

# Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



## October 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to the October edition of the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Newsletter, (also see website at [www.stantonbury.net](http://www.stantonbury.net)).

### Partnership News

#### **Partnership wide services**

Thank you to those who helped and attended either or both of these welcome services for Chi and Phil. They were very different from each other and highlighted the tolerant and exciting ecumenism of our Partnership.

The Ecumenical Tree Cathedral Service, led by Sam, Chi and Phil was extremely well attended and the theme of Jesus, the Light of the World was spot on. Such beautiful music from Bradwell Silver Band and singing from Ayo's church were just two of the highlights.

The last SEP wide service in 2024 will be **December 29<sup>th</sup>** and has yet to be planned. We discussed this at Council last week with no real decision made. Phil and Dave will take back the ideas voiced there, to Chi on his return. Please let Chi know if you are available and can help.

#### **Trustees**

Their next meeting is 1<sup>st</sup> October at 8.00pm. via ZOOM. Please let Anne Slee or David Preston know if you have anything to contribute.

#### **Area Dean**

We now have a new Area Dean. This position has been vacant since Tim Norwood left to work for national ecumenism at Lambeth Palace. Paul Oxley, known to many of us, has been appointed as Area Dean. Please send him any congratulations directly or through the Deanery Reps; Adrian, Chi or me.

#### **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 Diocese. Phil referred to our different congregation's visions at Council and knows there is much work to be done to draw the six churches closer to each other, their vision and SEP vision. I pray for his work to move us outward and forward.

I was speaking to Archdeacon Guy and Paul Oxley earlier this week about how hard our Ordained and Lay Ministers have been working over the past three years and maybe now that the ministers are gathering together, it's time to share unnamed instances of care given to the community, by them in their roles.

### **Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council**

Congratulations to Revd, Chi who is now Revd. Canon Chi.

Congratulations to St Andrew's as they now have a Congregation Leadership Team in place.

Thank you to the Church Wardens for using/finding your wands at Chi's welcome service.

At Council meeting last week, all SEPC Reps were asked to go back to their congregations and chat about the possibility of changing their Sunday Service start times, so that our energetic Ministers could preach at two churches each Sunday, as Chi and Phil suggest. Both of them are also available on 29<sup>th</sup> December for Sunday services. Please discuss this within your own congregations. Chi or Phil or I will contact the SEPC Reps in a few weeks' time to see what the response is.

Also, at the same Council meeting Gill Grant, representing Cross and Stable, showed us, '**God Welcomes All, How faith informs safeguarding**'. A free study guide related to the Theology of Safeguarding. Gill and Dave picked this booklet up from the recent Methodist training on Safeguarding.

Date for your diary: **the next SEP Council meeting is at 7.30pm on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November at Christ church.** Thanks to penny who will organise this for us.

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

Willen had an excellent Heritage Week, 536 visitors and raised about £1000. I hope you all enjoyed whatever heritage activities you attended. Roll on next year.

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.

### **Daylight Saving Time**

This ends on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October this year.

Autumn Bliss to you  
Warm blessings.  
Sharron, Chair of SEPC

## Our Church Services and Events

### **Bradwell Church, St Lawrence**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Phil Dunning*

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Morning Worship**

*Led by Helen Rouse LLM*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev George Mwaura and Rev Canon Chi Okpala*

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Morning Worship**

*Led by Rev Dave Heseldine*



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 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Morning Worship**

*Led by Maggie Prisk*

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Morning Worship**

*Led by Rev Phil Dunning*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Morning Worship with Communion  
and Virtual Communion**

*Led by Rev Canon Peter Ballantine*

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:30**      **Morning Worship**

*Led by Helen Rouse LLM*



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](http://www.christchurchmk.org.uk) which has the service details on it, and which is updated each week

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> September**.

### **Cross and Stable, Downs Barn**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:00**      **Signed Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe*

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:00**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Peter Green*



**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00      Holy Communion**

*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 [suejbaines@gmail.com](mailto: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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00    1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday Communion**

*Led by Rev Prof John Beazley*

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00      Open Door**

*Led by Stephen Hutchings*

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00    Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Canon Chi Okpala*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00    Morning Worship**

*Led by Rev Prof John Beazley*

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00    Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Phil Dunning*



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 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday Seminar Group**

**Talking About Jesus - 'The Jesus Event'**

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, after a short break for coffee and socialising following the 10am service, we shall reflect on phase four of the development of early Christology, notably the vigorous attempts to safeguard the undivided unity of the Godhead against the claims that Jesus was 'true God and true man'.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Canon Chi Okpala*

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00**      **Open Door Harvest Festival**

*Led by The Open Door Team*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Duncan Barnes*

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev David Nash*



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](http://www.stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk) for more information.

