Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



June 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to the June edition of the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Newsletter, (also see website at <u>www.stantonbury.net</u>).

Partnership News

Pastoral News - June 2025

Dear friends in Christ

'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven'

Matthew 5 v 16

Welcome to June and with it thoughts of summer events and holidays are very much on our minds. First though we mark Pentecost in the Church - the day of the powerful blessing of the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus' disciples just as he had promised. We should always greet this day with joy and expectation that God's power is here for us, and we should welcome it into our lives.

In June I'm also launching a new home group Bible study meeting for the partnership, alongside Hannah, and we will be first looking at the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel where Jesus gives this wonderful statement which challenges us all. I hope friends can join in with this, or any of our other organised Home and Church group weekly studies. Full details and timings for these are attached to this edition of the newsletter.

'Post' SEP AGM

We enjoyed the Official Trustees review of the Partnership work over the last year at Christchurch on 22nd May, and commissioned friends to continue their great work in our churches for this next year. We prayed God's blessing upon the team even amidst some uncertainties and value all the individual ministries that were affirmed there. The joint Ministers meeting is happening early in June to ensure Sunday coverage especially continues across the Churches in this next quarter through August.

Joint SEP Partnership Service

Sunday 29th June - 11.00am - Christchurch

Our next Joint 5th Sunday Partnership service together will be in Christchurch at the end of the month. All will be welcome to join us there. It will be a more informal service this time, not including Communion, looking to celebrate our unity and diversity creatively as we worship together and affirm one another.

Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship (MED) Group

We have held the second meeting of the Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship (MED) Group in May, with some great input, thought and prayer for the growth of our work together. The full notes for this session are below and I hope bring food for thought to everyone. The next meeting is scheduled for 14th July both Live at St James and online via zoom. All are very welcome to join in with the group.

Baptism and Confirmation classes

If you are interested in either believers baptism or confirmation of your infant baptism, please contact me. I'm hosting classes in the partnership at present. This is also in preparation for our local Ecumenical Confirmation service to be held on 16th November.

With every blessing

Rev Phil Dunning SEP Baptist Minister and Vision Enabler

<u>SEP MED Group - Second meeting notes - 19/05/25</u> <u>'Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship'</u>



Members Present - 7 live and 4 via zoom ...representing 4 of the SEP Churches.

Phil welcomed all those present, and opened with devotions and a reading from Matthew 13

...Phil then opened in prayer.

We began by reviewing next steps from the last meeting, and talked first about advertising and there was a discussion about websites and weekly notices. There is variance in the churches, particularly with no website at all for Cross & Stable but the SEP website directs people, and Paul does a great job making sure up to date service sheets at least are there. The monthly newsletter too is nicely prepared, however perhaps there is 'too much' in it. Some criticism too about advertising even for this meeting, and use of the acronym 'MED' – whole words are better. Comment was made that there are so many different methods of advertising online and actually word of mouth encouragement is always better. Things may well begin to get better because we have a new Administrator starting in June who will provide a more joined up approach.

Community initiatives and outreach. Not so much work has been done in the Parish council drop ins, and we are not really represented anymore at village fetes and carnivals that are put on, with the exception of St James who maintain a stall at the New Bradwell School carnival. Much comment about coffee mornings and drop ins and the welcome we give. The avoidance of 'church huddle' and the warm welcome are paramount - there was an incident at Bradwell where one person came into the coffee morning, but thought it was a church meeting and left immediately. St James have recently begun opening again for drop in on Wednesday mornings. Comment was made that other days of the week need to be considered - 3 of our churches are now open that same morning.

The question was raised about what is happening this summer in these community terms? - this with the thought of doing some 'low impact and organization' items. Make sure they are advertised though, with someone to coordinate it. The Church Pilgrimage idea was mentioned again, and perhaps an SEP wide picnic. Roger Gander will lead his 'Ramble' again this year, date for this TBC.

It was noted that these are things that will perhaps help to unite us as churches, *but are they specific missional ideas to others?* - a suggestion that we could walk between the village centres and 'do something specific in each'. This might be more missional? Support also for good charitable causes and activities locally to join in and promotes our life together also. Soup runs were also popular at one point and helped many people. 'Unity MK' (Homeless project) was mentioned, and we should try to encourage and get involved with that. Comment was made that people get a real sense of community and sharing as they get involved with these sorts of initiatives.

