescue them, support them, welcome them, help them to move on - have been demonised for too long. The ruling on December 19 that it is legal to send asylum seekers to Rwanda was heart-breaking. In June 2022, Pax Christi Scotland heard from Brendan Woodhouse, fireman and volunteer activist in the Mediterranean saving many lives. Here **Fiona Kendall**, another hero working for refugees, adds more valuable information as we seek to challenge the hostile environment.



## SAFER ROUTES - NOW

**Fiona Kendall** is a mission partner shared by the Church of Scotland, Methodist Church and Global Ministries. A former lawyer, she is seconded to the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, where she works on policy and advocacy within its refugee and migrant programme, Mediterranean Hope. Fiona is vice-moderator of the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, which monitors European migration policy and works to develop common ecumenical advocacy positions.



**Fiona Kendall**

### All Deserve a Welcome

On 14th December 2022, Together With Refugees (a coalition of over 500 organisations, including Pax Christi Scotland, which believes in showing compassion for people fleeing war, persecution or violence) posted this picture with the following Tweet: "Today we are united by grief & determination. Our hearts are with the families who have lost so much. No one should lose their life trying to reach safety. Without safe routes, people are left with no choice but to risk everything. Enough is enough. We need #saferoutesnow."

The trigger for the tweet was four people losing their lives in the icy waters of the English Channel. Yet the reality is that such tragedies are happening on a daily basis on different borders. My colleagues based on Lampedusa, a tiny slice of Europe around 150 miles from Tunisia, do what they can to meet every boat arriving there. When I spent time with them in September, 24 boats arrived in the space of two days. Yet they do not flinch. Every person who arrives, whatever has pushed them to make one of the world's most dangerous crossings,

deserves a welcome.

"Mediterranean Hope" is the name given to the work which the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) does for migrants and refugees, its presence on Lampedusa being just one element. Confronting death at sea also triggered FCEI's commitment to developing "safe routes now" back in 2015, specifically the humanitarian corridors pioneered with the Community of Sant'Egidio to bring refugees safely and legally from Lebanon to Italy. Seven years on, the programme is embedded in political and public consciousness, has facilitated the arrival of thousands and generated a number of legacy corridors from and to different locations. Be encouraged: if the will is there, new safe routes CAN be created.

Nurturing public and political support for asylum-seekers is rarely straightforward.

***In the EU and in the UK we hear a narrative which scapegoats migrants and stokes fear. NGOs involved in sea rescue are often demonized. The phrase "illegal routes" has become common parlance.***

Yet, from a legal perspective, the right to claim asylum does not depend on how someone arrives -

and nor does international law prescribe where an asylum claim should be made. Yet, said confidently and often enough, such ideas take root.

The UK has chosen to support the resettlement of people from specific places such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. That is to be applauded – but places offered represent a fraction of the numbers who require asylum, a fraction of overall reception places offered by other countries, and provide no hope to refugees of other origins. Yet some would seek to exploit the call for safe routes by simultaneously dismantling the asylum system, proscribing claims made outside these schemes.

UNHCR has made its position about this clear. We certainly need safe routes. But they must be sufficient to meet identified need. Until then, our ability to welcome through the open asylum system to which the world adheres remains fundamental.

*Fiona Kendall*

For more information, go to:

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2022/12/6398b0914/unhcr-appeals-uk-uphold-its-international-legal-obligations.html>





# Ukraine - catalyst for a new generation to protest against weapons of mass destruction?

**Archie Willis** is a journalism student at the University of Strathclyde. His current assignment is to write about nuclear weapons in Scotland and it seemed fair exchange that after he had interviewed Pax Christi Scotland's chair, he would write about his own experiences for *Pax Scotia*. Mainstream media stay silent on the nuclear issue - can Archie change that?

**Arriving** at Faslane Peace Camp on a chilly Saturday morning, I was greeted with a hug, cuppa and extensive tour of the site. As I'm told by camp member and occasional resident Margaret Ferguson Burns, this is a "very important place – this is where it's actually going out and happening". And yet, the lethal nuclear warheads lying dormant in Argyll & Bute receive little media coverage, which is exactly why for a university assignment I went to visit the world's longest surviving active peace camp.

That afternoon's vigil followed the busy A814 road to the North Gate of Faslane Naval Base. We then looped around the loch on a number 316 bus – packed with intrigued local punters – all the way to the Coulpport depot, another military eyesore on Scotland's west coast which provides "care and maintenance services" for the nuclear warheads.