## **St. Mary Magdalene, Willen**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> at 09:30**      **All Age Morning Worship**

*Led by Margaret Moakes LLM*

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> at 09:30**      **Harvest Thanksgiving Service**

*Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 09:30**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Hannah Akibo-Betts*

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 09:30**      **Holy Communion**

*Led by Rev Canon Chi Okpala*



The monthly communion service at **Oaktree Court, Portland Drive** will be at **2.45 pm on October 3<sup>rd</sup>**. 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 **Motif** on **Tuesday October 15<sup>th</sup>**, 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

## **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](mailto: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 looking for volunteers to come forward to amend our Parish Profile to entice applicants for House for Duty Minister.

## **News from Diocese of Oxford**

### **Human flourishing**

In presenting a motion to General Synod, Bishop Steven said:

"For a Christian, work is central for human flourishing and not just an economic issue. We were placed in a garden and charged with a God-given task from the very beginning. Work is related intimately to human dignity and purpose."

"Work is more than just the tools we invent or master. Work is more than just a means to earn a wage."

### **Human creativity**

The Bishop of Oxford continued, "The theological value of work faces new and powerful challenges and needs to be articulated afresh in the public square. To give the most current example, data scraped from the World Wide Web often disregards copyright or intellectual property rights, folding individual examples of human craft and creativity so deep inside a black box that proving theft is beyond most individuals."

The Archbishop's amendment committed the Church of England to becoming a signatory on the [Rome Call for AI Ethics](#), and the statement was signed during a meeting of the Primates held in Rome for the first time last week.

## **News from the Regional Central Baptist Union**

October is Black History Month and also this month Good Money Week

[www.goodmoneyweek.com](http://www.goodmoneyweek.com)

6 October Homelessness Sunday [www.housingjustice.org.uk](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk)

13-19 October Prisons Week [www.prisonsworld.org](http://www.prisonsworld.org)

14-16 October CBA Ministers' Conference [www.centralba.org.uk](http://www.centralba.org.uk)

23-24 October Baptist Union Council [www.baptist.org.uk/council](http://www.baptist.org.uk/council)

## **News from the Methodist Circuit**

## Warm Welcome Launch

As the new academic year begins and the weather turns colder, winter isn't far away. For the last two years, The Methodist Church has participated in Warm Welcome and opened up warm spaces to help combat loneliness and isolation in the coldest and darkest months of the year.

This year's campaign will be launched at 6.30pm on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October together with a new 100% Warm Welcome pledge. Currently, 62% of the UK population live within a 30 minute walk of a Warm Welcome space. However, the ambition is to provide 100% of the population with a Warm Welcome less than 30 minutes from home in the next few years.

David Barclay, Warm Welcome Campaign Director, says of the launch event, "It's a collective display of support and encouragement for local organisations and volunteers who might want to offer a Warm Welcome this winter. The purpose of getting together online is ultimately to grow the movement by enlarging the number of spaces that are registered with us...and the opportunities for partners to work collaboratively. We will increase the impact, strength and diversity of Warm Welcome by ensuring everyone has access and feels connected back into their community."

If you are interested in attending the launch event [register here](#).

## News from The United Reformed Church

### East Midlands Synod

The summer saw 14 12-17-year-olds who meet at Abingdon Avenue URC, along with their leaders, spend a day at Rock UK's Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire, a 122-acre instructed activity site of woodland, a river and lake for water sports.

The young people enjoyed activities such as paddleboarding, orienteering and kayaking whilst also making time for Bible study and creative prayer.

The day ended with the East Midlands CYDO, Richard Knott, leading the group through a time of worship before they all tucked into a BBQ together.



One of the young people commented: "I was worried knowing it would be a nine-hour day, but the time flew past. It was an awesome day." while another asked "when can we do it again?"

The event was made possible through a £175 grant from the Discipleship Development Fund.

[Learn more about the Discipleship Development Fund.](#)

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

#### Recycling

As you probably know you can use MK Council's website to check how to recycle various items. For those items that the council can't take you can check a website called [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com) where there is advice on recycling practically anything!

