



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Newsletter

*For all within our denomination who witness to the
belief that war and preparation for war are
failures of humanity*

Issue 20, May 2022

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www.ukunitarians.org.uk/peace/

Musings from the Chair

As I write this, I think I have finally recovered from a busy General Assembly.

We had an excellent conversation at our session. Many who want to do something, and some suggestions, from each day at a certain time to pray for and or to simply hold peace, in all the ways we envision peace happening.

This year's Anniversary service offerings have been marked to go to the Red Cross, Ukraine Appeal.

Peace Vespers led by the UPF officer team, especially Celia Cartwright, received several comments of thanks.

Our AGM returned the committee with the addition of Michael Allured as a new member.

We have a request, and that is that Celia Cartwright would like to pass the work of the Treasurer to someone else, so please consider if you are in fact able to do this important work for us.

Also, one emphasis I keep reminding the committee of is that we need to address conflict, not just through giving to the Red Cross, but in how we educate others, and especially highlight giving to those organisations that are proactively working for peace and justice.

If you are willing to help me do this, I would like to hear from you. Out of this year I would like us to assist our Trans-siblings by creating a study packet, with an emphasis of why we Unitarians view this as an important religious matter.

In our Vespers service and repeated in our session I included in the prayer, the top twenty plus places of conflict due to the number of battle related death per year. Current listings are over a year ago, and the amount understood to place these countries in the top 22, is around 10,000 battle related deaths. What is even more shocking is that this number of 22 conflicts of this magnitude is one of the lowest we have seen in many years.

I received several comments of people so moved and brought to tears by this information... it is sobering. I conclude my musings with the list and brief description of the conflict: *Afghanistan - Civil War/Terrorist Insurgency*; *Algeria - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Burkina Faso - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Cameroon - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Chad - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Colombia - Civil War/Drug War*; *Democratic Republic of the Congo - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Ethiopia - Civil War*; *Iraq - Terrorist Insurgency/Political Unrest*; *Libya - Civil War*; *Mali - Civil War/Terrorist Insurgency*; *Mexico - Drug War*; *Mozambique - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Myanmar - Civil War*; *Niger -Terrorist Insurgency*; *Nigeria -Terrorist Insurgency*; *South Sudan - Ethnic Violence*; *Syria - Civil War*; *Tanzania - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Tunisia - Terrorist Insurgency*; *Ukraine - Invasion by Russia*; *Yemen - Civil War*.

Rev John Carter, UPF Chair

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**Peace Fellowship Matters**  
**PUTTING IT POLITELY,**  
**WE NEED THE MONEY, PLEASE!**

As the Fellowship is now becoming active again, following the joy of meeting in person at this year's GA Meetings, we would like you to pay your subscription for 2022/23 please. We have decided to maintain the current rates: £9 for an individual; £15 for a couple, £18 for a small group, £27 for a large group.

**Our 2022/23 Appeal**, which was launched at the General Assembly meetings last month, is in aid of the **Red Cross Emergency Appeals**. We decided not to make it specifically for the Ukraine Emergency Appeal for two reasons: first, the collection at the GA Anniversary Service raised over £5,000 for this, and second, as John Carter told us during Peace Vespers and during the Peace Fellowship session, there are many other countries around the world in a state of conflict, who need the kind of aid the Red Cross can provide.

**Please, if you can, donate** to our Red Cross Emergency Appeal right now. Your donation will reach someone who urgently needs it, no matter where they are in the world.

**We would be very grateful** if you would send your cheques, made payable to 'The Unitarian Peace Fellowship', to our Treasurer, Celia Cartwright. (address on back page). Please write on the back of the cheque what the payment is for (i.e. subs / appeal / both). Thank you very much.

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GA President's message for 2022/23 Peace Fellowship Appeal

Dear Friends,

As Feargus O'Connor, a stalwart Peace Fellowship committee member, wrote (about the invasion of Ukraine) in *The Inquirer*, "We are seeing a terrifying tragedy unfold before our eyes. The people of Ukraine are facing the worst disaster and Europe as a whole our most dangerous political crisis since the Second World War.

"Approximately 10,500,000 Ukrainians, including over 4,800,000 children, have been displaced: around 6,500,000 internally displaced and almost 5,000,000 have already fled the country in

desperation as refugees in this rapidly escalating crisis.... Homes, schools and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed. Water, electricity and other essential facilities have been badly disrupted. Landmines and other devastating weapons are killing many innocent civilians.

“Bombs are rained down on Ukrainian cities. Innocent civilians, including defenceless women, children and the elderly, are subjected to incessant shelling and are forced to take cover in basements and shelters. They endure days without water, food and other basic supplies.

“By donating to the British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal you will help Ukrainian victims of war by:

- supporting families with food, warm clothing, first aid and medicines
- taking people to hospitals, transporting medical supplies and helping set up blood donation units
- supporting and funding hospitals and primary healthcare facilities, fire fighters and civil protection units
- repairing homes, schools and community centres
- and rebuilding or replacing Ukraine’s vital infrastructure damaged or destroyed by war.”

All this is true, and I was delighted that the General Assembly chose to donate the offertory (more than £5,000) collected at the Anniversary Service of the recent GA meetings to the British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal.