It's a journey my late grandmother, Elizabeth Willis, took in the mid-1960s, just as the UK's nuclear programme first set up shop in Argyll & Bute almost 20 years prior to the establishment of Faslane Peace Camp. As a 17-year-old first-year student at Aberdeen University, she joined Aberdeen's division of the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (YCND) and hopped on the CND bus to demonstrations at Faslane, Hyde Park in London, and other key locations when, as she said, "it was all kicking off" for the anti-nuclear movement.

The image of both my grandparents as "crazy hippies" was always the subject of some amusement during my childhood, and shamefully enough, remained completely misunderstood until I flicked through her diary of 1964-1965 the night I returned from Faslane. In between a mass of notes on her meetings, court hearings and Marxist-socialist events, she wrote that the Aberdonian student campaign against nuclear weapons was "a phenomenon worthy of being written up in its own right".

I was well aware that she had dragged my dad as a toddler along to large scale CND marches in late-1970s London after moving down south, but it's safe to say that the anti-nuclear anarchist bug hadn't exactly passed down the generations to me. And yet, incredulously, here I am on a sickeningly stuffy, bumpy bus journey holding a basket of protest materials for a bunch of hippies I'd only met that morning.

My own experiences are probably symptomatic of a wider trend within Scotland's anti-nuclear movement, which now struggles to attract as many teenage university students as were attracted in my granny's era of widespread freedom fighting in the name of world peace.

**Archie Willis**  
*Strathclyde University journalism student on his first visit to Faslane Peace Camp*



As if to disprove that theory, a student steps off a passing bus from Helensburgh to join the walk. Wide-eyed and ready to learn, it's her first time at the camp – she's never done anything like this before.

Everyone has a reason to trek up and down the base's perimeter fence, whether unwittingly retracing your rebel grandmother's footsteps or simply exploring an historic site of peace protest.

The catalyst for further attention could well be the situation in Ukraine, with bigger numbers of students needed to get the camp thriving once again. So take the 316 bus from Helensburgh and find out what the anti-nuclear movement means to you.

*Archie Willis*



Archie & Peace Camp members at Faslane North Gate on a bleak December day

## Our website

Blogs, podcasts, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Websites:

<https://www.caledonianwebsites.com/>

## Membership Reminder

**Easiest method? Pay on the membership page of our website.**

If you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

If you wish to pay by cheque, send to the address below, cheques payable to Pax Christi Scotland.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page - thank you.

Membership fees are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged.

Explore the website for all our activities:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

## Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<http://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

[@PaxScotland](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

[@PaxScotland](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

[@PaxScotland](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

Snail mail:

Pax Christi Scotland

c/o Xaverian Missionaries

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Coatbridge ML5 4JS

## YouTube Channel

You can find recordings of all our events at:

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/@paxchristiscotland)

[@paxchristiscotland](https://www.youtube.com/@paxchristiscotland)

Click on the word 'Subscribed' and you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.

Pax Scotia December 2022 -January 2023 Issue 29



# Pax Christi Scotland: the year ahead

**P**ace is what we say on the tin, and peace is what we will continue to strive for in 2023.

As we have learned from our members, 'peace' is a wide-ranging concept. In 2022, our online events have reflected that - our distinguished speakers have spoken about the presence of nuclear weapons in our world, the climate crisis, the refugee situation, gender violence, racism, and the threat that poverty holds for the peace of mind of far too many.

As we move into this new year, we will seek to reach out to all our brothers and sisters to create a better, more inclusive world, a world in which the marginalised are brought into the embrace of a common home that shares its riches with equity.

It doesn't look as if it's going to be an easy ride. As you can see on P2, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are under even greater attack. Hate speech on social media continues to stir people to mysogyny and racism. The situation in Ukraine gives excuse to the nine nuclear nations to not only hang onto their weapons of mass destruction but to increase their stockpiles - to the detriment in the UK of health, education and social care provision.

More than ever we need your support: the letters you write to your MSPs and MPs, to your banks and councils; the protests you make in person, the petitions you sign, the commitment you make to being Pax Christi Scotland members.

We pray that our online events will be as inspirational as they were in 2023 (and we can remind ourselves of that on our website and YouTube channel), and that speakers will be as generous with their time as they have been in 2022.

On P2 we hear from student Archie Willis that a new generation is being inspired to speak out against the possession of nuclear weapons and their place on Scottish soil. We know how committed young people are to halting the climate emergency. We are all working for **their** future, for a kinder, peace-filled world.

Pax Christi Scotland's Executive Committee wishes each and every one of you health, happiness and peace in 2023, and we look forward to sharing time with you (perhaps in person!) in the year ahead.

In peace

*Marian Pallister*

*"The time has come for all of us to endeavour to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common."* Pope Francis's message for the World Day of Peace 2023.

