

# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 44—April 2023

## Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

In this issue you can read about the diverse range of our corporate work, and the impact of our school linking project. It is good to see this project being taken up by schools across the city and county, and that it is useful to enable pupils to learn how to live well together as they start their secondary school career.

You can also read about some of our recent church facing sessions and activities, including a brief record of a book launch event. If you want to read more about the book, then visit <https://allsaintsloughborough.org.uk/resources/completion-and-condemnation-in-matthew-a-book-by-revd-dr-tom-wilson>.

Our schools work team are as active as ever and are well received wherever they go.

Finally, Rachael Brind-Surch, who has been on placement with us for the past few weeks, reflects on her experiences so far. April is a busy month for many different faith groups. May I wish you a time of blessing and peace as you celebrate.

Tom Wilson  
Director  
St Philip's Centre

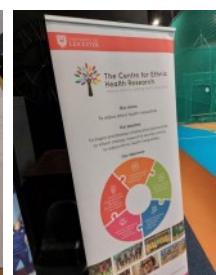
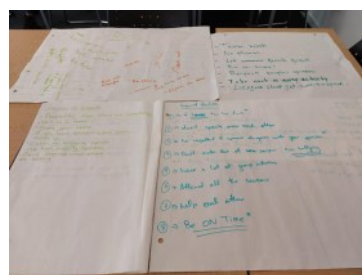
## Corporate Work

We're coming to the end of another very busy month. March began with another Confidently Addressing Radicalisation and Extremism (CARE) Course which was well-received by all those who attended. This was quickly followed by a Religion & Belief Training Day for employees of Leicestershire County Council. They came up with some challenging questions for our faith practitioners, who took it all in their stride!

The following week we held a Cops Communities Consent (CCC) Expo at Gateway College. It was a fabulous day engaging hundreds of students.

The next day we were back at Gateway College for the first of six sessions of our RISE Life Skills programme, which went down very well.

Finally, our Deputy Director was invited by the Centre for Ethnic Health Research at the University of Leicester to their Active Communities event to share ideas and meet community members.



# Linking Projects

## Intergenerational Linking

The Leicester Intergenerational Linking Project, based at St Philips Centre, delivers intergenerational linking across Leicester and Leicestershire, linking young people with older people in a way that is reciprocal and beneficial to all who take part.

This April we are inviting all partnerships involved in our work to take part in Global Intergenerational Week 2023 from April 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> in whatever way they want.

We are suggesting that linked partners organize a Mix and Mingle event during the week. The format of this can be totally flexible - we just want to see people of different generations coming together in exciting and creative ways!

Find out more about how to organise your own Mix and Mingle Intergenerational Event.

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/downloads/641dccc1649-intergenerational-mix-and-mingle.pdf>

If you would like to know more about our Intergenerational Linking programme please get in touch with Ruth Sinhal [school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk)



## Secondary Linking

### Consider Shuttle Dialogue as a programme for Year 7 induction.

Across three Secondary Schools in the LiFEMAT in Leicestershire, Shuttle Dialogue Secondary Linking is used as a key part of the Induction work that all Year 7's engage in during their first week at their new school. This year over 400 students from Countesthorpe Academy, The Winstanley School and Bosworth Academy, took part and classes were linked with others within the MAT and carried out the exchanges of work with each other. According to Steve Hall, LiFE Senior Leader, "It worked really well and all of the students involved made a really smooth transition to secondary school so we will definitely be doing it again next year!"

Staff see it as a powerful and proactive way to ensure all new students feel a sense of belonging, whilst at the same time, ensuring the schools' vision and values around inclusivity and respectful relationships are explicitly shared. They believe using the Shuttle Dialogue project in this way 'has awakened the students to the idea that they have lots of things to share and these things are important, and they don't want to leave these aspects at the school gate. They are confident to share them and consequently enrich the whole school community,'



Natasha Boyce, Associate Senior Leader & Head of Religious Studies at LiFE MAT explains, "... the content is fantastic – it's outstanding, it's relevant; it's looking at issues that they're currently dealing with in society; especially post George Floyd, there's so much around anti-racism, and how different people experience different spaces. Having that content in the materials

is great, and what I like is that it doesn't just raise the discussion around the content, but moves to what actions we can take as active citizens, to make sure we have a fairer, more inclusive society.

If you would like to know more about our Secondary Schools Linking programme please get in touch with Ruth Sinhal [school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

## Work with Churches

### Avoiding Christian Anti-Semitism

On Tuesday 7th March, Tom and Bernard Glick ran a session on Christian antisemitism for the preachers and worship leaders meeting of Trinity Methodist circuit. The group met in Great Glen Methodist Church. First, Tom gave a whistle stop tour of the history and Bernard shared reflections from his own personal experience as a Jewish person who attends church from time to time for family occasions. The participants reflected in pairs and small groups on how to avoid antisemitism in their preaching and leading of worship, before a plenary discussion. Afterwards, Richard, the secretary to the local preachers and worship leaders meeting, wrote to thank us for coming. He said, "Your guidance and sharing of personal lived experience was both inspiring and challenging to those able to attend. It was a thought-provoking session which helped us reflect on our approach to the Easter story and how we address our congregations when preaching and leading worship."

With thanks to the circuit for the invitation and Bernard for his help in facilitating the discussion.

