



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 82—August 2026

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

This month we're grateful for the many moments of connection across our communities. We begin by thanking Sue Malcolm for over twelve years of dedicated volunteering in our office and wishing her a very well-earned rest.

We're thankful for the warm welcome from the Disciples Fellowship Ministries UK—Leicester Church at their Gala Dinner, and we look forward to seeing their regeneration project flourish.

As the academic year ends, we celebrate another successful season of shared faith, learning and inclusion in our schools. We're grateful to all our faith practitioners and places of worship for their commitment — and we're excited that many schools have already booked for next year.

We appreciate the growing friendships at St Andrew's, Burton Overly, where Sikhs and church members enjoyed a simple but meaningful coffee morning, with more gatherings planned.

And finally, our thanks to the Amazing Grace Church community for their thoughtful contributions during our recent focus group with the Leicestershire & Rutland Cricket Foundation. Their insights will help shape more inclusive engagement going forward.

We're grateful for all these moments — and we look forward to building on them in the months ahead.

Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson

Director, St Philip's Centre

Community and Connection



Thank you to the Disciples Fellowship Ministries UK—Leicester Church, for the engagement and warmth at their Gala Dinner in early July which took place in their magnificent building. The community is within the sphere of Leicester's iconic 'Golden Mile' and provides a range of support to local communities including post-school time afternoon refreshments. Good luck with the regeneration project.

Learning from Faith Communities—A Day with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

On Tuesday 28th July, the St Philip's Centre hosted a Religion and Belief Training Day at Leicester Lions for members of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Through interactive "Round Robin" sessions with Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Humanist practitioners, participants explored diverse beliefs, practices and community perspectives. The day also included a presentation from a Sikh faith practitioner before a visit to the mosque in Oadby. Training like this is invaluable, helping fire and rescue personnel better understand the communities they serve and respond with greater confidence, sensitivity and effectiveness when supporting people during incidents across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.



Some of the feedback included:

- "Very well organised and run—thank you!"
- "I found I learned a lot about other communities and religions"
- "I really enjoyed hearing from so many different people from different backgrounds and the opportunity to visit a mosque"
- "Finding out more about different faiths we are likely to interact with regularly, and how to behave appropriately and professionally"
- "I enjoyed the course and learned a lot"

A Summer Gathering to Mark 20 Years of the St Philip's Centre

St Philip's Centre hosted a delightful afternoon tea at Launde Abbey on Sunday 5th July, bringing together supporters and friends for a relaxing summer gathering. Held as part of the Centre's 20th anniversary celebrations, the event took place on a warm, sunny afternoon in the beautiful surroundings of the Abbey. Guests enjoyed conversation, refreshments and fellowship, making the most of the peaceful setting. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate two decades of St Philip's Centre's work, reflect on the relationships built over the years, and thank all those who have supported its mission and growth.



Lively Ladies Meet Again

This month we had three more of our lively ladies' discussion groups

The **Tea and Samosas** - which usually meets monthly on a Monday afternoon discussed modesty. Some of the thoughts were:

- Not to misuse things we are given such as the land or by having more than we need
- Individual awareness of how we live our lives
- Without loving yourself you can't love others or please God – be comfortable with yourself and use your gifts
- Societal pressure to have more or be better creates stress and leads to materialism making it hard to live modestly
- We need to understand each other through difference – forgoing superiority/inferiority to be satisfied with own life
- As individuals we can lead by example
- Be humble. Don't look down on others. Leave no-one hungry
- Be aware that time and place can change what it means to be modest and not to judge others if the expectations or needs are different to yours.

Our young women's **Chatting Faith** and **Women Chat Faith** groups usually meet on a Saturday, sometimes starting together but then splitting into two different groups.

The Chatting Faith group was set up to reflect on topics important to young women, looked at through the lens of faith. There is an acceptance within the group that the level of knowledge and experience of individuals varies greatly. The group gives space to explore and learn without judgement and without pressure.

The women chat faith group has grown out of our young women's group and explores the same or similar topics. Discussions are all based on personal experiences, knowledge and thoughts.

This month we all talked about Hierarchy within our faith structures.

From this we learnt that some Christian denominations have more structure than that found in the other faiths represented. Once we delved deeper into the structures, we found that training and roles within both the faith leadership and the community leadership looked similar in all our faiths but without all having a formal layout.

We talked about the roles women had to play within each of our faiths and what influence women had. We also talked about the divisions of opinion about women taking a place within faith hierarchies and about the hidden influence women can have through the family.

