

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

*Six thriving and growing churches, making Christ known in
our area of Milton Keynes.*



May 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to the May edition of the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Newsletter. (also see website at www.stantonbury.net)

Partnership News

Partnership wide service

Tree Cathedral Service

The Parks Trust have confirmed that we can hold a Partnership wide service there on Sunday 15th September at 3.00pm. This is the last day of the National Heritage Week in Milton Keynes. Also, Bradwell Silver Band have now confirmed that they will play from 2.30pm to welcome everyone.

Appointment of new Anglican Minister

The advert for a Team Rector is in the Church Times, The Oxford Diocese website and Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership website now.

Resignation of Anglican Minister

Rev. Canon Chuks Iwuagwu's last service at St. Andrews is on Trinity Sunday, 26th May 2024. He has kindly allowed his powerful resignation letter to be available on our SEP website, so please click on the home page to read it.

He invites all 6 congregations to attend and have refreshments with him and his family afterwards. Stephen Hutchings, Church Warden at St Andrews, has asked if any contributions towards a gift go through him. (see below) Please check your newsletters over the next weeks to find out how you can say goodbye to Chuks as he leaves St. Andrews.

We will be presenting Chuks with a surprise gift in gratitude for the seven years of dedication and love he has given to all of us in the ecumenical parish. Your contributions towards this gift would be most appreciated. You may pay by bank transfer using reference "**leaving gift**" (or just "**leaving**" if it doesn't fit).

The bank account details are:

St. Andrew's Congregational Council

Sort Code: 20-57-40

Account number: 00789925

Stephen Hutchings

Churchwarden

St. Andrew's Church, Great Linford

Update on Baptist Minister Appointment

Many of you will know that Philip came to visit the partnership in February. He was able to meet members at each of the churches and attended some events including the Shrove Tuesday partnership service. He made a return visit on the first weekend in April. A group of five from across the partnership met with him for an interview on the Saturday and he led worship and preached at Christ Church on the Sunday. The service was live streamed, and the recording remained on the Facebook page for some days so as many as wished could view the service. Many took the opportunity to meet with him and his family at tea on Saturday afternoon and after the service on Sunday.

On the evening of Monday 8th April a meeting was held at Christ Church attended by 38 members from across the congregations. There was a unanimous vote to invite Philip to minister to us across the partnership with a particular focus on mission. This was confirmed by the trustees at their meeting on 9th April. He was pleased to accept the offer on the condition that we sorted appropriate housing. This is currently in progress. God willing he will join us in early September.

Please pray for Philip and his family and also for the recruitment of a minister to the team rector vacancy.

Adrian Prisk

Church (six congregations) Meeting

Thank you to the many members who turned up for this meeting on 7th April, and to Dave Haseldine and Adrian for leading us through the information on the Baptist Minister appointment process.

Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship and Worship Committee

Thankfully, Dave raised this at the last Trustees meeting, and I am meeting with him to see how we can develop this within what will be an exciting time for our six church congregations.

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council

Thank you for your draft AGM minutes and officer nominations for approval at the CIO AGM on 25th April 2024.

Church Wardens swearing in is in May.

There are no dates set for future meetings. These will be determined after the AGM

Social Media

Thank you to those who have contributed to our congregations or Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Facebook and website. The Facebook groups are all public so just post your own comments. Please check daily as there are so many activities going on.

If anyone can start an Instagram or X account for the SEP please get in touch with me.

As always, many thanks to John for pulling these newsletters together in the hope that better communication leads to closer friendships as our LEP Review showed was needed.

Warm blessings and may I wish a Happy Birthday to the Church this Pentecost.

Sharron, Chair of SEP
secchair22@gmail.com
07846346809

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence

Sunday 5th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 12th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Paul, Smith

Sunday 19th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Esther Squire

Sunday 26th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Guy Elsmore



Services are frequently live-streamed on Facebook using the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/BradwellChurchMK>

Gardening Club on Wednesdays at 10:00

Bell Ringing practice every Wednesday at 19:45. Beginners welcome.

