

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



September 2024 Newsletter

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

Partnership News

Partnership wide services

One of the most important and significant events for our Partnership is 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 congregations in Wolverton and Stony Stratford, the Sea Cadets, Chairs and Ministers from other Milton Keynes churches are all joining us. There will be choral support from the Choir of Christ the Cornerstone and Graham is working to bring together a choir from within our Partnership to support singing with everyone. Bishop Steven will lead this service, alongside Archdeacon Guy. The presentation to Rev Chi will be made by the Patron of St Andrews, Robert Uttwatt. We are very pleased that Chi's father, an Archbishop from Nigeria, will be joining his son and that other family members in Nigeria will be able to watch the live stream of the service. There will be refreshments after the service, so please leave your offering at the beginning of the service, stay and chat afterwards and please take your wrappings home with you. Can I remind all Church Wardens and Stewards to attend the rehearsal on Monday 2nd September at 6.00pm to ensure their roles are known.

I hope you are all able to also attend the other important and significant 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 and invitations have been sent to surrounding interfaith churches. The Central Region Baptist Leader, Lisa Kerry, will be leading this service and making the presentation to Phil. There will be refreshments after the service, so please leave your offering at the beginning of the service, stay and chat afterwards and please take your wrappings home with you.

The presentations to be made to both Chi and Phil is the NSRV Bible. 'This Bible was set in the Zondervan NRSV Typeface, commissioned by Zondervan, a division of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, and designed in Aarhus, Denmark, by Klaus E. Krogh and Heidi Rand Sorenson of 2K, Denmark. The design takes inspiration from the vision of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) to be a modern, ecumenical translation that serves the church in personal spiritual formation, in the liturgy, and in the academy. The designers of the Zondervan NRSV Typeface sought to reflect the

rich heritage of the New Revised Version and its tradition of being renowned for its beautiful balance of scholarship and readability. The result is a distinctive Bible typeface that is uncompromisingly beautiful, clear and readable at any size, and will faithfully serve a broad range of Bible readers now and in years to come.'

Please do your best to come to these important services and share cars wherever possible as parking could be difficult.

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. Sam's daughter has again produced a poster for us and it will come out with this Newsletter.

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 SEP wide service in 2024 will be December 29th and has yet to be planned. We hope it will be led by Lay Ministers. Please let Chi know if you are available and can help.

Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship and Worship Committee

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

Update on Baptist minister appointment:

Revd Philip Dunning, his wife Veronica, daughter Anna and son Sammy will have moved into Bradwell Church House on 28th August. Many thanks to the Archdeacon and the Diocese for making this possible and especially to Alan Potter who, as churchwarden, is responsible for the house during the vacancy.

Phil's term of office will start on 1st September. His welcome and induction will be on Saturday 14th September at 2.00pm at Christ Church.

Everyone from the across the Partnership is welcome to attend. Phil comes from a 20-year ministry in South Wales so we will be welcoming members of his former congregation along with special guests from local churches and representatives from the local community.

Please come if you are able. It would help if you can indicate by emailing adrian.prisk@gmail.com but don't worry if you are not able to.

Phil's ministry will be partnership wide. Together with Chi, Dave and Sam they will form a dynamic ministry team. Please pray for them as they all undertake their mission to our part of Milton Keynes.

Adrian Prisk

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

Safeguarding - a correction

In the August SEP newsletter an error was made regarding the move from Methodist safeguarding procedures to the Anglican system. This year's Church AGM made the decision to move to the Anglican procedures. Work is underway to transfer, with the aim of using the Anglican system by the end of September. This may be subject to change. In the meantime, the Methodist procedures remain in use.

Volunteer Administrative Assistant

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.

Are there any more willing volunteers out there to help with paperwork, typing up notes and booking events?

Heritage Week

This begins on 6th September and ends on Sunday 15th September 2024.

The booklets are available from the Museum and libraries and online at heritageopendays.org.uk.

At St Mary Magdalene, Willen, there are events every day and there will be hundreds of other events for you to attending Milton Keynes, though this is a national event. I have attached the Heritage Week Itinerary for St Mary Magdalene

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 super September

Warm blessings.

Sharron, Chair of SEPC

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence

Sunday 1st at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Jennie Boxwell

Sunday 8th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 15th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Susan Jackson

Sunday 22nd at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Margaret Goodall

Sunday 29th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Esther Squire

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 1st at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Canon Peter Ballantine

Sunday 8th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev David Nash

Saturday 14th at 14:00 **Welcome Service for Rev Phil Dunning**

Led by Lisa Kerry

Sunday 15th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Phil Dunning

Sunday 22nd at 10:30 **Morning Worship with Communion and Virtual Communion**

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 29th at 10:30 **Harvest Festival**

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 21st 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.

Re-start on **Thursday 12th September**.



Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Sunday 1st at 11:00 **Signed Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Peter Green

Sunday 8th at 11:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Stephen Fletcher LLM

Sunday 15th at 11:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Chi Okpala

Sunday 22nd at 11:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Sunday 29th at 11:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Phil Dunning



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 22nd 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 1st at 10:00 **Open Door**

Led by Stephen Hutchings

Wednesday 4th at 10:00 **1st Wednesday Communion**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 8th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Chi Okpala

Sunday 15th at 10:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Sunday 22nd at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Phil Dunning

Sunday 29th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley



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 1st at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Wednesday 4th at 19:30 Licensing of Rev Chi Okpala

*Led by The Rt Rev'd Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford and
Archdeacon Guy Elsmore*

Sunday 8th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Peter Laws

Sunday 15th at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 22nd at 10:00 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Stphanie Hibberd

Sunday 29th at 10:00 Holy Communion with Healing

Led by Revs Dr Paul Smith and Duncan Barnes



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 1st at 09:30 All Age Morning Worship

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 8th at 09:30 Morning Worship

Led by Stephen Fletcher LLM

Sunday 15th at 09:30 Holy Communion by Extension

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 22nd at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Hannah Akibo-Betts

Sunday 29th 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 September 5th**. 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.

T.T.T.T (Third Tuesday at Twelve Thirty) Pop along to St Mary Magdalene Church Willen and be entertained by **Saxophrenia** on **Tuesday September 17th**, 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

Great Linford Manor Park Heritage Open Days

Friday 13th & Saturday 14th September

All are welcome to attend these open days which St Andrews takes part in each year by serving refreshments from 12 noon – 5.00pm on the Saturday as well as hosting the indoor events on the Saturday.

This year this includes:

- a demonstration of lace-making and visitors will be able to learn about the craft
- an illustrated lecture about Great Linford Village

There will also be history walks starting from the adjacent Milton Keynes Arts Centre on both days plus the Arts Centre is hosting bookable fun activities on the Saturday from 11am-4pm including “Have your photograph taken with a Victorian camera”.

Please see attached poster for further information and booking information where necessary.

“LIVING THE LIGHT”

FORTNIGHTLY FELLOWSHIP* AT ST ANDREWS

(*formerly Monday Fellowship)

You are welcome to join us to share in a Four Session “York Course” Bible Study entitled “Living in the Light” and taking place from 10.00-11.30am on alternate Mondays from 16th September to 28th October:

16th September - Session 1 - Luke’s reporting of the coming of Christ

30th September - Session 2 – John’s reflections on the coming of Christ

14th October - Session 3 – Mary’s response to the coming of Christ

28th October - Session 4 – Paul rejoices in the coming of Christ

If you are interested in joining these sessions, please contact Jim Billenness or David Kent via greatlinford@googlemail.com for further information.

Course booklet costs £5.

Saturday 21st September

18.00 – 20.00 Paul’s Farewell Barn Dance

at St James, New Bradwell. Bring and share food. Bring your own drinks. Live band and caller.

Sunday 29th September

15.00 Paul’s leaving Service

at St James, New Bradwell. Preacher: Archdeacon Guy Elsmore. Bradwell Silver Band.

Please contact Paul if you are thinking of coming to either or both of these events. smith.paul.a@icloud.com or 01908 606689

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. At the moment we are considering taking on a House for Duty Minister to swell our ranks.

News from Diocese of Oxford

Statement by Bishop Steven Croft and Imam Monawar Hussain. On behalf of the Thames Valley Civic, Community and Faith Leaders' Group.

'In the light of recent scenes of unrest, we reiterate our deep commitment to fostering strong friendships, trust, and understanding among all our communities. Now, more than ever, it is crucial that we come together to support one another and continue to build a resilient, inclusive society.

We urge all fellow citizens of goodwill to continue to reach out to all our communities, especially those who may be feeling vulnerable during these troubling times. We want to reassure all our communities that your safety and well-being are at the forefront of our efforts. We invite all to extend a hand of friendship and solidarity to your neighbours, regardless of their background or beliefs.

Together, we can create a community where everyone feels valued, respected and given the space to flourish and contribute to our region and country.

In this digital age, misinformation can spread rapidly and cause unnecessary panic, division and inflame tensions. We strongly advise against sharing social media posts without first verifying their accuracy. If you are unsure about the veracity of a report, please do not share it. Let us all commit to being responsible digital citizens and help prevent the spread of false and inflammatory information.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Thames Valley Police for their unwavering dedication and efforts in maintaining peace and order during these challenging times. Their commitment to protecting our communities is commendable, and we stand in full support of their work.

Let us all work together to build a future where understanding, respect, and friendship prevail over hatred, violence and division.'

News from the Regional Central Baptist Union

A response from Revd. Dr. Steve Finamore, President; The Baptist Union of Great Britain, to the violence across UK towns and cities

Over the last week Baptist churches have watched the riots erupting across numerous towns and cities in the UK with horror and lament. Those committing these terrible acts appear to be incited by those determined to spread disinformation, deepen the appalling exclusion of minority groups, and mobilise racism and hate.

The stories of Mosques being attacked, hotels with asylum seekers inside being set on fire, and other riotous acts of violence and vandalism are truly devastating. Such acts of aggression and hatred towards innocent minorities, many of whom are victims of injustice themselves, can never be justified.

