

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



January 2026 Newsletter

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

Partnership News

Pastoral News

January 2026

A blessed New Year!

*'All the while praising God and enjoying
the good will of all the people.
Each day the Lord added to their fellowship
those who were being saved' Acts 2 v 47 (NLT)*



As another new year comes we are praising God for wonderful Christmas celebrations in the SEP in which our churches welcomed many local friends; particularly to carol and crib services. Contacts were enhanced and new friends made at this extra special time of year. We are hoping to build on that buzz as we enter 2026.

In January we are starting what will be a consistent focus on stewardship this year and reminding all congregations simultaneously of the commitment involved with both maintaining and enhancing our mission together; inspired by the early church in Acts with statements like the one quoted above. Look out for special Sunday services each month on this theme, with special readings - the first being on January 18th.

This should complement our special appointment with Bishop Dave on January 6th at St Andrews - just for an hour, beginning at 7.00pm. All are welcome to join us for that event.

Work is also beginning to bring a new discipleship course into the SEP in 2026. Simply called '**Being With**' (see page 3) it is a relaxed programme designed to enable participants to discover the different dimensions of God's presence in their lives and live more abundantly with God. We've not finalised dates yet but start considering who you might invite to join in this programme, which will be held centrally and include a meal together. Again this is an 'SEP wide' initiative and all churches should begin to advertise the material.

I'm excited but prayerful about these thoughts, as these new initiatives mix with our established patterns of weekly worship and community meetings. We also begin to look forward to another Lent season, focused primarily again around shared material

for our House group Bible study meetings. Look out for information on that and the start of these sessions in February.

With every blessing

Rev Phil Dunning

SEP Baptist Minister and Vision Enabler

...Acting Ministry team leader

Pastoral Letter to the Congregations

Marking the Transition into the New Year and the Season of Epiphany

Dear friends in Christ,

As we enter the dawn of a new year, I write to you with a heart full of gratitude and hope, mindful of the journey we have travelled together as a faith community. It is my prayer that this letter finds you and your loved ones well, and that the peace of Christ rests upon each of your homes.

Reflection on Advent

Just weeks ago, we began the holy season of Advent—those days set aside for watchful waiting and preparation. Advent invites us to reflect on God's promises, to nurture hope even in times of uncertainty, and to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Lord. Through the lighting of candles, our prayers, and our worship, we have journeyed together in expectation, trusting in the light that shines in the darkness.

Celebration of Christmas

Christmas arrived with its message of joy and love, reminding us that in Jesus Christ, God draws near to us. Our celebrations—whether quiet or filled with laughter—centred upon the wonder of the Incarnation: that God chose to dwell among us, bringing light, peace, and hope into our world. I give thanks for the ways in which our congregations embodied the spirit of Christmas, reaching out in kindness, sharing in worship, and supporting one another.

Entering Epiphany

Now, as we move into the season of Epiphany, we are invited to consider anew the revelation of Christ to the world. The story of the wise men's journey reminds us that God's love is offered to all people, near and far. Epiphany calls us to look for Christ's presence in unexpected places and to share His light with those around us. It is a season that beckons us to open our hearts to God's guidance and to walk in faith, trusting that the light of Christ leads us forward.

Looking Ahead to 2026

With the turning of the year, we stand at the threshold of new opportunities and challenges. Let us embrace 2026 with courage, compassion, and hope, remembering that we are never alone; Christ walks beside us. I encourage each of you to seek God's presence in daily life, to nurture your spiritual growth, and to support one another in love and unity. May we be a community marked by generosity, prayer, and service, shining as a beacon of hope to all who whom we come across.

Closing Blessing

As we step into this new year and the blessed season of Epiphany, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the light of Christ fill our hearts and homes with peace, joy, and purpose that the world cannot give nor take away. Let us journey together in faith, sharing the love of Jesus with the world.

With every blessing for the year ahead,

Sam

Revd Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Minister at Cross & Stable Downs Barn & St Mary Magdalene Willen

Being With

If you find yourself wondering about your spiritual life, its meaning, or have questions you would like to explore, we will be running a course beginning in February. We will meet in a relaxed setting, such as a pub or another place with good food, and plenty of space for conversation. The course is called 'Being With'. It is a welcoming journey for those new to faith or simply curious about Christianity. Together, we will explore themes such as who God is, the life of Jesus, prayer, and the resurrection, through shared conversations where every voice matters. No prior knowledge is needed, and there are no right or wrong answers. The course will be led by the Revd Peterson Feital and the Revd Phil Dunning.

