



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 77—February 2026

## Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage. 2026 is shaping up to be a busy year at the Centre, as we mark 20 years of learning how to live well together. We have a range of different events planned; look out for further details as the year goes on. We're also keeping up our regular activities, including lots of work with schools, training new police recruits, the CARE course, and various cohesion focused activities. Details of some of these events are in this newsletter. Do join us if you can.

**Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson**  
**Director, St Philip's Centre**

## Leicester Listening Together

Sometimes I meet people who are weighed down by all sorts of troubles and concerns – and I think to myself, what you need is a good listening to. Someone's focused attention. The chance to talk about what's going on, what you're worried about, what keeps you awake at night. I do my best to be that good listener. Listening not just for the words, but for the emotions, the silences, the hints of something deeper, waiting to be gently eased out into the open.



At St Philip's Centre we've been doing a lot of community listening recently. People are angry, scared, frightened and confused. But they are also joyful, inquisitive, grateful and empathetic.

We're sharing our learning at an event on 10th February. You can [book here](#)

**Tom Wilson**

## Connecting Communities

In December we ran two 'Christmas is Coming' sessions; the first at St Mary's Church, Humberstone and the second at St Philip's Church, Leicester. Whilst making clay Christmas trees, participants talked about what Christmas traditions they had grown up with and what changes they had seen either through time or from different cultural perspectives.

Conversations explored:

- The commercialisation of Christmas and in particular whether it not only hid the true meaning of Christmas, but also robbed children of some of the simpler joys that older participants remembered – how it was a treat to get an orange or a piece of chocolate in a stocking, the fun of playing games together and watching or listening to shows as a family.
- Different food traditions and especially where cultural background influenced what was eaten for Christmas dinner.
- The decline in church attendance including how the change in preaching following WW2 from 'fire and brimstone' to 'love' contributed to this.
- What presents people were hoping to get
- What preparations were being made for Christmas
- What church services would be attended
- How being in an ethnically diverse area impacted on Christmas services
- Family visits, interactions, and tensions

Both sessions were lively, interesting and very messy!

***Cathryn Parsons  
Churches Engagement Officer***





## Education

2026 has kicked off at a fast pace for the Education Team, with January packed full of activity. We started the year by delivering our Religion and Belief Roadshows, bringing interactive learning into schools and giving pupils the chance to explore different faiths in a really hands-on way.

One teacher from Mansfield summed up the experience perfectly:

*"The opportunity for children to see and touch various artefacts; also, the children benefit enormously from speaking to members who practice faiths or beliefs so that they have a greater understanding of these."*

We've also had several school visits where pupils spent time at a place of worship, followed by creative, faith-based activities back in the classroom. Through art and crafts, children were able to explore what they'd learned and really embed their understanding of the faith they visited.

On top of this, the team delivered workshops on Judaism and Hinduism, and supported visits to a Mosque, Gurdwara, and Jain Centre. These experiences gave pupils the chance to ask questions, meet people from different faith communities, and learn in a way that's engaging, memorable, and fun.

It's been a strong start to the year, and we're looking forward to continuing this work and creating more meaningful learning experiences throughout 2026.



# Safer Faiths, Safer Followers

Understanding and Countering  
Spiritual Abuse in Faith Communities

TOM WILSON



You are warmly invited to a  
lunch and learn on  
“Safer Faiths, Safer Followers:  
Understanding and  
Countering Spiritual Abuse  
in Faith Communities”

12:00 -13:30  
on  
Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February  
St Philip's Centre  
2a Stoughton Drive North  
Leicester  
LE5 5UB

Please register, and notify of  
dietary or access needs, via  
[admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

Free book for first ten attendees



Staff at the St Philip's Centre in Leicester have been rolling up their sleeves this week for First Aid at Work training, bravely facing the ultimate test of teamwork, calm under pressure, and... slightly unnerving resusci dolls. Between perfecting CPR rhythms (staying just on the right side of Stayin' Alive) and practising recovery positions that didn't quite resemble modern dance, the team threw themselves into the sessions with enthusiasm and good humour.

It's all part of making sure the Centre continues to be a safe, confident place for everyone who walks through the door — even if the mannequins will be having nightmares about chest compressions for a while.

# Corporate

The start of 2026 has been full on with the delivery of both CARE Silver and CARE Gold courses. Delegates from public bodies in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) including several from educational establishments signed up. Several highlights were noted including increased literacy of the Prevent duty and local referral systems. Attendees in particular appreciated the use of case studies which helped to illustrate risks and threats. We are grateful to Leicester City Council and Leicestershire Police for their contributions.

*Police recruits testing their knowledge with our Facts of Faith game at St Paul's, Oadby*



*Another focus group for local residents delivered at Stocking Farm Community Centre and Shop.*

*Good to catch up with PCSO Holly who held a drop in clinic at the same time.*

*The importance of parks and family cited as key motivators for being active by members of Parohia Ortodoxa Romana Leicester at our recent focus group. Thanks to the community for the welcome and engagement.*



# Preaching at Easter with Jewish people in mind

Introductory discussion,  
followed by work in small  
groups on how to preach  
from difficult texts

11:00am - 12:30pm,  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March

St Philip's Centre  
2a Stoughton Drive North  
Leicester  
LE5 5UB

To book a place or notify of dietary or access  
requirements, contact  
[admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk)  
Photo by [Aaron Burden](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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**Faiths Engage** is the newsletter of St Philip's Centre Ltd

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