



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 50—October 2023

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

In this issue you can read about our corporate work, in particular the training we have recently facilitated for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue service and for Leicestershire Police. September has also been a busy month for church engagement. We spoke at two synods, one Methodist and one Anglican, facilitated training for over 100 ordinands, as well as other engagements with church groups. This issue also features further details of Inter Faith Week which takes place next month in November. Do please support our activities and think about what activities you could put on yourself. Even a small activity helps people learn how to live well together.

Corporate Work

This month has been intense especially in relation to our public sector training and wider engagement.

At the beginning of September, Riaz Ravat was invited to the launch of the Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service's (NFRS) Ethnic Minority Alliance Network which was an opportunity to meet various staff from NFRS who are championing equality, diversity and inclusion in the service. The event enabled us to converse about how we might be involved moving forward. On 15th September, we ran a Religion & Belief in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) training day for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service new recruits. The day included visits to two places of worship—a Gurdwara and a Hindu Temple. The group were really engaged and asked some great questions. One of the group commented: *"I've always lived in the area but have very much lived in my own bubble with some awareness of other religions. I'm honoured to have had the opportunity to visit various places."*

The following week we had an East Midlands theme on our training session for Leicestershire Police with some visitors from Lincolnshire Police joining us for the day. We had similarly positive evaluations from this group: *"Thank you so much for this opportunity. I have found it very engaging and invaluable."* A big thank you to everyone who helped to facilitate these training days.

On 20th September, we were invited to take part in a Freshers Fayre at the Brooksby Campus of Brooksby Melton College. Here we promoted a small number of the 'Cops, Communities, Consent' Expo boards to students and staff. The feedback we received informed us that they were very keen for us to return with the full complement of boards and to host some of our seminars which boost decision-making and critical thinking skills.



Church-facing Work

Ratby Methodist Church Ladies' Circle

James went with Sheila Gewolb to the Ratby Methodist Church Ladies' Circle where they hosted an Introduction to Judaism session. It was an enjoyable session learning more about what it means to practice Judaism in Britain today and to think about some of the festivals that take place throughout the year. Please do contact James at courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk or phone the Centre (Option 6) if you would like to arrange a similar session for your church.



St Mellitus College

Kartar, Bernard and James went to Swanwick for an interfaith panel for ordinands in the Church of England studying at St. Mellitus College. Topics that were asked about included: what other faiths have to say about forgiveness, what do good and bad encounters with Christians look like?; and how can Christians convey their faith appropriately in a way that is heard as good news even if the other person doesn't agree.



St Guthlac's Church, Knighton

Imran was invited through St Philip's to speak during a recent service at St Guthlac's Church, Knighton about how Muslims view care for creation and to learn more about what it would mean for people of faith to work together for the good of the planet. The talk was appreciated by many who attended. If you would like to arrange something similar please contact James and he'd be happy to work with you.



Christian Engagement in a Multifaith World

On Tuesday 19th September we ran our popular course, Christian Engagement in a Multifaith World. We heard from four different faith practitioners: Bernard gave us a Jewish perspective, Imran a Muslim perspective, Harinder a Sikh perspective, and Nima a Hindu perspective on interfaith engagement. We are very grateful to all of them for giving up their time and for the course participants for asking such insightful and interesting questions.



Northampton District Synod

On Saturday 8th September I went with Sumaiya and Kartar to the Northampton District Synod. I began by explaining three principles of interfaith engagement. First, the idea of being both host and guest. It's easy enough to welcome others into our spaces, making appropriate changes to accommodate their needs. But what about when we're guests? A simple example is the question of taking off your shoes, the norm in many places of worship but largely unheard of in British churches. Second, service, both for others and from others. It is easy enough to want to do something for someone else. But what about when they want to do something for me? Or what about the hard work of collaborating so our limited resources are used for maximum impact? Third, proclamation. Christianity is a missionary faith, wanting to reach out to others. How do we do that appropriately in multifaith, multicultural Britain? Sumaiya and Kartar were honest and sensitive in sharing their wisdom and experience, suggesting what would be received well and what would be inappropriate for all three of these areas. My abiding memory will be of the warmth. It was a hot day, but more than that, it was warm with generosity of spirit and a desire to learn how to live well together.