Christ Church, Stantonbury

Sunday 5th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Canon Peter Ballantine

Sunday 12th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev David Nash

Sunday 19th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev David Lewis

Sunday 26th at 10:30 **Morning Worship with Communion
and Virtual Communion**

Led by Rev Dave Haseldine



All Sunday services are live-streamed to Christ Church's Facebook page, using the link below. You don't need to belong to Facebook in order to follow the service.

Streaming starts from 10.25 <https://www.facebook.com/christchurchmk/>

There is also a Christ Church website at www.christchurchmk.org.uk which has the service details on it, and which is updated each week

Saturday 18th at 09:30 **Coffee and cake morning**

all donations received go to Christ Church coffee money charity.

Morning Drop-In every Wednesday 10.00 – 11.30.

Meets at Church, refreshments and a quiz are available.

Under 5's meet every Thursday in **Term time only** from 10:00 to 11:30 in the Hall.

Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Sunday 5th at 11:00 **Signed Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Peter Green

Sunday 12th at 11:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 19th at 11:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Stephen Fletcher LLM

Sunday 26th at 11:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Services are live-streamed on Zoom at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85922248518?pwd=Tm4vd00wancwVk52cCtqNm5tMWRZdz09>

Meeting ID: 859 2224 8518 **Passcode: 830413**



Friday at 2:00 pm - **Prayer time & Bible reflection on Zoom**

This lasts around 45 mins - do join us from wherever you are on Zoom!

Please contact Sue Baines for the Link on suejbaines@gmail.com

Chatterbox MK every Wednesday from 10:30 to 12:30. All Welcome - tea - coffee - cakes - meet and chat. Come and meet others

Please pray for the **Care Homes in Neath Hill & Downs Barn** as we conduct a Church Service and Holy Communion on **Sunday 26th at 3.00pm and 4.00pm** respectively. Remember the frail, elderly, the caring staff & the concerned families as we minister God's love and grace.

St. Andrews', Great Linford

Wednesday 1st at 10:00 **1st Wednesday Communion**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Followed by refreshments and the 4th seminar in the series of 6 on "Talking about God" led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 5th at 10:00 **Open Door with Baptism**

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

Sunday 12th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

Sunday 19th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

Sunday 26th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu



Sunday Sitting Room at 17:00 on Zoom every week

Contact greatlinford@googlemail.com for joining details

Morning Services are live-streamed on Facebook using this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/StAndrewsGL>

Morning Worship every Wednesday at 08:30 in Church. All are welcome to attend in church or on our Facebook page.

5 WAYS CAFÉ at St. Andrews' Church

11.00am to 1.00pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month

Join us to enjoy good company, refreshments, a selection of board games, Pete on the piano and, for those wanting a bit of exercise, an accompanied walk in Great Linford Manor Park. In addition on the 2nd Tuesday of each month local artist Jane Charles will be leading 'Coffee & Craft - accessible art for everyone', this is a joint venture between 5Ways, Friends of Great

Linford Manor Park and the Parks Trust, so come along and see what you can do! All are welcome to 5Ways - we aim to be dementia friendly.

St. James', New Bradwell

Sunday 5th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 12th at 10:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Sunday 19th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 26th at 10:00 **Methodist Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Stephanie Hibberd



Services are live-streamed most weeks to St James' Facebook page.

Every Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00 St James' hosts a Coffee Morning.

Visit St James' website at www.stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk for more information.

St. Mary Magdalene, Willen

Sunday 5th at 09:30 **All Age Morning Worship**

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 12th at 09:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 19th at 09:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Hannah Akibo-Betts

Sunday 26th at 09:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe



The monthly communion service at **Oaktree Court, Portland Drive** will be at **2.45 pm on May 2nd**. Anyone who would like to join us, and stay for a cup of tea afterwards, would be welcome. Please speak to Margaret Moakes.

Volunteer Gardening at St Mary Magdalene Church. Join volunteers as they start again in 2024 with the upkeep of the churchyard. New faces welcome! **Saturdays 10am – 12pm** from April 13 onwards. Even if you only come sometimes speak to Sharron about joining the WhatsApp group.