Children and Youth projects - St James are considering ideas for a new group as they have around 10 young people who are engaging. Cross and Stable's family breakfast club has also engaged a younger audience. Comment was made that beyond Sunday morning's this needs to be informal to begin with, and 'on their terms' (...the youth lead it) but with a core group of adults coordinating in leadership. The young people need engagement by the churches and resources from the denominations could be considered. 'Christ the Sower Ecumenical School' (Crownhill) is worth noting and their initiatives may prove helpful. We also mentioned the new initiative from the Ethos team in Stantonbury High, bringing in the young people for a drop in into Christchurch for an after school group. Church representation here was important. It is necessary for any new group to be advertised 'partnership wide', and for any young people wherever it is held. There was mention of 'Open door', which in St James is a cafe style family service run now by congregation members and they have a good lay-led team. St Andrews also have an Open door service, which appears to be simply a more relaxed family orientated service. Messy Church also operates out of St James, with a few good contacts.

Family breakfast Club has become established at Cross & Stable, with great leadership by Rev Sam. It is encouraged as true 'multigenerational worship', where grandparents to children worship together. He has encouraged youth leadership too. It always begins with food and has a shorter family style service to follow. Phil is encouraging something similar and using the same name at Bradwell - in the reverse style - to begin in July. St James observed that this was close to their 'Open door' style.

We talked about discipleship initiatives and Phil particularly introduced the Housegroup sheet and varied options we now have - for any to attend any of the groups. This sheet will be displayed, advertised wider and feature in the next SEP newsletter. Particular reference was made to Phil & Hannah's new group - starting on June 2nd at Bradwell. It was noted that there is no Bible study group at Cross & Stable, so good advertising for this there. Phil indicated again that he was hoping to draw in friends who were not attending other groups. He did not anticipate that any groups would have a large influx of people as a result of this new advertising, but there were opportunities for any at different times in the week.

Comment from Individual Churches - It was noted that Christchurch is the only church now operating a Toddlers style group. Theirs is on a Thursday morning. Others have had nothing like this since COVID because of the people needed to set up and host.

Next steps...

- Summer events for all the churches. Roger's Ramble from Christchurch. Partnership picnic or Pilgrimage are simple, but need someone to coordinate them.
- Community Fetes and Carnivals for involvement. 12th July for New Bradwell. 5th July Music Festival in Great Linford.
- Christchurch have their 50th Anniversary lunch on 19th July, which follows their coffee and cake morning.
- Advertising generally, working with our new Administrator Helen.
- Identify new people who are leading, hosting and organising in our churches.
- Mission and outreach activities.
- Youth projects and Family breakfast club.
- House groups and discipleship
- This MED group new name!

We closed with a time of prayer - using 'Evening prayer' material from the Northumbria Community, incorporating silent prayer by all.

... This is an important time in the MED Group meetings.

Date of next meeting - Monday 14th July - 7.30pm - venue TBA

Message from Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Human extremity is God's opportunity – June 2025

In life we do our best to keep ourselves safe and healthy. Yet events outside our control overtake us and we are left in despair.

The disciples were trying to make a lake crossing in the scriptures and suddenly a great storm enveloped them, and they literally feared for their lives, but Jesus was with them in the boat. When we are assailed by uncertain events in life, be they health, finance, security, friendships or what we considered to be stable institutions, our human response is to fear, panic and feel our world has collapsed around us. This was the experience of the disciples on the lake. This is a natural human response.

As Children of a living God, at a spiritual level, we always have the unfailing God with us. Jesus said, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matt 28:20. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt 11:28. "Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." 1Pet 5:7.

It is easy to say these Scriptures when life is normal and stable, yet unless we have practiced them and made them real to us, during the calmer times of our lives, amid a whirlwind storm it is difficult to make them meaningful. Special military operations are conducted frequently during peacetimes to ensure their successful execution in actual combat scenarios.

