



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 35—July 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of *Faiths Engage*.

This feels like the summer when people are making up for lost time; we at the Centre have enjoyed being part of all sorts of different in person meetings, from the AGM to work with church groups, an interfaith pilgrimage of prayer for world peace and a conference supporting work on health and wellbeing in the city of Leicester. Our team of faith practitioners are very busy visiting schools; if you'd like to get involved, there's further information below.

With every good wish.

Revd Dr Tom Wilson

Director, St Philip's Centre

St Philip's Centre Needs You!

Since the end of covid restrictions, St Philip's Centre has been inundated with requests for its programmes – especially education, with many schools from across the region and beyond getting in touch with us. This is a wonderful development and we would hope to agree to every request but we are running short of faith practitioners! Our excellent team of faith practitioners are on the frontline of delivery. Roles include hosting, facilitating or teaching schoolchildren.

If you have some spare time and would like to hear more, please contact Riaz Ravat (Deputy Director) for a conversation. Please contact him initially via email at: riaz.ravat@stphilipscentre.co.uk or feel free to approach Revd Dr Tom Wilson (Director) at the Centre. Please note that all roles are subject to a DBS check at the appropriate level as part of our Safer Recruitment policy.



Annual General Meeting

On Wednesday 22nd June, the St Philip's Centre held its annual general meeting. It was a pleasure to be able to meet in person, having had to hold the last two meetings online.

We heard from Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly, Anglican Bishop of Loughborough, on the theme of learning to live well together. The talk was interactive, and we discussed how we can practice "holy envy" in our interactions with people of different faith and belief perspectives, celebrating aspects of their faith we find particularly challenging or impressive.

During the business meeting, we confirmed Bishop Saju's nomination as a trustee, as well as renewing the terms of Revd Dr Israel Selvanayagam and Mrs Ruth Olugbenga. We also said goodbye, with great sadness and heartfelt thanks, to Mr Gordon Arthur, who has been a trustee of the Centre for twelve years. His quiet wisdom, good humour and commitment to the Centre will be greatly missed.

Tom Wilson



Work with Churches

Faith and Friendship Forum

The June meeting of the Faith and Friendship Forum at Mayflower Methodist Church involved Ramesh sharing his daily life as a Buddhist and his meditation practice. The next meeting will be on Thursday July 21st at 7pm when there will be a presentation on daily life as a Jain.

James Blackhall



Linking Projects

Schools Linking

We had a really amazing Schools Linking Celebration Week with classes meeting finally, face to face! A class from Linden Primary visited St Margaret's Stole Golding and was filmed for BBC East Midlands Today. You can watch the report here: <https://www.facebook.com/100011977564047/videos/795922185154605/> We had posed the question, 'How do we all live well together?' and engaged not only schools but local charities, civic society and even some celebrities! Here are a few responses:



We are starting to renew and recruit schools for the 2022-23 project and have exciting plans for face to face meetings as part of the new programme. We are collaborating with The Stephen Lawrence Research Centre and The Attenborough Arts Centre to create an exciting new offer, that will still be completely free to schools. All Primary and Secondary schools in the city and the county are welcome to take part.

We are also pleased to be able to offer our Intergenerational Linking Project across the city and the county next year too.

For more info – email Ruth Sinhal on school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Conciliation in the Qur'an

On Tuesday 14th June, I had the privilege of being one of two respondents at a seminar held in the Centre for Muslim Christian Studies in Oxford. The main presentation was from Dr Shafi Fazaluddin (pictured) who shared from his book *Conciliation in the Qur'an*. The focus of the presentation was particularly on reference to *birr*, righteous conduct, in the Qur'an. In my response, I was able to draw connections with the St Philip's Centre's core aim of learning to live well together. We had an interesting conversation about the ideals presented in our sacred texts and the challenge of putting them into practice in the reality of everyday life. Dr Fazaluddin's book is an excellent read, but the academic hardback copy isn't cheap, so if you'd like to read it, do get in touch!



Tom Wilson

Community News

A Big Day Out

One of our faith practitioners was invited to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace recently and shares his reflections on the day:

A very unusual day in my life when Penny and I found ourselves, with many others, in the gardens of Buckingham Palace for a postponed garden party, having been honoured to be nominated for my work as a faith ambassador going into schools all around the East Midlands to teach not only about Judaism but, with all the other faith ambassadors of different religions, showing how much our respective faiths have in common.

The day had its trials and tribulations with cancelled trains (East Midlands Railway shame on you!), rain on and off and poor access to transport on our way home, but we got to see a wide variety of people from all walks of life, equally honoured for their work and just as nosy as us to see the fantastic gardens, sample the cucumber sandwiches and beautiful cakes and watch people walking by in a variety of formal, national and just plain colourful outfits.

It was a day we won't forget in a hurry and though we got not a glimpse of a royal personage, it was definitely a day and an experience to remember. Thank you to two fantastic London cabbies who got us to and from the Palace.

And of course, not forgetting Mrs H in a hat (she hates hats but made a special effort for me), looking a very pretty picture.

Elliot Harris



Live Well Walk More

Live Well Walk More provide free to attend health walking groups, aimed at people looking to get in more daily physical activity to improve their health as well as those who enjoy a short walk.

Our focus is to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and it's a great way to meet new people to help combat social isolation.



For more information please visit our website [Live Well Walk More - Live Well Leicester](#)

Community WellBeing Champions Network

On Thursday 16th June, Tom attended a conference that launched the Leicester City Council Community Wellbeing Champions Network. The Director of Public Health for the City, Professor Ivan Browne (pictured) shared his hopes for the network, encouraging us to work hard to improve the wellbeing of all the residents of the city.

As part of the Centre's contribution to this important area of work, on Monday 20th June, Riaz facilitated an online seminar on the faith communities of Leicester for staff in the Public Health team. We're grateful for the opportunity to be part of this important initiative, and look forward to working with the Public Health team in the months to come.



Tom Wilson & Riaz Ravat

Truth by Name: Exploring Relationships between Sikhs and Christians

On Wednesday 29th June, Tom hosted a fringe session at the Methodist Connexion Conference to discuss a book he has been working on during lockdown: *Truth By Name: Exploring Relationships between Sikhs and Christians*. After some orientation and introductory discussion the book discusses the *Mul Mantar* and *Japji*, the opening hymn of the Guru Granth Sahib, offering reflections from a Christian perspective on the themes and ideas found in what is arguably the greatest composition of Guru Nanak. The second main section explores some of the *janam sakhis*, stories of the birth, life and teachings of Guru Nanak. The stories are recounted and then further reflections from a Christian perspective are offered. The third, and final, main section discusses relationships between Sikhs and Christians, focusing on some of the key contributions from different pioneers in this field. If you would like to know more, or get hold of a copy of the book, please do get in touch.



Pilgrimage of Prayer for World Peace

On Wednesday 29th June, Riaz took part in a walking Pilgrimage of Prayer for World Peace, organised by Loughborough Council of Faiths.

They visited six faith groups: Sahib Gurdwara, the Brahma Kumaris, Loughborough Mosque & Islamic Centre, Loughborough BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, Loughborough Baptist Church, and Geeta Bhawan Hindu Temple.

It was an excellent evening, enabling people of many different faith and belief perspectives to continue their journey of learning to live well together.



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