The next of the **Second Saturday at Three** presentations organised by Willen Village Heritage Association at St Mary Magdalene Church Willen will be on Saturday **April 13 at 3.00pm**. (see attachment for details)

T.T.T.T (Third Tuesday at Twelve Thirty) Pop along to St Mary Magdalene Church Willen and be entertained by **U3A Band** on **Tuesday May 21st**. (see attachment for details)

Future Events

Saturday 11th May

10.00-12.00 **Coffee Morning for Christian Aid Week**

St James will be holding their usual coffee morning and raffle as above. This year they will be including a seed and plant swap in return for a donation.

Saturday 25th May

7:00-9:00pm

BARN DANCE

At St. James', the event is free entry (but you may have to pay a bit to leave!).

You are most welcome to a great night of music, dancing and fun. Please bring your own drinks and snacks. Further information, straw hats, etc., from Duncan Barnes.

External Ecumenical News

We want to plan for our future in faith and church and ministry. If anyone reading this is thinking their future may lie in any level of ministry, please speak to your minister or drop me a line.

News from Diocese of Oxford

Appointing the next Bishop of Buckingham

Bishop Steven of Oxford wrote to clergy and church wardens this week to say 'We continue to grieve Bishop Alan's death, to pray for his family and to remember him with deep affection and thanksgiving. In the midst of that grieving, we do now need to begin the process for appointing the next Bishop of Buckingham and I am writing to seek your views as part of the consultation process.

There will be a vacancy period of around a year following Bishop Alan's death.

Archdeacon Guy will lead the Area Team through that time and Guy and I will be meeting regularly throughout. During the vacancy, I will hold primary responsibility for Buckinghamshire and we will draw in Bishops Gavin and Olivia (until September) and honorary Assistant Bishops as appropriate for licensing and confirmation services. We have been reflecting for some months about where the next Bishop of Buckingham should live. The consensus from various consultations has been that the Bishop's house should be located in the south of the new city of Milton Keynes so that the Bishop can play a fuller part in the life of what is now by far the largest centre of population in the diocese while remaining the Area Bishop for the whole of Bucks. At the same time, we will be establishing an area office for the Area Team, including the Bishop and their staff, in the former Archdeacon's house in Stone. The first step is ... to seek the approval of the Dioceses Commission to appoint at their meeting on 13 June. If all goes well there will be an announcement in December.

Please would you keep this appointment in your prayers in the coming months, both privately and publicly. We are together seeking the person whom God is calling to this vital ministry in the life of the diocese and the area. This letter begins the process of initial consultation. Please see this letter as your invitation to comment on the needs of the area and the diocese. Please email or write to me in the normal way and indicate if your comments are confidential to me or can be shared at some point with the wider group. This initial consultation process will end on 30 April. I will also be holding a series of meetings with the Area Deans, separately with the Lay Chairs and holding a number of other face-to-face consultations in Buckinghamshire to listen to reflections. By all means feed your own insights into the process through the Area Deans and Lay Chairs. We are all continuing both to grieve and adjust to Bishop Alan's death and for that reason there will be a second consultation day to check back with colleagues on Monday 10 June.

It is possible that the person appointed may already be in episcopal orders, however this is unusual. We would therefore be looking towards the consecration of the new Bishops of Buckingham and Reading (provisionally) on 27 February 2025 (consecration dates are fixed many months in advance). You may wish to pencil this date into your diary. There will then be a service(s) of welcome into the diocese in the few weeks following.

Please do hold all of those involved in the appointment in your prayers as we seek the person of God's calling to be the next Bishop of Buckingham.' Bishop Steven

Archdeacon Guy also writes to the same group this week 'To support the parishes and deaneries of Bucks through the coming year of transition, I have delegated archdeacon's powers to four senior clergy in the area, who will work with the Revd Canon Chris Bull (Associate Archdeacon), myself and the area team to serve and support you in your ministry: Janet Binns, Deiniol Heywood, Sally Moring and Gill Barrow-Jones. The plan is that over the next year, alongside parish duties, the four will each give up to a day per week to share in the day-to-day work of archdeacons, thus freeing Chris Bull and myself to have more capacity in our roles during the episcopal vacancy. In addition to this, Archdeacon Jonathan Chaffey will be sharing in this year's clergy MDRs and will be available to offer other support as needed.