Freecycle is a global network of local groups where people can give and get things for free reducing waste and building community. [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

Otherwise, locally, as well as recycling at supermarkets and charity shops there are other local options including the Re-use Community project, Willen Hospice warehouse and Age Concern warehouse all of which are situated close to each other at Burners Lane, Kiln Farm and take all manner of household goods, books, furniture etc.

Dunelm Mills have paired up with the British Heart Foundation and Clearabee to recycle mattresses and furniture and also have a drop off point for their Take Back Textile scheme. Curry's will take back electrical appliances/tech items.

Charity Recycling based at 25, Cattle Avenue, Downs Barn, take smaller items such as cheese wrappers and toothbrushes which are converted into charity donations.

There is also a drop off point at Great Linford Parish Council offices. Check their website as items they take can vary from time to time. [www.facebook.com/recyclemk](http://www.facebook.com/recyclemk)

This is not an exhaustive list – have a search online!

*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 November's issue is **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October** to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of November.*

*John*

John Porter [sepnewsletter9@gmail.com](mailto:sepnewsletter9@gmail.com)

*I am adding this month's letter from Dave Haseldine as the **Last Word** as I feel it something we need to be thinking about. I hope you agree, so over to Dave. JP*



## Letter from Dave Haseldine October 2024

Dear friends.

We are now seriously into autumn and, weather-wise, clinging on to hopes of some time(s) of an “Indian summer”. (I am not sure if the people who are most expert, or probably more accurately, who are least ignorant, of the planet’s phenomenally complex weather and climate systems reckon if the changing global climate patterns might make Indian summers more likely, or less, or more varied.) But we are heading away from the relative warmth of summer, and throughout human history, in colder, wetter, and darker seasons, people have created reasons to celebrate *in* them, and indeed to celebrate *them*. Thus making a virtue out of their necessity.

“Making a virtue out of a necessity” is an interesting phrase! Do you read it positively or negatively? Well, it is certainly pragmatic, and can help anyone, along with St. Paul, to “give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). So it also turns out to be potentially quite spiritual. At some point, or on many occasions, everyone will have tough experiences that call us to dig deeply into all that keeps us going, all that keeps us hopeful. That goes for all individuals. That has also been true throughout history for all groups and organisations, including our community, church, nation, and for a whole variety of reasons that is true now both for all of those groups and it is also true now for the whole planet.

We are some decades past the time when doing what we can to be an eco-church / village / town / city / nation / race is just a nice virtuous optional extra. For some decades this has been a growing necessity. But you would not think so from looking at most political and religious leaders, me included, and at most people and at what we say and do. In addition to all the many other challenges we face, we need to be acting on this one more than anything else.

Turning to a narrower focus, over the summer it has become clear that I am unable to be the fully-functioning, full-time minister needed by the four Churches, Circuit, and Ecumenical Partnership that Sarah and I have the privilege of being part of and have had so since the end of summer 2024. So the plan is from now until next summer for me to offer to you all the best ministry that I can with whatever support I need, and for the Churches, Circuit and Ecumenical Partnership to enter into the Methodist Church’s Stationing process and seek to appoint a new Methodist Minister (Presbyter).

That is not Plan A. Far from it. But it is a necessity. Can a virtue be made from that? In other words, can we make any theological sense of that? Or, better, can we see God involved in this somehow? I do hope that we can! And for many reasons! For instance, Jesus’ parting words to his followers in Matthew 28 were, “I am with you always to the very end of the age.” I.e. whatever happens, our Dad, Jesus the Anointed One, and the Holy Spirit, God, is with us, whatever happens: brilliant, disastrous, challenging, seemingly hopeless, ending, new, unfamiliar, scary.

And God uses the unique gifts and skills that he has freely given to you and to each one of us. And God is able to work for his extra-ordinary reign of grace through every very ordinary and broken human being and organisation. St. Paul also writes, “... for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Ironically, even when we are strong, our very strengths can get in the way of God, for “God’s weakness is greater than our strength” (1 Corinthians 1:25) and “God’s ways

(of giving up our life and aims and strengths) are not God's ways" (Isaiah 55:9) so that others (and us) may find them!

So may you, I, we, and others, be embraced by this strange God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Christ. May we embrace this Strange God, and (to quote and alter Rowand Williams), may we have eyes to see what this Strange God is doing, and whatever it is, however strange it is, may we join in. Amen?

*Dave Haseldine.*