The depth of our spiritual maturity is tested on a regular basis, and yet the outcome for us as Christians, depends not on our spiritual maturity but on the promises of our God. The Psalmist says, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Ps 23:4.

Through the storms of life, we grow in spiritual maturity for the glory of God, in the service of the people around us. With every calamity, comes an opportunity, to grow in God and to be a blessing to others. At Pentecost we are reminded, the Holy Spirit is given to us, his Church, as a helper for all times. John 14: 16 to 18.

Revd Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Trustees

David Preston, Chair of Trustees, led the AGM last week and they will report back to you.

Thank you to those who worked for the church last year, those who remain and those who are new..

Diana has said she wants everyone, especially our Church Officers, to know that our policies are on <u>stantonburyecumenicalpartnership.org</u> website.

Partnership wide services 2025 for your diaries

Please put these dates in your diary. The 2025 SEP wide services are 29th June, Heritage Week at the Tree Cathedral on 21st September at 3.00pm, 30th November

House for duty Anglican minister

Dave, Bishop of Buckingham, will be helping us to appoint this person, who we hope will start in September and live in the vicarage at St Andrews, Great Linford. The Closing date has now passed. Shortlisting: 10th June (in person in the evening at Stantonbury) Interview: 19th June.

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council

I am happy to serve the Lord and be the Lay Chair for a further year.

Thank you to Irene Farr for her knowledge and skills as Secretary, as she stands down to take a well-earned break.

Administrative Assistant

Congratulations and welcome to Helen Eaton (organist at St Mary Magdalene and member of Quorum Choir) who will be taking notes and minutes this coming year. Helen is also one of the six volunteers who answer the Partnership's main telephone.

A very Happy Birthday to the church this Pentecost

Sharron, Lay Chair of SEPC

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence		
Sunday 1 st at 10:30	Holy Communion	
Led by Rev Phil Dunning		
Sunday 8 th at 10:30	Morning Worship	
Led by Mike Morris		
Sunday 15 th at 10:30	Holy Communion	
Led by The Ven Guy Elsmore		
Sunday 22 nd at 10:30	Holy Communion	
Led by tba		
Sunday 29 th 09:30	Holy Communion	
Led by Rev Phil Dunning		



This month's dates for live streaming services to You Tube are May 11th, 18th and 25th. The You Tube link is @BradwellChurch MiltonKeynes. Simply go to You Tube, search for this and click the red live button just before the service begins.

Gardening Club on Wednesday's at 10:00. There is a lot to do, and we really need more members, see Andrew and Angela.

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

Christ Church, Stantonbury

Sunday 1 st at 10:30 Led by Maggie Prisk	Morning Worship	
Sunday 8th at 10:30 Led by Rev Phil Dunning	Morning Worship	
Sunday 15 th at 10:30	Morning Worship	
Led by John and Jenny Boxwell		
Sunday 22 nd at 10:30	Morning Worship with Communion +	
-	Virtual Communion	
Led by Rev Canon Peter Ballantine		
Sunday 29 th at 11:00	SEP Joint Service	



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

Led by Revs Phil Dunning and Dr Sam Muthuveloe

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 guiz are available.

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

Services are live-streamed on Zoom at

Sunday 29th

Led by Rev Peter Green Sunday 8th at 11:00

Sunday 15th at 11:00

Led by Rev Phil Dunning Sunday 22nd at 10:00

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85922248518?pwd=Tm4vd00wancwVk52cCtqNm5tMWRZdz09 Meeting ID: 859 2224 8518 Passcode: 830413

No Service (See SEP Service at Christ Church)

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

Holy Communion

Holy Communion

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 1st at 11:00 **Morning Worship** Led by tba Wednesday 4th at 10:00 Wednesday Communion Led by Rev Prof John Beazley Sunday 8th at 11:00 **Holy Communion** Led by tba Sunday 15th at 11:00 **Holy Communion** Led by Rev Prof John Beazley Sunday 22nd at 11:00 Holy Communion Led by Revs Phil Dunning and Dave Haseldine Sunday 29th **No Service** (See SEP Service at Christ Church)

Silent Reflection in the Chancel **9.30 to 10am prior to 11am Sunday Services** (coffee available from 10am)

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

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. Please email greatlinford@gmail.com if you would like information on the current study topic. John Beazley.

