

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



August 2024 Newsletter

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

Partnership News

Partnership wide services

We are all invited to the licensing of our new Anglican Minister, Team Rector and Team Leader, Revd. Chi Okpala. This service will take place on **Wednesday, 4th September, at 7.30pm** at St James, New Bradwell. Members of his congregation in Wolverton will be invited to join us. Bishop Steven will be leading this service, and he has sent the proposed Order of Service to us. There will be refreshments after the service, so please stay and chat. Thanks to Mary K and Graham for arranging this and Helen Rouse for offering to play the organ.

We are all also invited to the Welcoming service for Revd. Phil Dunning, our new Baptist Minister and Vision Enabler. This service will take place on **Saturday 14th September at 2.00pm** at Christ Church, Stantonbury. Members of his current congregation in South Wales will be coming along too. Central Region Baptist Leader, Lisa Kerry, or her colleague, will be leading this service. There will be refreshments after the service, so please stay and chat. Thanks to Adrian, Maggie and Penny for arranging this.

The Ecumenical Tree Cathedral Service will be led by Revd. Dr. Sam Muthuveloe. It will welcome all 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. Please get in touch with Sam if you can help him in any way.

The next SEP wide service (on the fifth in the month) will be at St James on **Sunday 29th September at 3.00pm**. This will be Revd. Dr. Paul Smith's farewell service, led by Archdeacon Guy. If you would like to contribute to Paul's leaving gift, please let Mary or Graham (St. James Church Wardens) know or offer a monetary gift into the SEP account via Adrian Prisk, Trustee Treasurer.

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 Ministers, Sam, Phil, Dave and Chi, and SEPC have all determined to recommend to the Trustees that it is preferable to consider a House for Duty part time Anglican Minister, rather than a paid Administrative Assistant at this time.

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

Some Lay and Ordained Ministers came together on 18th July for prayer and reflection, and I hope this will become a regular Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship support within SEP in future. This joint support was seen as vital during our Review with Neil Popham to help us to grow more Christ like as in the vision for SEP, Milton Keynes and Oxford.

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council

Trustees are still finalising whether to remain with the Methodist training for Safeguarding or move to the Anglican system.

Date For Your Diary: the next SEP council meeting is **Thursday 19th September at 7.30pm at Bradwell church**

Churchyard Regulations

St James is in the process of closing their churchyard and handing it over to MK Council to care for, but Bradwell, St Mary Magdalene and St Andrews are using the Churchyard Regulations of 2016 and it's up to the Church Wardens to ensure the regulations are displayed, known and supported. Thank you.

Volunteer Administrative Assistant

Thank you to Adrian, Jackie, Kath, Helen, Kaddy, Janet and me for volunteering and being so successful. There are hardly any calls, so please ensure the poster is on the external noticeboards and remove any other phone numbers and email addresses. SEP need all congregation newsletters and noticeboards to have the one SEP phone number only advertised from 1st July this number is 01908382458. We need to advertise one email address and one phone number for SEP communication for this to work.

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.

Patronal Day Service at St Mary Magdalene 21st July 2024

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this service a success and also to Quorum Choir. Archdeacon Guy gave an interesting sermon on new evidence that has come to light on Mary Magdalene. At the same time, the remaining members of the Society of the Sacred Mission, no longer based at The Well, were thanked for their service over the last 50 years in Willen and their help in setting up the Hospice, which until 2018 was called The Hospice of Our Lady and St John.

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.

Have a wonderful summer
Warm blessings.
Sharron, Chair of SEPC

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence

Sunday 4th at 10:30 Morning Worship

Led by Rev Canon Peter Ballantine

Sunday 11th at 10:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 18th at 10:30 Morning Worship

Led by Rev Esther Squire

Sunday 25th at 10:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Duncan Barnes



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 4th at 10:30 Songs of Praise

Led by John and Jenny Boxwell

Sunday 11th at 10:30 Morning Worship

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Sunday 18th at 10:30 Morning Worship

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 25th 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 17th 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.
Finished for the summer and will re-start in September.

Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Sunday 4th at 11:00 Signed Morning Worship

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 11th at 11:00 Morning Worship

Led by Stephen Fletcher LLM

Sunday 18th at 11:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 25th at 11:00 Songs of Praise

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe



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 suebaines@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 25th 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

Sunday 4th at 10:00 Open Door

Led by Stephen Hutchings

Wednesday 7th at 10:00 1st Wednesday Communion

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 11th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Stephanie Hibberd

Sunday 18th at 10:00 Morning Service

Led by Rev David Nash

Sunday 25th at 10:00 Baptist Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith



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 4th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 11th at 10:00 Open Door

Led by The Open Door Team

Sunday 18th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 25th 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 4th at 09:30 All Age Morning Worship

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 11th at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Hannah Akibo-Betts

Sunday 18th at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 25th 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 August 1st**. 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.

Willen Church will be organising the refreshments - drinks and cakes - at the Willen Summer Fete which is being held on August 3rd at the Willen Pavilion. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Future Events

Sunday Café at St Andrews

from 2.00 till 4.00pm on 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th August.

It's that time of year again and St Andrews will be open as above for members of our congregation to serve refreshments (tea, coffee, cake and cookies) to all who want to come in for a sit down with friends or are visiting for walks in the Manor Park.

No price list – just donations by cash or card please.

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)

Sunday 18th August

15:00

Outdoor Band Concert

Bradwell Silver Band play their popular Outdoor Concert in St James Churchyard.