If you would like more information about the course, please email Peterson at revpfeital@gmail.com or see the website: <https://being-with.org>

The date and location of the course will be confirmed in January.

Partnership wide services

Thank you to the 100 members who attended the last one. Our next one is 31st May as the March date falls on Palm Sunday. Any Church Officers wanting to offer their church as a venue should let Helen Eaton know on sburyepadm@gmail.com

'MED Group' - Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship

The latest notes for the last MED group meeting are available in all our churches, and reflect the themes we discussed and prayed for on 6th October. Next meeting - Monday 19th January 2026 - hybrid, live venue TBA.

Rev Phil Dunning

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council

The next SEP Council meeting will be 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 29th January 2026. We welcomed Revd Dr. Kofi and Revd Peterson to our last meeting. Can all the Chairs, Church Wardens and Officers ensure their congregation is represented there.

Helen's SEP admin. phone number is 01908382458 and her email is sburyepadm@gmail.com. Our hope is that Helen will remove some of the burden of administrative tasks from the shoulders of our ministers and officers. We can all help

with that by contacting Helen with any admin or bookings, in the first instance, instead of our ministers and officers. Helen will then feedback any bookings to our Team Leader, Revd. Phil Dunning who will be able to decide who the best Minister is to take any service or office forward. My continued thanks to our six volunteers who still answer this phone every day.

Thank you to Revd. Phil, who is determining what support we can obtain for our March to May 2026 worship rota for the whole partnership with wider support from the Anglican, Baptist and Methodist denominations, so he can ensure a fair coverage of worship and pastoral care across our six congregations.

EVENTS on website

Helen is devising a way forward, with Paul Brookman of Bradwell Church, to make it easier to check for events at each church. This will help our congregation members, who maybe can't make the Bible Study group closest, but would like to go to one on a day or time better suited to them.

I hope 2026 is a good year for our Partnership
God Bless
Sharron, Lay Chair of SEPC

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence

Sunday 4th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Phil Dunning

Sunday 11th at 10:30 **Holy Communion Covenant**

Led by Rev Tim Norwood

Sunday 18th at 10:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev George Mwaura

Sunday 25th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Mike Morris



Most services are live streamed to You Tube. 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 is on its winter break.

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

Christ Church, Stantonbury

Sunday 4th at 10:30

Led by Maggie Prisk

Morning Worship

Sunday 11th at 10:30

Led by Rev Phil Dunning

Morning Worship

Sunday 18th at 10:30

Led by Rev David Nash

Morning Worship

Sunday 25th at 10:30

Holy Communion with Virtual Communion

Led by Rev Phil Dunning



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.

Re-starts on 15th January.

Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Sunday 4th at 11:00

Led by Rev Peter Green

Signed Holy Communion

Sunday 11th at 11:00

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Carol Service

Sunday 18th at 11:00

Led by Rev Phil Dunning

Holy Communion

Sunday 25th at 10:00

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Family Breakfast



Bell Ringing practice every Friday at 19:30.

Services are live-streamed on Zoom at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85922248518?pwd=Tm4vd00wancwVk52cCtgNm5tMWRZdz09>

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 The Open Door Group

Wednesday 7th at 10:00 **Wednesday Communion**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 11th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by tba

Sunday 18th at 10:00 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley

Sunday 25th at 10:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev Charles Dixon



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.

Bell Ringing practice every Tuesday at 19:30.

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.**

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

St. James', New Bradwell

Sunday 4th at 09:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 11th at 09:30 **Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Peterson Feital

Sunday 18th at 09:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Sunday 25th at 09:30 **Methodist Communion Covenant**

Led by Rev Stephanie Hibberd



Services are live-streamed most weeks to St James' Facebook page at [St James Church NB | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/StJamesChurchNB)

Every Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00 and Wednesday (not 7th) 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 4th at 09:30 All Age Morning Worship

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 11th at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 18th at 09:30 Baptist Holy Communion

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 25th at 09:30 Holy Communion

Led by Rev Peterson Feital



The monthly communion service at **Oaktree Court, Portland Drive** will be at **2.45 pm on January 8th**. Anyone who would like to join us, would be welcome. Please speak to Margaret Moakes.

Volunteer Gardening and T.T.T.T (Third Tuesday at Twelve Thirty) have finished for this year. A big **THANK YOU** to all the volunteers for all their great work in delivering **T.T.T.T** and also in maintaining and upgrading the churchyard in 2025.

Future events

Tuesday 6th January 2026

19:00 'An evening for the SEP with Bishop Dave'...Confirmed

at St Andrews Church, Great Linford.