Canon Rosie Harper will continue in her role as Bishop's Chaplain until the new bishop is in place. My thanks to her for continuing in this way. Alongside this work, Rosie will become the Bucks Area Advisor for Women's Ministry.' Archdeacon Guy.

News from the Regional Central Baptist Union

Information about a Possible Request for a General Meeting of the Baptist Union of Great Britain

The following letter was sent to CIO members of the Baptist Union of Great Britain on 19 April 2024

I wrote to you last month to let you know that following a wide consultation among members of Baptist Assembly, Baptist Union Council concluded their discernment around Marriage and Ministry by deciding not to change our current Ministerial Recognition Rules.

Immediately following that decision, a group within our Baptist family who call themselves the 'Evangelical Baptists' asked the BUGB Trustees to bring further proposals to our Baptist Union Council. The Trustees have carefully considered this request. They wrote to the Evangelical Baptists earlier this week and also to all members of Council. The letter to Council is reproduced in full for you at the end of this email.

In both letters, the Trustees said:

'We do not believe it would be appropriate, helpful or constructive to bring such proposals to Council. Rather, we believe that now is the time to:

- refocus our Union-wide conversation and energy on our vision of 'Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission';*
- reassert our confidence in the Declaration of Principle as the basis of our Union; and*
- reaffirm our Baptist identity as a movement of autonomous churches, Associations and Colleges held together in covenant relationships.'*

The reason that I am highlighting this to you is that in the light of the Trustees' response the Evangelical Baptists are now likely to request that a General Meeting of the Members of the Baptist Union is called according to the provisions in the BUGB Constitution. We are writing to you because your church is one of the Members. This is because if a General Meeting is called then **the maximum notice Members will get that a meeting is being held is 49 days.**

I am saddened that I need to write to you in this way. My hope and prayer continue to be for the flourishing of our movement and for our wholehearted dedication to Jesus' Great Command and Great Commission. Please do keep praying with me at this time.
Lynn Green, General Secretary

We encourage our whole Baptist movement to refocus our combined efforts on the task given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20).

News from the Methodist Circuit

I cannot find any spiritual message on the Methodist Circuit MK this month but maybe one of our Methodist members could take on the role of providing news for us here.

News from The United Reformed Church

RWANDA BILL

The United Reformed Church, along with over 250 other organisations from across the UK, has signed an open letter to the Prime Minister following the government's Rwanda Act being approved by Parliament.

In an open letter to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the organisations say the Bill breaks international law and “abandons our duty to share in the global responsibility towards those forced to seek safety”.

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to express our shared outrage at the passage of the misleadingly named 'Safety of Rwanda Act'. This is a shameful and performatively cruel law that will risk people's lives and betray who we are as a society.

We all want to be safe – and we want that safety for each other, too. As a country, we are proud to uphold our responsibility to support refugees. Given the chance, communities across our country go the extra mile to welcome those in need. The wider public do not support the Rwanda plan.

But this law would enable the government to forcibly expel people seeking asylum – including children and survivors of trafficking and modern slavery – despite concerns they could be put at grave risk of harm and human rights abuses. The Rwanda plan will force people who have fled violence and persecution into detention centres where they may face abuse and mistreatment, with no time limit. They will then be removed to a country to which they have no connection, despite our country's Supreme Court ruling that it is unsafe for them. Through this law, the Government will put them at

grave risk of mental and physical harm, and of being returned to danger in the countries they fled.

Despite the clear ruling from the Supreme Court, the government is rewriting the facts so they can shirk our responsibilities to refugees. In doing so, the government would break international law and further shatter the UK's commitment to justice and the rule of law. While this is a targeted attack on refugees and migrants, an attack on one group's rights is an attack on all of us.