Refreshments in St James'.

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

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.

Participate in God's Mission

Grow in your everyday faith and become a confident disciple by joining one of three learning pathways from the Diocese of Oxford. This learning hub is open to everyone in the Diocese of Oxford and the content is designed to be accessible to all. [It's free to make an account](#) and join any of our learning pathways, and there are no mandatory assignments for you to complete. Bookings are now open for autumn 2024 study groups. Head to our [Eventbrite](#) to register.

Learning Pathways

Read about our three learning pathways or [browse all courses](#). Create a free [user account](#) to enrol on our courses.

Bite-sized Courses Work through topics at your own pace at a time that suits you. Each section includes a film, questions and something to reflect on. Allow 3 hours per topic.

Going Deeper Learn online at your own pace, or as part of a local group exploring five or six sessions together. Going deeper courses take around 15 hours to complete.

Study Groups Study groups take place each term. They are open to all and designed to be accessible to everyone in the church. Allow for 40 hours of study over 8–10 weeks.

News from the Regional Central Baptist Union, the Methodist Circuit and the United Reformed Church.

[General Election statements](#). Joint statement following the General Election from Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Church leaders

We congratulate Sir Keir Starmer on his appointment as Prime Minister, and all who will now take their seats representing their constituencies as Members of Parliament in Westminster.

The election campaign has been hard-fought, but we know that the real challenges still lie ahead.

The new government inherits a situation where poverty in the UK has been increasing and deepening at an alarming rate. Conflict and persecution in different parts of the world are forcing many to flee their homes to seek safety in other countries including the UK. The existential threat of climate change is causing enormous suffering to both humankind and the wider natural world. There is an urgent need for politicians to restore trust and rebuild integrity in public life. There are also huge pressures on the

NHS, on social care, on the criminal justice system, education and other public services, as well as on the public finances.

It is clear that there is an appetite for change in the country, but also a need to restore faith in the ability of politics to meet these challenges.

We urge the new government to put the needs of those who are most vulnerable and marginalised at the forefront as it wrestles to respond to these problems. We also encourage it to work in partnership with local communities to tackle them, in recognition that we all have a part to play in these endeavours, and welcome the commitment made by the new Prime Minister to build strong partnerships with faith groups. Churches across the UK will continue to respond practically in many different ways, but we also look forward to building relationships with the new government and newly elected MPs, and remain ready to support policies and initiatives that offer just and sustainable long-term solutions.

We offer our prayers for the Prime Minister, for the new government and for all elected MPs. We will pray for God's blessing to be on all endeavours to seek peace, justice and the wellbeing of this nation – and where we can embody that blessing, we will

News from the Methodist Circuit

See Joint General Election Statement above.

The Methodist Conference – Leeds – June/July 2024

The Methodist Conference met in Leeds from 27th June – 3rd July. The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world.

A report received by the Conference detailed the work undertaken since the God For All strategy was agreed in 2020 and how this has since been shaping the mission and ministry of the Methodist Church while supporting its people in evangelism, discipleship, missional growth and leadership.

The Conference voted to re-affirm the strategy, renewing its objectives until 2032.

Director of Evangelism and Growth, Trey Hall, detailed how God For All is already bearing fruit.

Find out more [here](#)

The Conference elected the Revd Helen Cameron to serve as President and Carolyn Godfrey to serve as Vice-President, starting their year of office on Saturday 29th June 2024. Many will know that Revd Helen was Chair of the Northampton Methodist District until recently.

You can read the Revd Helen Cameron's [address here](#) and you can read Carolyn Godfrey's [address here](#).

General Election

The Joint Public Issues Team has made post-election resources available featuring prayers, a guide to congratulate your MP and an "Invite your MP to Church" guide. Click [here](#)

Thanks to Ann Harris, Administrator of the MK Methodist Circuit for the preceeding item

News from The United Reformed Church

See Joint General Election Statement above.

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

Eco tip for August

August can be when we look forward to time to enjoy Summer perhaps taking a holiday or days out.

If you like to walk or bike, have particular interests in wildlife or want activities for families The Parks Trust has a large programme of activities planned. Many are free. <https://www.theparkstrust.com/whats-on-in-your-parks>

Thinking about lowering our car use we can go by bus to many areas of Milton Keynes and beyond. Or to go by train for further afield.

However, we can also think about how we drive our vehicles to reduce fuel use and pollution:

A Roche Eco churches suggests:

Your driving:

- Avoid sudden braking and unnecessary acceleration.
- Drive more slowly. A car driven at 60mph uses 15% less fuel than one driven at 70mph.
- Don't use the air conditioning. At speeds below 40mph having the windows open does not affect the car's aerodynamic efficiency.
- Turn the engine off when idling if you expect to be idling for more than ten seconds.

The car:

- Remove wind resistance and weight; the top box left on when it's not needed, and 'stuff' kept in the boot which both reduce efficiency.
- Keeping tyres inflated and maintaining the car can save 10% of fuel costs.

Planning your trips:

- Plan to drive outside of rush hours; stop/start is very inefficient.
- Add short drives together, cars are more efficient when the engine is warm.
- Google Maps has pledged to start to show the most eco-friendly route by 2030. Other apps and online maps may follow suit or be in advance so do look out for these developments.

- If possible, use other forms of transport which are more energy efficient:

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/efficient-driving>

*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 September's issue is **Sunday 25th August** to
allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of September.*

John

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