



Church and Peace

Internationale Geschäftsstelle

Church and Peace - European Ecumenical Peace Network

A people's movement for peace

Laufdorf, 29 April 2026

"We need a people's movement for peace", said Jane Kinninmont, CEO of the United Nations Association (UNA UK), at a joint peace conference in Milton Keynes.

Church and Peace hosted a joint conference over 24-26 April 2026 on the topic of "Healing from Conflict" – the healing process after war and conflict – together with the British branch of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR UK), the Anglican Peace Fellowship (AFP), the Christian International Peace Service (CHIPS UK) and Pax Christi UK.

In her presentation about the UN and the UN Charter, Jane Kinninmont pointed out that while people in the Western world have experienced **80 years of peace**, this has not been the case worldwide. The Global Peace Index 2025 shows that general conditions for world peace are at their lowest level since 2008. **2.7 trillion dollars were spent on arms and war in 2025.** This is many times more than the UN budget.

The first UN Peacebuilding Week will take place over 22-26 June 2026, to recognise and strengthen partnerships for peacebuilding. Kinninmont explained that this was a way for the UN to highlight that peace does not only depend on heads of state shaking hands, but is a process to which citizens contribute and which needs to be anchored in civil society. Global peacebuilding is more than a short-term drive for peace in Palestine, Iran and Ukraine, i.e., the wars that are in the news currently. There are other, neglected conflicts which need to be considered too. Kinninmont drew attention to the UN crisis and the politics of a multilateral world order. She suggested that we **write letters to support appointing a woman as the new UN Secretary-General to take office from January 2027.**

Martin Tiller, a Church and Peace board member and an activist for the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (Christian CND), led a workshop on **how to argue against nuclear weapons** and emphasised that 13,000 nuclear weapons belong to just nine states worldwide. Like Jane Kinninmont, he refuted the argument that owning nuclear weapons provides more security from aggressive states. Kinninmont said that one possible scenario is that two states in a conflict situation move towards nuclear catastrophe (see too the position of the Church and Peace board on the Munich Security Conference on Europe's "nuclear options" and the concept of deterrence: <https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2026/04/the-munich-security-conference-showroom/>).

The 40th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster fell on Sunday 26 April, during the conference.

Siniša Klem, a Church and Peace board member and a Baptist theologian from Croatia, gave a lecture on **the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4: 1-16) entitled "I am Abel, but Cain lives in me"**. We should be aware, he said, that there is "a tendency to do evil if we see only ourselves as 'a new creation', superior to others, and externalise evil". Along the same lines, he also criticised judging states fundamentally as good and democratic or bad and autocratic.

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Some methods which foster healing processes were presented in very practical **workshops**, e.g., Revd Canon Kate Massey of Coventry Cathedral introduced an art therapy approach, and Rike Flämig of Refo Moabit (Berlin) showed a body-orientated approach. Rev. Nathanael Reuss (Australia) spoke about “Trauma and theology” and support for survivors of complex PTSD. Catriona Robertson of the Iona Community (Scotland) brought a fingerprint labyrinth about the right to peaceful protest. John Cooper of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) led a workshop on the militarisation of faith and society. Ana and Otto Raffay of RAND (Croatia) spoke about the courage for peace in warlike times; Marcellina Priadi of CHIPS talked about the quest for peace and healing in Darfur; and Revd Girma Bishaw spoke about creating space for healing via the Gratitude Initiative.

During **memorial prayers**, the conference participants remembered peace activists who were killed, such as Tom Fox, Christolyub Bozhiy Vegan, Michael J Sharp and Zaida Catalan and others, and also those whose life work was peace activism, such as Jaap van der Sar and Wilfried Warneck. **Lindsay and Craig Foreman, who merely wanted to meet people in Iran and are currently imprisoned for doing this, were remembered in prayer.**

At the end of the conference, Ulrike Flämig invited the participants to join the **Peacewalk**. The Peacewalk is a **15-month collective pilgrimage from Europe to Jerusalem/AIQuds**: “Join us for an hour, a day, a week or months – along the world’s longest peace path, the Jerusalem Way.”

<https://peacewalk.info>

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