### Bishop Saju at Muslim School Oadby

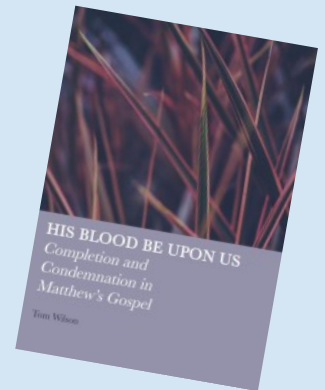
On Monday the 13th of February Tom took one of our trustees, Bishop Saju, to visit Muslim School Oadby. He was met by the principal, Zubeir Hassam. Zubeir showed Bishop Saju around the school, and we heard Quranic recitations from some of the youngest children. We also discussed the importance of bringing up children to believe in the faith of their parents. Bishop Saju talked about his "holy envy" of the rigorous and disciplined education system that he had witnessed. We are grateful to Zubeir for taking the time to show us round.



### Book Launch

The Centre hosted the book launch for our Director Rev'd Dr Tom Wilson's new book *'His Blood be Upon Us: Completion and Condemnation in Matthew's Gospel'* which explores passages in the Gospel of Matthew and how to preach on them in ways that don't perpetuate antisemitism. The event was well attended and the question and answers raised interesting questions around how we handle such passages in worship. The launch was well received and people who attended appreciated the thoughtfulness that had gone in.

If you would like to explore Preaching with Jewish Communities in mind, both James and Tom lead sessions alongside Jewish colleagues. Contact James for more information: [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk) or phone the Centre and select Option 6.



### Forthcoming Events

#### Visit to the East Midlands Buddhist Vihara

9 Una Avenue, Braunstone Town,  
Leicester LE3 2GS

**Thursday 20th April at 7.00 pm**

For further information or to book,  
please contact James:  
[courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

#### An exploration of how Passover is celebrated at home

Led by Sheila Gewolb

**Tuesday 25th April,  
12.15—1.15 pm  
at St Philip's Centre**

Refreshments provided

To book, please email James:  
[courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

## On Placement at St Philip's Centre

As someone training for ordination (an ordinand) in the Diocese of Leicester, we are expected to get real-world ministry experience alongside our more academic studies. Throughout our training, we will complete at least two placements, one a parish placement in a specific church context, and the other a community placement, which can be a placement in any community context, most frequently this may be a chaplaincy of some kind or community outreach programme. Growing up in the more homogenous suburban villages of Leicestershire I was aware of the amazing diversity of the city I would travel into for various county activities. Sadly though I never had too many experiences to learn about the vast number of faiths and places of worship which make up the rich tapestry of Leicester. This felt like a really significant gap in my knowledge, and so I felt that my community placement presented the perfect opportunity to address my ignorance.

It has been wonderful to be welcomed in to the St Philip's Centre over the past few weeks. Tom and the team have ensured that I am getting to see as much of the brilliant work the Centre is engaged in as possible. I have met representatives from many of the city's major faiths and visited their places of worship. Having the option to ask questions, experience worship of different kinds and learn about work to promote cooperation and understanding between communities has been a real privilege. I have encountered real enthusiasm for the work being engaged in and a generosity of time and hospitality which I'm exceedingly grateful for.



Conversations with the small but dedicated team and the people they work alongside with to educate and inform ordinands, curates, public sector workers and children have offered me a glimpse of the scale of need in our city as well as the many things we have in common with our siblings in faith. It's clear that all our communities are struggling after Covid and in the face of the cost of living crisis, but woven throughout the issues raised there is a lot of hope to be found at St Philip's Centre.

School visits and book launches, have highlighted the importance of learning to see the world from other perspectives to our own on a personal level. Whilst learning about some of the great community programmes and groups being facilitated in Leicester through the Near Neighbours grants scheme have demonstrated the need for a wider strategic action. From Cross faith initiatives providing food for those in financial hardship, training, legal help and housing for refugees and social schemes to build understanding and tackle loneliness, it is clear from this that the work happening is vital to peace and reconciliation in our communities and the relationships being built only help to serve and enrich the places we live.

I'm looking forward to my final couple of days with St Philip's Centre and hope that the insights from this experience can be carried with me into future ministries I may be involved with in future.

Rachael Brind-Surch

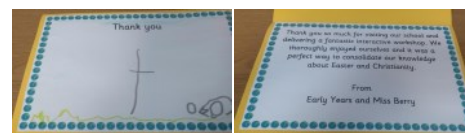
## Work with Schools

March has been a very busy month for school programmes and we've had some lovely testimonials:

Market Harborough C.E. Academy said: *"The day was fantastic and I wanted to extend my thanks to David and Rachael who accompanied us on the trip. All of the sites were great – the children were especially absorbed by the Mosque – with many of them describing it as a being like a palace! Once again – thank you for arranging such a great, educational and informative day for the children."*



Then we received this lovely Thank You card from Thrussington C.E. Primary School after an Understanding Celebrations Workshop for their Early Years children. It really brightened our day!



## Funding Support

Active Together  
All Saints' Educational Trust  
Anglican Diocese of Leicester  
The Benefact Trust  
The Dunhill Medical Trust  
Home Office  
The J R Corah Foundation Fund  
Leicester College  
Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation  
Leicester City Council

The Linking Network  
Methodist Connexion  
National Lottery Heritage Fund  
N C Bellefontaine Trust  
Near Neighbours (DLUHC)  
Northampton District of the Methodist Church  
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC)  
Open Society Foundations  
P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust  
Shire Funding  
The United Reformed Church



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