Yet as we discovered at the Peace Fellowship session at the same GA meetings, there are more than twenty other countries around the world, whose population has suffered more than 10,000 battle-related deaths in the past twelve months. None of whom are making any substantial headlines, but all of whom are in need of humanitarian aid such as that described above.

So the Peace Fellowship Committee has decided to make this year’s Appeal for the British Red Cross in general, rather than just

for the crisis in Ukraine. Please send your cheques, made payable to ‘Unitarian Peace Fellowship’ and endorsed on the back with ‘2022/23 Appeal’ to our Treasurer, Rev Celia Cartwright (address on back page).

Thank you.

Rev Sue Woolley, President of the General Assembly

UPF HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY FOR 2022/23

UPF invites you to support the Red Cross by friending them on social media as well as with financial contributions.



Webpage: [https:// www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/donate](https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/donate)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BritishRedCross>



“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.”

Jimi Hendrix

Peace Vespers, April 2022 by Ed Fordham (from *GA Zette*, reprinted with permission of the author)

Someone else I was chatting to was going to the Peace Vespers and I decided to tag along. Peace: the most newsworthy of current agendas matters to me, but I wasn't expecting to attend Vespers at GA.

We were barely a minute in – guided expertly by Rev Celia Cartwright – and I found tears dripping down my cheeks.

Then in Rev John Carter's brilliant, eloquent and blunt prayer for peace and the case to work for peace, I found myself crumbling.

There is so much need for peace at the moment – not in a way that is nice and lovely and warm – but we need to work for peace. Peace should be in our deeds. Peace should be part of our mission.

If I was to have any doubts, then they were dispelled by Rev Sue Woolley. Calm, warm, loving and true – I find that Sue speaks from her heart – but also that she speaks directly to my heart. And I know in my heart that I don't do enough for peace and I know I can do more. We all know that we can do more.

After Peace Vespers tonight I feel bolder, braver and more emboldened. Peace had in me a supporter, tonight it gained an activist. I have wiped away my tears and taken a walk outside. I know I can and – now, now, I will do more. Thank you Celia, John and Sue. It worked for me – and I, in turn, will work for Peace. Louder, harder and with more passion.

Witnessing for Peace in Troubled Times: the Unitarian Peace Fellowship session at 2022 GA meetings

Peace Fellowship Chair, Rev John Carter, began by leading a centring meditation, using words which he had written for the occasion. A series of statements beginning "For peace to be in our world..." It included a sobering list of twenty plus countries in which more than 10,000 people had died in the past year, because of civil war, terrorist activity and drug wars.

During the meditation, he asked those present a series of questions for reflection:

- What are our thoughts and beliefs about peace?
- Which conflicts concern us the most?
- What are our congregations doing to witness for peace?
- What would we like to see our wider Unitarian community doing to witness for peace?

When the meditation ended, he opened the discussion by asking more questions:

- What one thing stood out for you in your personal reflection?
- Do you have a dream for our Unitarian community and our witness for peace?
- What would you like to do in your own life to witness for peace?
- How can we be pro-active, rather than reactive?

A lively and thought-provoking discussion followed, during which people suggested a wide variety of ways in which we, both as individuals and the wider Unitarian community, might witness

for peace. Some were shocked by how widespread the violence in the world is. Most agreed that we need to start where we are – to bring peace into our own lives, and to act at a grassroots level – not only through how we relate to people day by day, but also through actions such as taking to the streets in a walk of witness for peace (e.g. an annual inter-faith peace walk) or planting a peace pole in the grounds of our chapels and churches. We agreed that both will and energy are needed to get people together to witness for peace. And that empathy for the other is an essential ingredient.

We concluded that it should be the role of inter-faith relations to work together for the promotion of peace and lobbying for more government money to be spent on this and less on defence. And that better communication between individuals and countries is at the heart of working for peace, as it will lead to a better understanding of the other's motivations.

Peace can be seen as a fundamental choice about how we choose to deal with conflict.

Sue Woolley

War = ?? by Celia Cartwright

It is strange
how times change:
what once was
considered ridiculous
into what now
deemed right.

When I was 15
in school one day,

when asked to find a simile
for war,
I said: "Futility."
And uproar then ensued
for I had failed to see
how that would sound
to those who had
returned from war
with memories
too much to bear,
and those who grieved
the dead of war,
and wanting it to mean
Something.

Now
I hear it all the time,
that war is
indeed Futile.
It takes,
It hurts,
It spoils,
It kills,
It turns men Into beasts,
And causes so much pain.

For what?
A bit of land,
A sense of entitlement,
A perceived wrong?
Are these worth lives
and grief
and devastation?

I think (perhaps),
The idea that war

Is Futile, now
 Is one small step
 Along the way to peace.
 A step away
 from peace.

Celia Cartwright April 2022



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision



The Unitarian Peace Fellowship was founded in 1916 in the darkest days of the First World War to witness for peace and against the futility of war. Today we maintain that witness. Our vision includes the ethos and values of the Charter for Compassion. The surest route to peace is through the compassion of human beings for each other and for all living things. We support and encourage Unitarians in their witness for Peace and Compassion locally, nationally, and internationally.

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