Outsourcing our asylum system to other countries is never acceptable. It abandons our duty to share in the global responsibility towards those forced to seek safety. Instead of continuing down this dangerous path, the government must guarantee that asylum claims will be heard fairly on our shores, and open safe routes so that people are not forced to take dangerous journeys.

As organisations working towards a better future for all, we believe in kindness and compassion. The government must listen to the people, abandon this deplorable deal with Rwanda and similar plans with other countries, and protect those who need sanctuary.

Sharron, Chair of SEP secchair22@gmail.com

News from Churches Together in Milton Keynes

Our strapline is:

One in Christ Jesus, engaged in God's mission, empowered by the Spirit.

There are far too many items on the website to list, so please take a look for yourself at: [Churches Together in Milton Keynes \(ctmk.church\)](http://ctmk.church)

News from the Partnership Green Champions

MK Eco Church Network meeting Saturday 13th April

This half day meeting was attended by several churches in Milton Keynes and the surrounding area. St James, as hosts for the morning, described how they are making their site more environmentally friendly and guided us through the graveyard pointing out the variety of wild flowers and areas left to grow wild. Signs outside and on the church porch noticeboard explained these changes which some consider look 'untidy and unkempt'. The walk stimulated a lot of sharing of what other churches were doing with their land and how they finance these improvements. Volunteers are not always just those who attend church but attract others eager to make church land more wildlife friendly as reported by Willen church.

Swift bird boxes are being installed in the bell tower and St Jame's past on their contacts for this work: Saving Wolverton's Swifts and Martins and New Bradwell Swifts group who will make the boxes give contacts for someone to fix them to houses/buildings in the area.

Christ the Cornerstone recommended the Oxford Diocese professional energy audit which comes with recommendations for improvements some of which the church would not otherwise have considered. The audit is being offered at a discounted

price. The cost of large scale energy saving installations was underlined by the cost of the attractive, low energy lighting installed in St James at more than £40,000. St James illustrated how environmentally friendly changes can affect all areas of our church life – oil filled candles instead of traditional wax ones, chicken wire and pin holders instead of oasis for flower arrangements and craft work with children using natural materials and homemade playdough.

We were encouraged to cut down our use of plastics by a display of environmentally friendly, plastic free products.

Stuart Kean from Christ the Cornerstone is the Environmental Lead for the Milton Keynes Deanery and gave a resume of up and coming environmental initiatives that we can join in. *If anyone would like to be added to the MK Eco Church Network mailing list, please contact Stuart whose email is: stuart.kean@gmail.com*

I hope that you find this newsletter interesting and useful. If there is anything you think would make it better or find any glaring omissions, please let your congregation's newsletter editor, Sharron or myself know.

*The deadline for information to go into June's issue is **Saturday 25th May** to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of June*

John

John Porter sepnewsletter9@gmail.com

*Finally if anyone would like an item included as the **Last Word** (max one and a half pages please) either next month or in future, send it to me at the above email address before the deadline with the reference 'Last Word'. JP*

*So I leave the **Last Word** item this month to Sharron with an updater on Willen's Hooke Heritage Project.*



St Mary Magdalene Willen feasibility project complete.

St Mary Magdalene Church Willen has now completed the feasibility phase of its Hooke Heritage Project.

The purpose of the project is to preserve the Grade 1 Church, to grow its congregation by providing space for spiritual activities, hospitality and washroom, and to share the story of its 17th century creator, polymath Robert Hooke.

With funding from the Heritage Fund, the Diocese of Oxford, the Society of the Sacred Mission and Milton Keynes City Council we have assessed the significance of the Church building, the need for the project and its potential impact, and developed illustrative architectural options. All of this has been shared for public consultation.

The Diocese of Oxford has reviewed the feasibility findings and consultation feedback and encouraged St Mary Magdalene to proceed to further develop the project. With this encouragement, the Church Leadership Team is now considering its plans for developing the feasibility findings into detailed and fully costed building plans, and a detailed and fully costed future operational activity programme and business plan.

No construction is planned during this development phase. I thank everyone for any support you have given us and please keep us in your prayers.

Further information from: smarland8@gmail.com