Family Breakfast Club



Cross and Stable, Downs Barn Sunday 1st at 11:00 Signed Holy Communion

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. Coffee & Craft with local artist Jane Charles will be back again on 2nd Tuesdays from April to September and we are hopeful of further dates – you can email

<u>greatlinford@googlemail.com</u> for the latest information. All are welcome to 5Ways - we aim to be dementia friendly

St. James', New Bradwell Sunday 1st at 09:30 Holy Communion by Extension Led by Helen Rouse LLM Sunday 8th at 09:30 **Open Door** Led by the Open Door Team Sunday 15th at 09:30 **Holy Communion** Led by Rev Canon Peter Ballantine Sunday 22nd at 09:30 **Methodist Communion** Led by Rev Stephanie Hibberd Sunday 29th at 09:30 Morning Worship + Healing Led by Helen Rouse LLM



Services are live-streamed most weeks to St James' Facebook page at <u>St James Church</u> <u>NB | Facebook</u>

Every Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00 and Wednesday from 09:30 to 11:30, 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 09:30All Age Morning WorshipLed by Margaret Moakes LLMSunday 8th at 09:30Holy CommunionLed by Rev Dr Sam MuthuveloeSunday 15th at 09:30Holy CommunionLed by Rev Dr Sam MuthuveloeSunday 22nd at 09:30Holy CommunionLed by Rev Phil DunningHoly CommunionLed by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe



The monthly communion service at **Oaktree Court, Portland Drive** will be at **2.30 pm on June 5th** Anyone who would like to join us, and stay for a cup of tea afterwards, would be welcome. Please speak to Margaret Moakes.

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

St Mary Magdalene Willen: Hooke Heritage Project

Thank you to everybody who completed the St Mary Magdalene Willen questionnaire earlier this year. Your responses have confirmed that the heritage building's lack of

toilets and poor access are presenting barriers to visitors, and that there is support for addressing this. They also shared insight into how a new space with contemporary facilities might serve the congregation and sustain the heritage church. Using this information, an operational business plan has now been drafted which imagines the future and tests the concept of a new space.

Meanwhile, the heritage credential of St Mary's Willen will be further confirmed on Robert Hooke's birthday on 18th July when (weather and serviceability permitting) a heritage aeroplane (Avro Lancaster BI PA474 from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight) will fly over St Mary's in recognition of the impact of Hooke's early scientific experimentation on contemporary aviation. Flypast time will be notified nearer the time.

Future Events

A meeting to promote stewardship – Wednesday 25th June 2025 – 7.30pm – Christ Church, Stantonbury

Over the last few years the SEP has struggled to pay its full share to the Diocese. This has resulted in a gradual reduction in the stipendiary ministry. Our fall in income was accelerated during the pandemic and has not fully recovered. Joshua Townson, the Diocesan stewardship advisor will be the guest speaker and will be talking about giving in general and about the Parish Giving Scheme which is an alternative to Standing Orders as a means of regular giving.

Please put the date in your diary.

Adrian Prisk

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 reding this is thinking their future may lie in any level of ministry, please speak to Rev Chi or drop me a line.

News from Diocese of Oxford

Archdeacon Guy to retire in September



The Ven Guy Elsmore, Archdeacon of Buckingham, will be retiring from his post at the end of September this year. Guy was ordained as a deacon in 1993, and as a priest in 1994, and served the first 23 years of his ministry in and around Liverpool, where he became the area dean for Wavertree and Toxteth and Honorary Canon of Liverpool cathedral in 2014. He joined the Diocese of Oxford in 2016. Guy said: "I am deeply grateful for the opportunities to serve the Kingdom of God which my role has given me. I will never forget the friendship, faith and kindness of the parishes, the

Bucks Area Team and the wider Diocesan family. Working with Bishop Alan over so many years was a huge privilege, and I am holding Bishop Dave in my prayers as he takes up the mantle of Bishop of Buckingham. It has been a joy to be part of the process which led to his selection and to work with him through these first months of his episcopacy. As I move into retirement, I am looking forward to the next stage of life, and to being of continued service locally as a priest with Permission to Officiate.

