



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 37—September 2022

## Welcome to the latest edition of *Faiths Engage*.

As you can see, after a quieter, more restful period over August, the St Philip's Centre's staff and volunteers are raring to go for the autumn. We've plenty going on for people of all ages, both in person and online. I look forward to welcoming you to one of our programs soon.

All the best,

Tom Wilson

## Leicester Schools Linking Project 2022/2023

Would you like to connect your class with one from another school in the Leicester/Leicestershire area and give your pupils a chance to get to know young people who they might not normally meet in their day to day lives? Schools Linking is a perfect way for all ages to challenge stereotypes and develop critical thinking and provides numerous opportunities for SMSC development.

However, it is also a perfect way to support literacy development as according to the EEF, "*Purpose and audience are central to effective writing. Pupils need to have a reason to write and someone to write for.*"

Linking provides both purpose and audience in abundance - utilising experiential learning and the quality texts, children have opportunities to write in a range of genres for exchange with their linking class.

All schools are welcome - Primary, Secondary, Special, Faith, Private, Academy, PRU.

It is a completely **FREE, FULLY RESOURCED PROGRAMME** of age-appropriate, curriculum-rich lessons with virtual teacher CPD provided regularly throughout the year.

The 2022-23 project will be a hybrid of virtual and face-to-face opportunities for linking activities, but we are excited to offer new opportunities for joint trips and face-to-face experiences for Primary and Secondary classes, involving collaborations with two new neutral venue spaces.

The activities are based around four key questions:

- **Who am I? – exploring identity; Who are we? – valuing diversity**
- **Where do we live? – appreciating community ; How do we all live together? – championing justice.**

To find out more about school linking in Leicester and Leicestershire, email:

Ruth Sinhal—[school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk) or find us on Twitter: @LinkingSchool

## Education Team get ready for the new school year

Although schools have been closed for the summer holidays, our Education Team have been busy behind the scenes getting things ready for the new academic year. The next term looks as though it will be a busy one, with a whole series of 'A World in One Street' visits planned in September/October, on top of all the usual assemblies, workshops and roadshows!

The photo shows pupils from Nettleham C.E. Aided Junior School who went on a 'Golden Mile' visit. This was one of the last school visits which took place before the summer holidays and we received great feedback:

*"The guided tour along the Golden Mile was fascinating for both children and adults alike! A treat for all the senses. I thought the whole day went very well. The guides were wonderful and the shopkeepers very welcoming. The children really felt included and welcomed. We shall be booking this trip again!"*



# Completion and Condemnation in Matthew

I am currently working on a book, provisionally entitled *“His Blood Be Upon Us”*: Completion and Condemnation in Matthew’s Gospel. There are two reasons why I decided to write this book. The first is it provides me with an opportunity to reflect at length on one of the most complex sentences in Matthew’s Gospel, the cry of “all the [Jewish] people” that “His blood be on us and on our children” (27:25). The second was seeing a photograph of a pro-Palestinian demonstration, held during May 2021, when conflict was raging across Israel-Palestine. One of those present at that demonstration held a placard with a drawing of Christ on the cross accompanied by the words “Don’t let them do it again.” The “them” referred presumably to Israelis or Jews or Israeli Jews. This is the charge of deicide, the killing of God, which has been levelled at Jewish people by Christians for centuries. The incident at the demonstration indicates that the charge is still present today. But is it justified? Was it ever justified? And how do we respond to both the long history of Christian persecution of Jewish people as well as the rise in contemporary antisemitism? Are there any plausible links between the “blood cry” of Matthew 27:25 and the so-called “blood libel” that began in 1150, and still resurfaces today? Exploring these issues is the task I have set myself in writing this book.

In a sense, the key question this book discusses is who does Matthew think is responsible for the death of Jesus. My answer is that it is Jesus himself, because three times he predicts his own death (16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) and he acts provocatively and makes deliberate claims that invite his audience to conclude either he is divine, or he is blaspheming. Jesus does this knowing that the punishment for blasphemy is death. Jesus also sets himself up as a rebel against the authority of the Roman Emperor and of Rome, and the penalty for such treason is also death. But ultimately, within the interpretative framework of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is the fulfilment of the Jewish messianic hope, and he brings God’s plan for the redemption of humanity to its intended goal through his own life, death, and resurrection. It is Jesus who chooses death so that others may have life. Any charge of deicide is misplaced if it does not focus on these facts.

Yet this interpretation remains contested; the charge of deicide and the arguably associated blood libel, have become enduring cultural tropes and excuses for discrimination, hatred, and murder. Numerous Jewish scholars whose work I have read in preparation for writing cite their own, contemporary experience of this accusation. To give one example, when Levine was seven, she was accused of deicide:

A friend on the school bus said to me, “You killed our Lord.” “I did not,” I responded with some indignation. Deicide would be the sort of thing I would have recalled. “Yes, you did,” the girl insisted. “Our priest said so.” Apparently, she had been taught that “the Jews” were responsible for the death of Jesus. Since I was the only one she knew, I must be guilty (2006, 2).

