

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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



February 2024 Newsletter

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

Partnership News

Partnership wide service

Preparing for Lent

Service for all six congregations **Shrove Tuesday 13th February at St Andrews at 7.30pm**

This is the first Partnership wide service of the year and there will be three more; one for each of the four faith denominations.

This Anglican Communion service will be led by Revd. Asa Humphries, Pastoral Advisor, Buckingham, Diocese of Oxford, and supported by Revd. Dr. Sam Muthuveloe and Revd. Canon Chuks Iwuagwu. Thank you to St Andrews for hosting this and refreshments after the service. If you are able, please bring contributions for refreshments to the service.

Revd. Duncan Barnes and a team from the congregation at St. James have very kindly worked to provide materials for each week's service during Lent. These focus on a selection of themes of Inclusion; to listen and reflect on. We are invited to use these in our six congregations, or attend Sunday Services at St James, or the Bible Study group there. David Preston, Chair of Trustees and I are both grateful to Duncan and St James for this support on our journey to becoming a more Inclusive church community.

(For details see under the Future Events section of this Newsletter)

Appointment of new Priest in charge

After speaking with Archdeacon Guy and Rev Asa Humphries last week, the Diocese of Oxford arrangement is to advertise on 4 April for a Team Rector. This is due to Revd. Dr. Paul Smith transitioning from Team Rector to Team Vicar until his retirement in Autumn 2024. This new appointment will not be legally binding until 18 March. We need to hold a Section 11 meeting, which will be part of the PCC meeting held before the next SEPC on 21 March 2024.

Appointment of new Baptist Minister

David Preston, Adrian Prisk, Sam Muthuveloe, Paul Smith, Chuks Iwuagwu and myself, met by zoom with the applicant. From that meeting we have invited him to

visit the six congregations and hold a formal interview in April. Each congregation will be asked to select a small group to meet with him and his wife when they visit.

Mission, Evangelism, Discipleship and Worship Committee

I haven't made any change to this comment as the information is the same. This has still to come to fruition, as the Review expected, but I pray we get this off the ground with our ministry soon. This does not mean our Sunday Worship is compromised in any way, as the Worship Plan is still being organised without a meeting, as has been the case for a while. Our thanks to Margaret Moakes, Helen Rouse and Maggie Prisk for preparing the Plan and to Ann Fountain for helping with the administrative tasks.

Booking Offices with Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

The Trustees will note the new charges for weddings etc., at their next meeting on 6th February and then Irene Farr, Mary Kennedy and I will develop a poster for all six congregations to display, to help our communities arrange for their family needs, such as weddings and other events with the right person.

In my opinion we need a central answering system for clear contact information with the wider community. If this was for a couple of hours a day, six days a week then the six congregations could cover it. St Mary Magdalene have volunteered to cover Mondays, from 10-12. We will chat about this at our next few meetings.

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Council

We next meet on Thurs. 14th March 7.30pm, AGM 2024 changed to 25th April, venue Christ Church, Stantonbury. The Partnership Leadership Team meet on Thurs. 22nd February to prepare for the following two months. If you have anything you wish us to discuss, just tell me or your congregation representative to bring it up with us.

Hooke Heritage Project

St Mary Magdalene CLT have now been given the go ahead, by the Diocese Advisory Committee, to progress from a feasibility study to planning a building. The Diocese of Oxford prefer a contemporary design within the curtilage of the church. We still need archaeological and biodiversity reports though. Our need for water and toilets prevents invitations for meetings and this building would mean hospitality and a place for Bible Study and Sunday School. Oxford Heritage have produced Statements of Need and Significance, which state that St Mary Magdalene, built by polymath Robert Hooke, is probably the most important building in Milton Keynes and needs care by more than the congregation.

Please look at the Facebook pages St Mary Magdalene, Willen Village Heritage Association and Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership, or website Willenchurch.org to read these documents and keep up to date with developments.

Social Media

Thank you to those who have contributed to our congregations or Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Facebook and website. The Facebook groups are all public so just post your own comments. Please check daily as there are so many activities going on.

UNITYMK (originally known as Winter Night Shelter MK)

They are still looking for volunteers to help from now until March 2024. If you want to learn more, please contact:

Andrea Eklund, Operations Manager on andrea.eklund@unitymk.org or via their website, <https://www.unitymk.org/>

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.

Warm blessings, and I hope you all have a healthy and reflective Lent.

