

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



July 2024 Newsletter

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

Partnership News

Partnership wide services

The licensing of our new Anglican Minister and Team Rector and Leader, Revd. Chi Okpala, will be on Wednesday 4th September at 7.30pm at St James. Members of his congregation in Wolverton are also invited to come. Bishop Steven will be leading this service. There will be refreshments after the service. Thanks to Adrian, Maggie and Penny for arranging this.

There will be a Welcoming service for Revd. Phil Dunning, our new Baptist Minister and Vision Enabler Leader, on Saturday 14th September at 2.00pm to be held at Christ Church. Members of his current congregation in South Wales are also invited to come. Lisa Kerry, or her colleague will be leading this service. There will be refreshments after the service. Thanks to Mary K and Graham for arranging this.

The Tree Cathedral Service is open to all and will be Ecumenical on Sunday 15th September at 3.00pm; the last day of the National Heritage Week. Bradwell Silver Band will play from 2.30pm. Thanks to Sam for leading in this. Please get in touch with Sam if you can help him in any way.

The next SEP wide service will be at St James on 29th September. This will be Revd. Paul Smith's farewell service at 3.00pm.

The last one in 2024 will be 29th December and has yet to be planned. We hope for it to be led by Lay Ministers. Please let me know if you are available and can help.

Appointment of new Anglican Ministers

The Trustees are determining the advantages and disadvantages of employing either a House for Duty part time Anglican Minister, or a paid Administrative Assistant. I will let you know as soon as I have some advice from them.

Church (six congregations) Meeting

As soon as the Trustees let me know when they want to call the next one I will let you know.

Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship and Worship Committee

Bless Dave Haseldine for trying to sort a meeting out between our clergy, before our new ministers begin working for us all. He is arranging to meet all Lay and Ordained Ministers on 18th July and those who can't attend can zoom in. please keep an eye on your emails to look for a message from Dave; or email him and tell him your availability.

This is about creating a Preachers' type of Guild, not a Worship Plan.

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council

Thank you to Penny Miller, who has offered to create a spreadsheet of what information is needed from our 6 congregations.

Trustees are determining whether to remain with the Methodist safeguarding system and training or move to the Anglican system.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: The next SEP Council Meeting is at **7.30pm on Thursday 18th July** and will be held at St Andrew's.

Social Media

Thank you to Paul Brookman and 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.

Volunteer Administrative Assistant

Volunteers are needed for Initial Point of Contact for Stantonbury congregations Please check with your Church Wardens and Ministers who will be discussing this with you in the coming weeks or contact me. I now have 8 volunteers to answer a phone from 10.00-12.00 one day a week and check emails during this time. There will be training for this. We need to find out if there is a need to employ an Administrator, if we can afford one. Our Ministers deserve this support from us. This is set to start on 1st July and I need to sort out a rota for volunteers before that so please get in touch with any questions. This will not be difficult or too onerous and the telephone calls can be transferred to your phone at home, if you do not want to sit in Christ Church. New Ministers coming in may expect this support.

SEP need all congregation newsletters and noticeboards to have the SEP phone number only advertised from 1st July this number is 01908 382458. We need to advertise one email address and one phone number for SEP communication for this to work and to this end I have deleted my phone number and email address from this newsletter.

I have visited Mason's Funeral Company and told them this is the only telephone number to use and the Manager was relieved as she said it is most confusing to keep being told that the telephone number is changing. They had about 12 telephone numbers in their system. There will be teething problems but we need to act as a Partnership and help each other, as support is not the same level in each of our six churches.

Thanks

SEP CIO Website

We would like to start a small working group to look at our website becoming more Partnership focussed to support Paul in the information that is put on. He has been supporting our website for a long time and we need to look at ways of making it accessible to many who will then not need to ring or email our ministers. This is not a teccy working group, but a group of people who want to share how they would be more able to use our website.

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 to all and thank you for reading this Newsletter.
Sharron, Chair of SEP

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence

Sunday 7th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Jenny Boxwell

Sunday 14th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Steve Barnes

Sunday 21st at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Colin Taylor

Sunday 28th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith



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 7th at 10:30 **Songs of Praise**

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 14th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 21st at 10:30 **Morning Worship with Communion
and virtual Communion**

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 28th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

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 20th 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.

Last session of this term is 18th July. Restart in September.



Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Sunday 7th at 11:00 **Signed Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Peter Green

Sunday 14th at 11:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 21st at 11:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Stephen Fletcher LLM

Sunday 28th at 11:00 **Songs of Praise**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley



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 28th 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 3rd at 10:00 1st Wednesday Communion

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 7th at 10:00 Open Door

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 14th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 21st at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 28th at 10:00 Baptist Holy Communion

Led by Rev David Nash

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.

St Andrews 1st Wednesday Seminar Group

Talking About Jesus - 'The Jesus Event'

In June the group completed the first in a series of six seminars, 'Talking About God'. On July 3rd, following Holy Communion at 10am and a short break for coffee and fellowship, we shall begin a further series of six seminars, 'Talking About Jesus'.

This second series opens with some preliminary observations on 'the Jesus of history' and 'the Jesus of faith'. We shall then review phase 1 in the development of Christology, focussing on 'the Jesus event' as perceived by the Gospel writers, but notably by Paul.

You would be most welcome to join us on the first Wednesday of each month and participate in the discussion, which usually starts at about 11am. **John Beazley**

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 7th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 14th at 10:00 Baptist Holy Communion

Led by Rev David Nash

Sunday 21st at 10:00 Patronal Holy Communion

Led by Rev Duncan Barnes and Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 28th at 10:00 Morning Worship

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

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 7th at 09:30 All Age Morning Worship

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 14th at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 21st at 09:30 Patronal Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

**and at 15:00 Celebratory service for Patronal and
Fr Jonathan Ewer SSM with Quorum**

Led by Archdeacon Guy

Sunday 28th at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Steve Barnes



The monthly communion service at **Oaktree Court, Portland Drive** will be at **2.45 pm on July 11th**. 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 continue in 2024 with the upkeep of the churchyard. New faces welcome! **Saturdays 10am – 12pm**. 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 **July 13th at 3.00pm**.

Please join for complimentary cake and coffee, and chat about our local history. Donations welcome.

T.T.T.T (Third Tuesday at Twelve Thirty) Pop along to St Mary Magdalene Church Willen and be entertained by **Webster and Ferguson** on **Tuesday July 16th, 12.30 - 1.15**. Pop in during your lunch break. Walking the dog or just passing by, stay for a while or the whole 45 minutes. Complimentary cake and coffee. Donations to Church Restoration & Hooke Heritage Project

Future Events

Thursday 18th July

12:30 - 13:15

Free Lunchtime Concert

At St. Mary and St Giles Church, Stony Stratford. Bring your own packed lunch and listen to local musicians James Jarvis (violoncello) and Helen Rouse (piano) play music by a variety of composers, whose special anniversaries are being celebrated in 2024, including Faure, Puccini, Holst and Michael Rose. (see attached poster)

Sunday 4th August

15:00 – 16:30

Piano Concert

John Robertson is playing at St Mary and St Giles Church, Stony Stratford. (see attached poster for more details)

Role Huddles

Across the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership there are groups of people with shared interests, abilities, knowledge or talents building links between our six congregations.

These role huddles include those with an interest in:

- ❖ Eco-church
- ❖ IT, sound systems, live-streaming
- ❖ Providing music for services
- ❖ Communication, social media
- ❖ Pastoral Care
- ❖ Care of our church buildings

These are very informal groups, only meeting if needed, but able to offer support.

If you are interested in finding out more, if you feel your congregation needs help with any of these, or if you could offer help, please contact me and I will put you in touch with the group.

Many thanks,

Irene

irene@tfarr.plus.com

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

New dates released for diocesan safeguarding training

The Autumn/Winter 2024 Safeguarding Learning Programme is now [available on the website](#). We have a range of online and face-to-face sessions available between now and the end of the year. Leadership or PtO safeguarding training needs to be renewed every three years.

Other training delivered by the National Safeguarding Team can be found on the [online learning portal](#). This includes Safer Recruitment and People Management and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse, which also needs renewing every three years.

The vacancy for the Bishop of Buckingham's position is going to be advertised soon and the date of 27th February 2025 has already been set for the selected person to begin work as a Bishop.

News from the Regional Central Baptist Union

Applying for National Churches Trust Grants: a FREE Workshop especially for Baptist churches

Thursday 18 July 12 noon - 13:00

The National Churches Trust (NCT) will be running a free training session for Baptist churches across the UK to help with applying for their grants.

The session will include an introduction to NCT grants and tips on applying, as well as examples of Baptist churches who have been successful in their application for a grant.

The event will be held online, and you can [click here to sign up](#).

NCT grants help churches to maintain and improve their buildings. The NCT accept applications for both listed AND unlisted buildings, as long as they are more than 30 years old and are open for regular worship.