Whilst we may not go around accusing Jewish people of killing Jesus, how confident are we that we are not perpetuating antisemitism? When we presume Christianity is a religion of grace, but Judaism is one of legalism and pointless works, we are guilty of stereotyping and misinformation. Taking the polemic of Matthew 23 as if it were an objective description of all Pharisees for all time is another mistake preachers might make. I could go on, but then I’d share the whole book, which I hope will be out by the end of the year.

At the conclusion to her discussion of Jesus as “the misunderstood Jew,” Levine tells the story of Rebbe Moshe Leib of Sassov (1745-1807), who told his disciples that he had overheard a conversation between two villagers which taught him what it meant to love his neighbour. The first said, “Tell me, my friend, do you love me?” and the second replied that he loved his fellow deeply. The first responded, “Do you know what causes me pain?” and the second said that he did not. The answer came, “If you do not know what causes me pain, how can you say that you truly love me?” The rebbe’s point was that to truly know what causes another pain is to truly love him (Levine 2006, 116-17). As a Christian, if I am to truly love my Jewish sisters and brothers, I must endeavour to understand how the faith I follow has caused them pain. That is my real purpose in writing this book.

Reference:

Levine, Amy-Jill. 2006. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: HarperOne.

This blog is to be published on <https://theologyeverywhere.org/>

You can pre-order the book from <https://ethicspress.com/collections/forthcoming-titles/products/his-blood-be->

# Noticeboard

Adult Mental Health First Aid training  
9:00am to 5:00pm, Friday 4th and Saturday 5th November

Youth Mental Health First Aid training  
9:00am to 5:00pm, Friday 25th and Saturday 26th November

Venue: Bodie's House  
254 Braunstone Lane  
Leicester, LE3 3AS

To register interest, email  
[director@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:director@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

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Contemporary British Islam  
with Dilwar Hussain

7:00-8:30pm,  
Thursday 8th, 15th,  
22nd and 29th September

Dilwar Hussain MBE, is an independent consultant working on social policy, Muslim identity and Islamic reform in the modern world. He is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, University of Coventry and founding Chair of New Horizons in British Islam, a charity that works for reform in Muslim thought and practice.


This series will be online  
Please email [onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk) to book





"The rise of the Sikh Soldier:  
the Sikh warrior throughout  
the ages."

Gurinder Singh Mann

6:00-7:30pm  
Wednesday 5th October



This is an in-person event,  
with light refreshments  
Please email  
[admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk)  
to book




Growing as a Leader

12th Sept - Working from Rest  
10th Oct - Psychological Safety  
14th Nov - Developing Grit  
12th Dec - Leading with Insight

All sessions run 7:00 - 8:30pm at the St Philip's Centre  
Email: [onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk) for details




## Could you be a Police Chaplain?

### Could you support officers and staff by providing a listening ear?

Leicestershire Police's multi-faith chaplaincy is a pastoral care service providing support to officers, staff and their families. The chaplaincy also offers operational support by providing a resource where faith and operational issues interact and by facilitating and developing links between communities and the police.

To join Leicestershire Police's chaplaincy, you will need to have had a number of years' experience in a pastoral care situation. Chaplains are drawn from all faith communities but must be willing to minister to all those in the police service, regardless of their beliefs.

Police Chaplains are allocated a police station where they can regularly drop in and become a familiar friend to the officers and staff on shift.

Find out more at [www.leics.police.uk/joinus](http://www.leics.police.uk/joinus)



# Leicester Cathedral Revealed

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August, Tom Wilson was amongst a small group of faith leaders who visited Leicester Cathedral, to learn more about the Leicester Cathedral Revealed project, and to visit the site of the archaeological work that is currently underway. It was a fascinating glimpse of a bit of Leicester's history you do not normally get to see.



## New Leicester Prevent Coordinator discusses online safety with Warning Zone

Ben Smith formally commenced employment at the St Philip's Centre as the full time Leicester Prevent Coordinator during July. Ben has been dedicating more available time over the Summer to undertake important community engagement opportunities and this has included visiting some of our community partners who deliver local Prevent initiatives.

An example of this was on 24th August when Ben visited Elaine Stevenson and Craig Lewis at Warning Zone for a tour around the Warning Zone centre. Discussions included how to educate young people to raise their awareness of online safety and the associated risks of online extremism and exploitation.

The 'Warning Zone Road Crew' project will be continuing to visit local secondary schools through 2022 and with the new school year now starting the project will be gearing up for a busy Autumn ahead.



## Funding Support

All Saints' Trust  
Anglican Diocese of Leicester  
The Dunhill Medical Trust  
The Helen Jean Cope Charity  
Home Office  
The J R Corah Foundation Fund  
Leicester College  
Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation  
Leicester City Council

The Linking Network  
Methodist Connexion  
N C Bellefontaine Trust  
Northampton District of the Methodist Church  
Open Society Foundations  
P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust  
The United Reformed Church



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

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