The Bishop of Buckingham is spending an evening with us in the SEP specifically to show his support and seek to answer questions in our current ministry situation. Please put this date in your diaries now, so that you don't miss out on hearing from Bishop Dave on how the Diocese can assist our SEP at this time.

...our Administrator, Helen, is now compiling a list of questions for the Bishop.

...the event is free, and open to all members.

Saturday 31st January 2026

18:00 to 21:00 Burns Evening

Once again Willen are offering a **Burns Evening** at **Willen Pavilion**. The menu will include home-made vegetarian soup with Maria's speciality breads; haggis neeps and tatties and a dessert. Tickets will be £15 as before and £5 for schoolchildren. Please book early and let us know if you want vegetarian or any other dietary option.

Please contact David Preston for tickets or queries: tel. 07538 498061 or

email. davidgwpreston@gmail.com

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 Rev Phil or drop me a line.

News from Diocese of Oxford

We stand in sadness and solidarity'

In the aftermath of the Bondi beach attack, the Thames Valley Faith and Civic Leaders Group and the Oxfordshire Faith and Civic Leaders Group issued the following statement:

"Once again as faith and civic leaders we stand in sadness and solidarity with those in Australia facing up to the horrific terrorist attack on the Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach. Our prayers are with the injured, the bereaved and all who are grieving.

"We stand in solidarity with Jewish communities across the Thames Valley and beyond. Each time such an atrocity strikes, we renew our commitment to building peace, fostering understanding and nurturing good will within our own communities and across the world."

Imam Monawar Hussein and Bishop Steven Croft

Archbishop of Canterbury

The 105th archbishop, [Dame Sarah Mullally](#), currently the [Bishop of London](#), will become the legal archbishop on 28th January 2026 in a service at St Paul's Cathedral. She will be installed as Archbishop at Canterbury Cathedral on 25th March 2026.

News from the Regional Central Baptist Union

The Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain states, 'I am delighted to learn that Sarah Mullally has accepted the invitation to become the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

'This is an especially historic day given that Sarah is the first woman to be appointed to the role.

'These are challenging times and this is a most demanding role, and I pray God's blessing, wisdom, grace and strength as she serves the Lord in leading the Church of England.

'Our relationships as Baptists with the Church of England at local, regional and national levels are extremely important as we seek to fulfil the Great Commission in our unique contexts. Sarah will become one of the six Presidents of Churches Together in England, and it will be a privilege to work alongside her as we liaise on a wide variety of issues of common interest and concern. I'm aware too of countless examples of Baptist churches and ministers teaming up with their Anglican sisters and brothers in the communities they serve, and this is a wonderful expression of our partnership in the Gospel.

'I believe we are living in a season of spiritual hunger, and so our partnership in the Gospel means that Kingdom growth for one of us is Kingdom growth for us all, and we celebrate that.

'I would like to assure Sarah of my prayers and support as she becomes the next Archbishop of Canterbury, and I'm sure that churches across Baptists Together will join me in doing likewise.'

News from the Methodist Church

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 2.4

Peacemaking lies at the heart of the biblical story and remains a central Christian vocation. The Joint Public Issues Team want to see a world which actively works for peace, and to offer alternative approaches to violence. Our work examines the shifting challenges to peace which the world faces and responds to Jesus's call that we might be peacemakers in our communities and our world.

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: [Churches Together in Milton Keynes \(ctmk.church\)](http://ctmk.church)

Susan Armstrong, of St Mary Magdalene, is the link to CTMK.

News from the Partnership Green Champions

Eco Tip January 2026

The Eco Tip to measure your carbon footprint at the beginning of the New Year is taken from the A Rocha November newsletter 2025 and contains two useful sites to guide you doing this.

Take an audit of your individual or household carbon footprint, then repeat this each year to see if you can reduce it! There are some great tools to help you, including the carbon calculators provided by Climate Stewards at climatestewards.org/carbon-calculators. There are lots of ways to reduce your footprint, from switching energy suppliers to changing your diet.

Creation Care, at creationcare.org.uk, has resources specifically for households that give you ideas and help you track your progress. As you look at different areas of your life, consider lifting up each area or action to God as an offering.

I hope that you have found this and previous newsletters interesting and useful. If there is anything else you think would make it better or find any glaring omissions, please let your congregation's newsletter editor, Sharron or me know.

*The deadline for information to go into **February's** issue is **Sunday 25th January**. to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of **February***

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all A Very Happy and Peaceful 2026.

John

John Porter
sepnewsletter9@gmail.com