James Blackhall

Tom Wilson

Leicester Diocesan Synod

On Saturday 23rd September I went with Pradip Gajjar and Shirin Mansur to Leicester Anglican Diocesan Synod. I began by reminding the Synod of the Centre's strapline of learning to live well together, and our four values of encounter, understand, trust, and cooperate. These formed the context for my two colleagues to share their thoughts. Shirin talked about her experience as centre manager for St Philip's Church, and the opportunities it gives her to serve the local community. Pradip talked both about the visits of Bishop Martyn and Bishop Saju to Avanti Fields secondary school and the behind the scenes work the bishops do in building strong community relationships. He also shared his own experience of interfaith engagement. We discussed some tough issues, including the tensions there are within and between communities. We received a warm welcome and positive engagement with the challenges of living well together in our diverse city and county.



LCFC safeguarding input

On Tuesday 12th September some delegates from our 'Safer Faiths, Safer Followers' project visited Leicester City Football Club to hear from their safeguarding team. We heard from staff who work both for the professional club, and those who work for the Community Foundation, sharing ideas for best practice ways of ensuring both children and adults at risk are kept safe. We are grateful for the opportunity and the insights gained.

Tom Wilson



Abrahamic Dialogue Group: Prophetic Families

24th October: Noah and his wife
21st November: Abraham, Sarah and Hagar
19th December: Isaac and Rebecca
23rd January: Jacob, Leah and Rachael
20th February: Joseph and his brothers

All meetings 7.00—8.30 pm at
The Dialogue Society, 105 The Lodge, Margaret Road,
Leicester LE5 5FW

Email courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk to book a place

INTER FAITH WEEK 2023

Inter Faith Week 2023 runs from 12th to 19th November. There will be lots of interfaith activities happening locally and all around the country during that week so keep a look out for them as they are advertised in the coming weeks. Keep an eye on the Inter Faith Week website and the Activities Map: [Activities by town - Inter Faith Week](#)

One event which is in the planning stage is a series of lunchtime talks which will take place at Bishop Street Methodist Church from Monday 13th to Friday 17th November. Further details will follow—but save the dates!

If you are involved in planning an event, please do let us know so we can share the information. If you need some inspiration, have a look at the back page of the newsletter for lots of hints and tips!





Inter Faith Week

12-19 November
www.interfaithweek.org



Taking part in Inter Faith Week 2023—tips and pointers

Inter Faith Week is about increasing awareness about the different faith communities in the UK and highlighting the contribution of faith groups to society; spotlighting inter faith cooperation and understanding; and encouraging dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. It's a fantastic platform to share, learn and build relationships with neighbours, colleagues and service users of different backgrounds, promote diversity and integration goals and to come together in service for the common good.

Now is a great time to begin planning an activity for Inter Faith Week 2023!

There are lots of activity ideas and resources to help you run an event at: [Resources - Inter Faith Week](#). Another great resource is the newly published, '[Strengthening Co-operation and Understanding: Inter Faith Week 2022](#)' which is packed with examples and pictures of how the Week was marked by faith and inter faith organisations, local authorities, emergency services, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals and hospices, sports bodies, museums, libraries and many others.

We maintain an interactive map and calendar listings which will show events happening by town/city across the country. This adds to the buzz of the Week and helps media and others find out what's going on.

If you arrange an activity, please do take a few minutes to tell us about it at www.interfaithweek.org/submit. If your event is just for your organisation – for example a training session in a workplace or a classroom activity – then you can indicate this on the form and we will list the activity as closed. However, having it on the website helps to inspire others and shows what you're doing to support good inter faith relations and increase religious literacy

There will be a short lunchtime Zoom session on **Wednesday, 4th October, from 12.30pm to 1.30pm** with:

- Tips and ideas for people thinking about possible activities to hold
- Pointers for promoting activities to reach more people
- Thinking about monitoring and evaluation of activities
- Q and A session with the Inter Faith Week team at IFN

You can register for the event [here](#) and Zoom details will be circulated to those who have registered by noon on 3 October to attend the meeting.

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
The M B Reckitt Trust

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 Spalding Trust
The United Reformed Church



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