Sharron, Chair of SEP

secchair22@gmail.com

07846346809

Our Church Services and Events

Bradwell Church, St Lawrence

Sunday 4th at 10:30 **All Age Service**

Led by Rev Esther Squire

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

Led by Maggie Prisk

Sunday 18th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Helen Rouse LLM

Sunday 25th at 10:30 **Holy Communion Service**

Led by Rev Steve Barnes



Services are frequently live-streamed on Facebook using the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/BradwellChurchMK>

Gardening Club have decided to go into hibernation until Wednesday 6th March 2024 and thank you for all your help in 2023

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

Christ Church, Stantonbury

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

Led by Colin Taylor LLM

Sunday 11th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by Rev David Nash

Sunday 18th at 10:30 **Morning Worship**

Led by John and Jenny Boxwell

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

Led by Rev Dave Haseldine



All Sunday services are live-streamed to Christ Church's Facebook page, using the link below. You don't need to belong to Facebook in order to follow the service.

Streaming starts from 10.25 <https://www.facebook.com/christchurchmk/>

There is also a Christ Church website at www.christchurchmk.org.uk which has the service details on it and which is updated each week

Saturday 17th at 09:30 **Coffee and cake morning**

all donations received go to Christ Church coffee money charity.

Morning Drop-In every Wednesday 10.00 – 11.30.

Meets at Church, refreshments and a quiz are available.

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

Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Sunday 4th at 11:00 **Signed Holy Communion**

Led by Rev Peter Green

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

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Wednesday 14th at 19:30 **Service of Ashing**

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 18th at 11:00 **Morning Worship**

Led by Stephen Fletcher LLM

Sunday 25th at 11:00 **Holy Communion Service**

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe



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 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 (Party on the morning of 20th)

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 Service**

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

Wednesday 7th at 10:00 **1st Wednesday Communion**

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

Followed by refreshments and the 2nd seminar in the series of 6 on "Talking about God" led by Rev Prof John Beazley

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

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

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

Led by Rev Canon Chuks Iwuagwu

Sunday 25th at 10:00 **Holy Communion Service**

Led by Rev Prof John Beazley



Sunday Sitting Room at 17:00 on Zoom every week

Contact greatlinford@googlemail.com for joining details

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.

5 WAYS CAFÉ at St. Andrews' Church

11.00am to 1.00pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month

Come along to enjoy good company, refreshments and, for those wanting a bit of exercise, an accompanied walk in the Great Linford Manor Park to see the new layout, information boards etc. Everyone is welcome and the café is dementia friendly.

St. James', New Bradwell

Sunday 4th at 10:00 Holy Communion Service

Led by Rev Duncan Barnes

Sunday 11th at 10:00 Open Door Service

Led by The Open Door Team

Wednesday 14th at 19:00 Ash Wednesday Communion

Led by Rev Dr Paul Smith

Sunday 18th at 10:00 Holy Communion Service

Led by Rev Duncan Barnes

Sunday 25th at 10:00 Morning Worship

Led by Maggie Prisk



Most services will be live-streamed to St James' Facebook page at:

[St James Church, NB | Facebook](#)

Every Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00 St James' hosts a Coffee Morning

Visit St James' website at www.stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk for more information.

St. Mary Magdalene, Willen

Sunday 4th at 09:30 All Age Worship

Led by Margaret Moakes LLM

Sunday 11th at 09:30 Holy Communion Service

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe

Sunday 18th at 09:30 Holy Communion Service

Led by Fr Jonathan Ewer SSM

Sunday 28th at 09:30 Holy Communion Service

Led by Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe



A monthly communion service takes place at **Oaktree Court, Portland Drive** on the 1st Thursday of each month – next service is **2.45 pm on February 1st**. Anyone who would like to join us, and stay for a cup of tea afterwards, would be welcome. Please speak to Margaret Moakes.

Margaret Moakes is planning a **Lenten Quiet Day** on **Saturday, February 24th**. Further details to follow. Please contact Margaret if you are interested.

Future Events

St. James' church is currently exploring issues around being an *Inclusive Church*, in order to build towards a whole-SEP meeting in May.

Taking, as a baseline, the work done by www.inclusivechurch.org, which includes 6 published books on different aspects of developing a more Inclusive Church mindset, we would like to suggest a parish-wide sermon series and Lent group in the 6 weeks before Easter.

Using the 6 booklets, we would like to host a Sunday service, followed by a Monday evening home-group on the following subjects/dates:

18/19th February – Including **Ethnicity**;

25/26th February – Including **Sexuality**;

3/4th March – Including **Mental Health**;

10/11th March – Including **Disability**;

17/18th March – Including **Gender**;

24/25th March – Including **Poverty**.

The *Inclusive Church* Statement of Belief is:

‘We believe in Inclusive Church – church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.’