We hope to see some of you there!

News from The United Reformed Church

The papers for the General Assembly 2024 are now available from the URC website and you can also follow this as it is live streamed.

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 Methodist Circuit

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton, and the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, Deacon Kerry Scarlett, have released this statement expressing their concern for the conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the 'Rapid Support Forces' (RSF).

[Read their statement here](#)

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) are encouraging everyone to 'Love, Pray, and Vote' for this year's general elections on 4th July. JPIT have put together a wealth of resources to help you and your church prepare and engage with the election.

[Discover the resources here](#)

News from the Partnership Green Champions

Eco tip for July

'Wilding' is a film showing at cinemas and MK Gallery from 12th -16th July. To quote from the Knepp Estate website knepp.co.uk/2024/04/wilding-movie:

"Wilding tells the story of a young couple that bets on nature for the future of their failing, four-hundred-year-old estate. The young couple battles entrenched tradition, and dares to place the fate of their farm in the hands of nature. Ripping down the fences, they set the land back to the wild and entrust its recovery to a motley mix of animals both tame and wild. It is the beginning of a grand experiment that will become one of the most significant rewilding experiments in Europe."

Screenings at MK Gallery	Friday 12 th July at 14.00
	Saturday 13 th July at 19.00
	Sunday 14 th July at 14.00
	Tuesday 16 th July at 10.30

*Well we have made it through two years and here we are at issue 25.
I hope that you find this and previous newsletters 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 August's issue is **Thursday 25th July** to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of July.*

John

John Porter sepnewsletter9@gmail.com

*I know this is already quite long enough, but I am adding this month's letter from Dave Haseldine as the **Last Word** as I found it very relevant. I hope you agree, so over to Dave. JP*

Letter from Dave Haseldine July 2024

Nick, a local C of E vicar recently got me thinking about how we discuss and debate with one another hot topics and controversial issues. We do not do this very well often, especially on social media, but also face-to-face. I read Nick's article as a plea for each one of us to engage in any and all debates with an attitude of humility and openness and to recognise our common humanity: thinking I might be wrong, or at the very least there are things that I have yet to learn, and I might learn some of them from those I strongly disagree with, indeed they might be the only people I might learn those things from, and that might also be true the other way round!

As it turns out, Nick's topic and words were very timely since I write this in the middle of a general election! So we are in even greater need of really listening to the variety of perspectives, experiences, and voices of the people in our communities who are virtually the same as me and my way of thinking (rare), or who have virtually nothing in common with me (also rare), or who are an amazing mix of both (that's virtually everyone!).

The ministers of a local Churches Together group meet weekly for conversation and to pray together. As we have met and talked on a wide variety of topics including politics, football, Israel and Gaza, and other things, I have been surprised, delighted, and disappointed in various measures when our thinking has been similar, and when our thinking has been utterly different. And when our views have been the most surprisingly different, those times have been when I have had to listen the most, and think hardest about why the person who is speaking thinks as they do, as well as think hardest about what has been and still is going on in me that makes me disagree with them, or better, disagree with what they are saying, and think hardest about assumptions I make about them and their views and me and mine. Have you come across this quote by an apparently renowned philosopher named William James: "A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices"? I remember when I first came across it and I winced and thought, "Ouch! I do that!"

Human beings need to talk well with one another!

So the ministers of the local Churches Together group discussed and held a General Election hustings so that people in the community could gather and meet the candidates to be appointed as their MP, discover who they are as human beings, listen to them, hear their ideas, and let them be debated and scrutinised in ways that were respectful, fair, honest and robust. It turned out that each of the candidates also wanted the same things as the Church ministers wanted: democracy at its best, nationally, locally and individually. However, one thing that we Church ministers had not thought about was the need for security for all the candidates. Ouch. Although our democratic processes are very far from ideal, remembering the bravery of murdered MPs Jo Cox and David Amess, and looking at too many other nations, may we realise what a fragile and precious thing we have in the democracy here.

The hustings went as well as we could have hoped: it was a safe, respectful, honest, and robust Q&A, helping all the 150 or so different people attending to decide how to use the precious right and gift they have to cast their vote on July 4th.

Jesus said to people to pray for even their enemies. So may you and I pray that: the person elected will be a real constituency MP, trying to respond with integrity to every constituent who contacts them regardless of whether they received their vote or not; and also that we will treat our MP, and each unelected candidate too, as the human being that they are regardless of whether we voted for them or not. Amen?

Dave Haseldine.