Christians worship God in the person of Jesus who was accused of things of which he was innocent, he was considered a threat by those he came to live amongst and serve, ultimately, he was mocked, attacked and killed by those swept up by a frenzy of hatred and disinformation. It is hard for Christians not to see Christ in the eyes of those who, in this day, are being rejected and threatened with violence.

It is heartening to see Baptist Churches, like The Beacon Baptist Church, Teeside, joining alongside other Christians and so many others with a heart for peace, grabbing their brooms and tools to clean up their communities and express love and support of those being targeted.

It is, of course, the responsibility of all Christians to work for peace and to pray for and stand alongside those who are being persecuted. We recognize there are those in our communities that have concerns around immigration, we recognize too that many of them are as appalled by the violence as we are. The challenge now is to find ways to ensure those disseminating inflammatory lies, racism and hatred are confronted and face justice, while spaces of listening and constructive dialogue can be found for those desperate to have their concerns heard.

In the meantime, it is my hope is that Christians up and down the country will consider contacting their Muslim neighbours, those seeking asylum in their communities, and all others feeling the threat of far-right hatred; that they might express our love and concern for them, assure them of our prayers and ask that they reach out should any threats of violence come their way, so we can walk in solidarity and peace alongside them.

News from the Methodist Circuit

A Prayer following the recent unrest

God of love,

We pray for your Spirit of peace to move in our communities,
that those who are targets of hate might be safe
and that people of good will might work together in love and respect.

We pray for your Spirit of healing,
that those who grieve, might be comforted
and those who are injured might be made well.

We pray for your Spirit of hope,
that those who despair might see a way ahead
and those who live in fear might find sanctuary and freedom.

Soften the hearts of those motivated by hate
and help us all to love our neighbours as those made in your image.

In Christ's name.

Amen

Welcoming Sonia – our new District Chair!

On the 3rd August 2024, we welcomed Rev'd Dr Sonia Hicks as our new District Chair. We're thrilled to have Sonia joining us in the District. Please do be praying for Sonia and her husband, Rev'd Conrad Hicks, as they get settled in the Manse and Sonia starts her work.

Disability Awareness Week resources for Churches

Disability Awareness Week begins on the 15th September 2024, and Through the Roof, a church disability charity, have put together some excellent resources for churches to use on Sunday 22nd September to help raise awareness.

The President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Helen Cameron, is encouraging all churches to celebrate Disability Awareness Week (15 – 22 September 2024). Helen supports the disability charity Through the Roof, who invite churches to include local disabled people in Disability Awareness Sunday events on Sunday 22nd September 2024, or a day of their choice.

Through the Roof have put together a free church resource called 'Journey with Jesus', featuring Andrew's story of a life-changing accident. Access the resource [here](#).

News from The United Reformed Church

CPCE's 9th General Assembly

Two hundred and fifty participants from 96 churches will gather in Romania to set the course for a common future at the 9th General Assembly of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE).

Themed "In the light of Christ – called to hope", the Assembly takes place in Sibiu from 27 August to 2 September and will focus on topics including migration from the perspective of the countries from which people emigrate, how churches are dealing with the war in Ukraine, interreligious dialogue in times of conflict in the Middle East, and democracy and churches.

The Revd Dr John Bradbury, URC General Secretary, who was elected one of the CPCE's three presidents in 2018, will deliver a sermon at the Assembly on the hope we find in God's resurrection power that draws us into ever deeper union with Christ to live and proclaim God's light and hope for all the world.

The CPCE is made up of 96 Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed and United churches from more than 30 countries in Europe and South America and represents around 50 million Protestant Christians. Every six years, a General Assembly determines the basic lines of work and elects the 13-member Council which manages the work of the CPCE between the General Assemblies. The Council is led by a Presidium consisting of three members: Prof Dr Miriam Rose, from Germany, Revd Marcin Brzóska from Poland, and John.

Speaking of the relevance of the Assembly, Dr Mario Fischer, CPCE General Secretary emphasised how “important it is in these times to give a clear Christian and Protestant witness to issues of the present, and to be guided by the biblical message of hope.

Thank you for reading this, Sharron, Chair of SEP CIO Council

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 September

Help save nature by rewilding the Church’s massive landholdings!

Chris Packham, Naturalist TV presenter and Campaigner, urges us to sign a petition asking the Church of England to rewild 30% of the land it owns.

He writes: **Environmental scientists say we need to rewild 30% of the planet** to return nature to its former essential health and protect our future. But **Britain is falling way behind** that target and as a naturalist **I know how devastating it could be to our wildlife** and our countryside if we don't catch up as soon as possible.

Please follow the **link to sign the petition** and to read Chris Packham’s letter to Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church Commissioners.

https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/promoted/help-save-nature-by-rewilding-the-church-s-massive-landholdings?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=blast50212&partner=wildcard

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 October’s issue is **Wednesday 25th September** to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of October.*

John

John Porter sepnewsletter9@gmail.com