Minor Repairs and Improvements Fund

Due to the high volume of applications received in the first two rounds of grant awards, this fund is not currently open to further applications. Future application deadlines will be announced subject to the availability of funds.



News from the Regional Central Baptist Union

SEP Newsletter Issue #36 June 2025

News from the Methodist Circuit

Methodist people cherish our place in the worldwide church, and our relationships with the Roman Catholic Church at local, national and international levels. We look forward to ever more opportunities to share with our Catholic siblings in the mission of the Church. We pray that all church leaders listen to the voices of the poor and the oppressed, and speak out for justice, as we share God's love.



A prayer on the election of Pope Leo XIV

God of all grace,

we thank you that in every generation you reveal your love for the world, and set before your people your word of life and hope.

Bless and guide your servant, Pope Leo XIV.

Give him the assurance of your love, and pour your

Spirit upon him: may his ministry reflect that of your Son Jesus, and let him be a bold witness to your love and truth.

Bless our siblings in the Roman Catholic Church as they welcome their new Holy Father. May he lead their Church with wisdom and grace.

Together with Pope Leo unite all Christians as a holy people, bearing hope and peace within the human family, and always attentive to the most poor and marginalised.

In the name of our Risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

News from The United Reformed Church

The outstanding Christian service of two URC members were honoured by King Charles on Maundy Thursday.

The Revd Louise Gee, an East Midland Synod Pastoral Consultant who also serves as Chaplain and Trustee at Friary Drop In (West Bridgford), and John East, a former Elder from Central URC in Darwen, attended a ceremony in Durham Cathedral for the annual presentation of Maundy Money just before the Easter weekend.

Each year, purses with the special coins are distributed by the Monarch to a selected number of men and women whose ages match the age of the Royal on Maundy Thursday. This year, 76 people received the Maundy Money, to the value of 76p in a white purse. The gift is to mark their years of Christian service in their communities. The tradition dates back to 1210. Also handed out to the recipients was a red purse containing a £5 coin commemorating The Queen Mother and a 50p coin featuring stories of WWII.

Explaining how he felt humbled, John who has served as Chair of DARE (Darwen Asylum Seeker and Refugee Enterprise and held many roles within the community, said: "I was delighted to be nominated to receive Maundy Money. Having the privilege to serve the Christian Church in many roles, it's important to reflect each day on developing that relationship with Jesus and to be able to learn and sustain a living faith."

Louise said 'I accepted these purses with great delight and great pride on behalf of all those I have walked alongside over the years in many churches, in the prison and those who live on the margins – all who have been such a blessing to my ministry for whom I give thanks to our Lord.

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 the website: <u>Churches Together in Milton Keynes (ctmk.church)</u>

News from the Partnership Green Champions

Eco Tip for June 2025



paths of the seas." Psalm 8 v 6-8

Thursday 5th June is World Environment Day, which this year takes as its theme "Ending Plastic Pollution"

SEP Newsletter Issue #36 June 2025

Key facts

• An estimated 583 billion plastic bottles were produced in 2021. That is 100 billion more than were produced just five years ago.

• In the UK it is estimated that five million tonnes of plastic is used every year, nearly half of which is packaging.

• Every minute, two garbage trucks of plastic are dumped into our oceans. Currently, a total of 8 million metric tons is dumped.

• Over 1 million marine organisms are killed each year due to plastic pollution in the ocean.

How you can help

1) Buy bags and other items, e.g. wipes, that are biodegradable or reuse them whenever possible.

2) Choose fruit and vegetables with paper or less packaging, or take your own bag.

3) Study MK's recycling scheme. You can recycle plastic bottles, food trays, yoghurt and snack pots, cartons and tubs.

4) Share your ideas with your family, friends and members of your church – and work together.

5) Sign Greenpeace's petition against supermarket plastics https://action.greenpeace.org.uk/supermarkets-broken-plastic-promises

I hope that you have found this and previous newsletters interesting and useful over the last 3 years.

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 July's issue is **Wednesday 25th June** to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of July.

John

John Porter <u>sepnewsletter9@gmail.com</u>