We are aware that, being an Ecumenical Parish, there are a wide variety of outlooks, traditions and interpretations of these issues. In offering this Lent sermon and home-group series, we hope to deepen the discussions and face these important questions together as a parish.

If you have already planned a Lent group series, please could you let us know. Also, could you let us know if any members of your congregation might be interested in participating in leading aspects of the course.

External Ecumenical News

We must think of our future in faith and church and ministry. If anyone reading this is thinking their future may lie in any level of ministry, please speak to your minister or drop me a line.

News from Diocese of Oxford

Care for Creation course

A six-series, online course for anyone interested in understanding more about the theology and science of caring for creation, and practical ideas about how to take action, both as individuals and as churches.

The course runs from 30th January, is free to attend, and will be led by our Environment Programme Manager in partnership with Winchester Diocese.

[Contact Hannah Mann to sign up or find out more](#)

SumUp profile verification email

SumUp is a payments processor used by many churches for online and contactless donations. As part of money laundering regulation they are required to check the sources of income passing through their systems. A number of churches have recently had emails from SumUp asking them to verify their profile and/or to provide further information about their “business”.

Please note that if this email comes from onboarding@sumup.co.uk then it is legitimate and you should respond as soon as possible, to prevent your account being closed. We have some template responses to the “business” information questions which [you can find on our website](#). You are urged to tailor these to your own church’s context.

News from the Regional Central Baptist Union



Wednesday 7th February: An opportunity to pray together with Lynn and our Regional Ministers as part of our call to prayer [More ...](#)



[ChangeMakers: Exploring ‘why’ and ‘how’ we use film as a catalyst for mission](#)

Saturday 17th February: A training day for all those interested in communicating via film and social media [More](#)



Baptist Assembly 2024

17-19 May: Join us in Telford for Baptist Assembly 2024 [More ...](#)

News from the Methodist Circuit

Milton Keynes Methodist Circuit Mission Development Plan 2022 – 2027

Methodists understand that mission is recognising and taking part in God’s work within our churches and communities; this includes praying and worshipping

together, sharing our faith, caring for those in need, and acting in loving and just ways.

The Circuit seeks to become a community that:

- Grows and flourishes
- Tells others of the love and grace of God
- Notices and challenges unfair and unjust situations
- Offers hospitality and generosity in ways that are open to all

News from The United Reformed Church

Community Project Awards

For 25 years, the United Reformed Church has been recognising outstanding community projects taking place in its churches – projects that don't get the recognition they deserve, but which demonstrate the mission of the church by reaching out in many different ways to the local communities which they serve.

The URC has partnered with [Congregational](#) and we are again deeply grateful to them for donating up to £6,000 in prizes, and for agreeing to make the awards each year after we went back to holding our General Assembly annually.

Each year, three awards of up to £2,000 are made.



2024 Community Project Awards entry form is available below, and contains details of what to do and by when.

The deadline for completed entries is 5pm on Friday 23 February, 2024. Download the entry form:

• [The United Reformed Church Community Project Awards 2024 Entry Form](#)

Each denomination has a website with all these items and much more. You can subscribe to receive updates.

Warm blessings and I wish you a healthy, reflective Lent.

Sharron, Chair of SEP secchair22@gmail.com

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://Churches Together in Milton Keynes (ctmk.church))

News from the Partnership Green Champions

ECO CHURCH TIP FOR FEBRUARY



Did you know that during 1 week last year, the UK threw away 2 billion pieces of plastic, only 12% of which was recycled? The Big Plastic Count is a nationwide initiative to reveal how much plastic the UK throws away. You can play your part by monitoring your rubbish and completing a chart. The results will be used to convince UK government ministers to lead the way at the Global Plastics Treaty talks in 2024, and push for a really strong treaty.

Taking part in The Big Plastic Count is really easy. Here's what you need to do:

1. **Register:** Get your free counting pack (digital or via post) which includes everything you need to take part
2. **Get Counting:** Count all your plastic waste from 11-17 March
3. **Submit Results:** Submit your data via our website by 31 March
4. **Get Your Footprint:** Discover your plastic footprint and use the results to make a difference!

Sign up here:

<https://thebigplasticcount.com/sign-up/households>

I hope that you find this newsletter 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 March's issue is **Sunday 25th February** to allow me to get it to you in time to send out before the beginning of March*

John

John Porter sepnewsletter9@gmail.com

*No **Last Word** item this month, however if anyone would like an item included as the **Last Word** (max one and a half pages please) either next month or in future, send it to me at the above email address before the deadline with the reference 'Last Word'.
JP*