To find out about any of these groups, please see the poster for our next sessions.

Cathryn Parsons
Churches Training Officer

Celebrating Sue Malcolm

After more than twelve years of dedicated volunteering, we say a heartfelt thank you to **Sue Malcolm**, who is now finishing her time working with us.

Sue has been a steady, reliable presence in the office, always willing help with whatever needed doing. From general admin to printing, shredding, preparing packs, and data entry, she has quietly kept so many essential tasks running smoothly. Her consistency, care, and good humour have made a real difference. She has been part of the fabric of the team, and her contribution over these twelve years has been truly invaluable.

We would like to thank Sue for all her hard work, her loyalty, and the time she has given so generously. She has earned every moment of rest and relaxation that comes next, and we wish her all the very best for the future.

Thank you, Sue — you will be greatly missed.



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You are invited to join one of our ladies chat groups

Chatting Faith

A Young Women's group
for monthly discussions, visits and food!

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We explore how our faith impacts how we see the world.

We learn about our differences and what we have in common, make
new friends and deepen our own faith. We meet influential people
from different walks of life.

.....

Women Chat Faith

Women's group for monthly discussions,
visits and food!

This group is an offshoot of our Young Women's Chatting Faith Group.
Times, venue and themes will often (but not always) be the same and we may join together at
the start and end of sessions to discuss the subject matter or to hear a talk.

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both groups:

Monday 24th August 6pm - 7.30pm

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

Love through different Lenses

- What does Love mean to you?
- Is Love different dependent on context

(Please note, meetings are usually Saturday's 10-11.30am)



Tea and Samosas

Monthly discussions over a bite to eat

Monday 17th August 1.30-2.30pm

Spirituality

- What does it mean to you?
- How do you experience/express your spirituality
- In what way do your Holy Scriptures refer to Spirituality?

Please contact courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk or text Cathryn
07707640885 for more information



Education: Celebrating A Year of Shared Faith, Learning and Inclusion

As the 2025–26 academic year comes to a close, it is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on another successful year and to thank our dedicated team of faith practitioners and the places of worship who so generously give their time to support our schools work.

Their commitment to sharing their faith, culture and personal experiences helps bring learning to life for children. Through these encounters, pupils not only gain a deeper understanding of different religions and beliefs but also discover the many values and traditions that faiths have in common. Perhaps most importantly, they see people from different faith communities working together in friendship and mutual respect, providing a powerful example of inclusion and understanding.

We are delighted that many schools, having seen the positive impact of this work, have already booked visits for the next academic year before breaking up for the summer. It looks set to be another busy and exciting year from September, and we look forward to continuing to support schools in fostering curiosity, respect, and meaningful interfaith learning.

Ramila Chauhan

Education Officer



Sikh Group Visit Burton Overy

On Tuesday 7th July a group of Sikhs visited a coffee morning held at St Andrew's Burton Overy. The aim was simply to get to know each other over coffee and cake. Everyone had a great time chatting, so much so that they're planning to meet again, both at the Church and also hopefully a visit to a Gurdwara. We're organising several coffee mornings and afternoon teas over the coming months – if you'd like us to come to you, please do get in touch.



Insightful Engagement with the Amazing Grace Church Community



Over the weekend in partnership with the Leicestershire & Rutland Cricket Foundation, we held a focus group with some female members of the Amazing Grace Church community in the West of Leicester. The contributions they made were invaluable particularly in relation to accessibility, inclusion and perceptions. Thanks to all for the excellent engagement.

Can you help with an Open University research study?

I am a part-time PhD student at The Open University researching the life experiences and mental health of women who were born in East Africa into families with South Asian heritage and later settled in the UK.

I am looking to speak with women aged 55 or over who would be willing to take part in a confidential, one-to-one interview. The interview lasts around an hour and can take place in person or online, whichever is most convenient.

The research has been approved by The Open University's Research Ethics Committee. Participation is entirely voluntary, all interviews are anonymised, and participants may stop the interview at any time without giving a reason.

There has been relatively little research exploring these experiences in depth, and I would be very grateful to hear from anyone who feels they may be able to contribute.

If you know someone who may be eligible, I would also be very grateful if you could share this invitation with them or let them know about the study.

If you would like to find out more, with no obligation to take part, please contact:

Sam Toolan

Part-time PhD student, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies

The Open University

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Telephone: 07929 614 760

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