



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 61—September 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

I do hope you have managed to have a rest over the summer and enjoy a more relaxed pace of life before the business of the autumn. The summer always allows us to reassess what we've managed to achieve so far in the year and look ahead to the next few months and what we plan to do.

This summer has been a period of changes at the St Philip's Centre. We have come to the end of a five-year grant from the Methodist Connexion and look forward to starting work on a five-year grant funded by the Northampton District of the Methodist Church. We are very grateful for this support that enables people to learn how to live well together.

Best wishes,

Revd Dr Tom Wilson, Director of St Philip's Centre

Diary Date

Our Annual 'Thank You' Evening will take place on **Tuesday 10th December 2024** at the Holiday Inn, Wigston.

Please put this in your diary! Further details to follow in due course.

Coming Soon

C.A.R.E. SILVER

Confidently Addressing Radicalisation & Extremism (Prevent) Course—intermediate level

This extended day course is delivered by the St Philip's Centre and our partners and is suitable for the following sectors:
Health, social care, local authority, probation, prisons, police, education, youth & community workers and the private sector

There are a limited number of free places available to those who work within Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland. Otherwise there will be a charge of £150 per person—please contact us to find out more.

Course Content

- Prevent and Contest
- The Prevent Duty
- What Prevent is and what Prevent is not
- Extremist recruitment and campaigns
- The role of frontline staff
- Making appropriate referrals
- The role of partners e.g. police, community engagement.

The CARE Silver programme will aim to provide a safe environment for you to ask questions confidently. The course aims to improve professional practice in your role.

For further details of dates and venues, please contact admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Farewell to James

James Blackhall finished working at the Centre on 31st August. He will be starting a full-time placement from September 2024, as the next stage in his training for ministry in the Methodist Church.

We're grateful to James for all he brought to the Centre and wish him all the best in his future ministry.



Five years of confident Christianity

For many people living in the UK, inter-religious encounters are simply a normal part of daily life, whether at work or school or with their neighbours. This may be because of where they live, where they work or their particular interest or passions.

I've found inter-religious activity to be an immensely rewarding part of my life in Leicester. Our city and county have a long, and proud, history of living well together with people of all religions and none. Celebrated as the most diverse small city on the planet, Leicester sets an internationally recognised standard for friendship across religions. But we cannot presume this will continue; as people have invested time and energy in interfaith engagement in previous generations, so we must continue that today.

Over the past five years, the Methodist Connexion has resourced St Philip's Centre to carry out all kinds of inter-religious activity, as part of our "confident Christianity" project. As we engage, we can be confident in our Christian identity. We want to distinguish confidence from cockiness or arrogance; recognising that we do not know all the answers or have all the skills or resources. Confidence in Jesus Christ is marked by humility, by gentle and courteous sharing of life and faith, building trust and co-operation with people of all religions and no religion.

Engagement with those of other religious communities can take many different forms. During the project, we have comfortably exceeded all our targets for engagement with different types of events. Over the five years of the grant:

Our target for general events was 2,900 people – we reached 3,022.

Our target for our Abrahamic group was 125 people – we reached 227.

Our target for Hindu-Christian conversation was 80 people – we reached 246.

Our target for Sikh-Christian conversation was 80 people – we reached 208.

We saw particular successes with:

Series that built over time – such as Reading with Rabbis or sessions on the seed verses of the Gita, or prophets in the Abrahamic traditions. We also ran a popular series of visits to local places of worship.

One-off events with well-known people. For example, an event on the connections between Sikhs and churches in the UK, where a popular Sikh historian spoke.

Partnership working, leading to annual engagements, for example with Methodist Women in Britain and with the Queen's Foundation.

I could not have completed this project on my own. During the five years of the grant, I had the privilege of working with two wonderful colleagues, Laura Johnson and James Blackhall. Both have been a delight and an inspiration to work with. We have also benefited from collaboration with many of our faith practitioners, who have tirelessly worked with us to help people understand different religious perspectives and build relationships of trust and co-operation.

The photos on the next page give you a sense of some of what we have achieved.

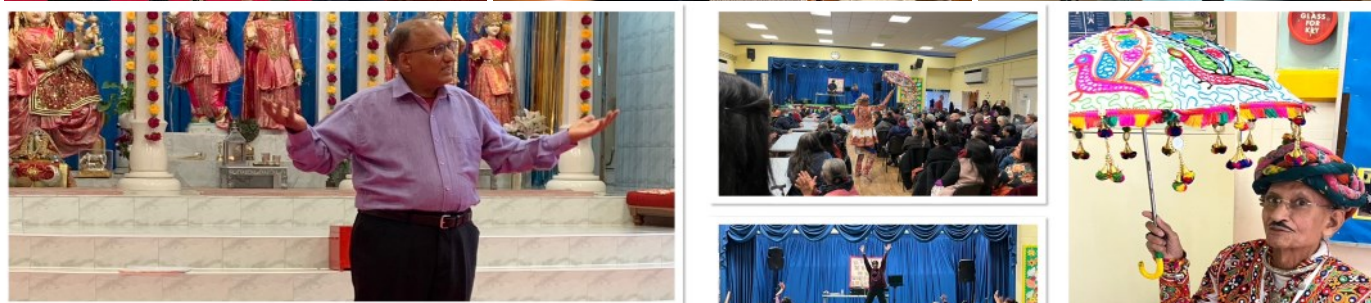
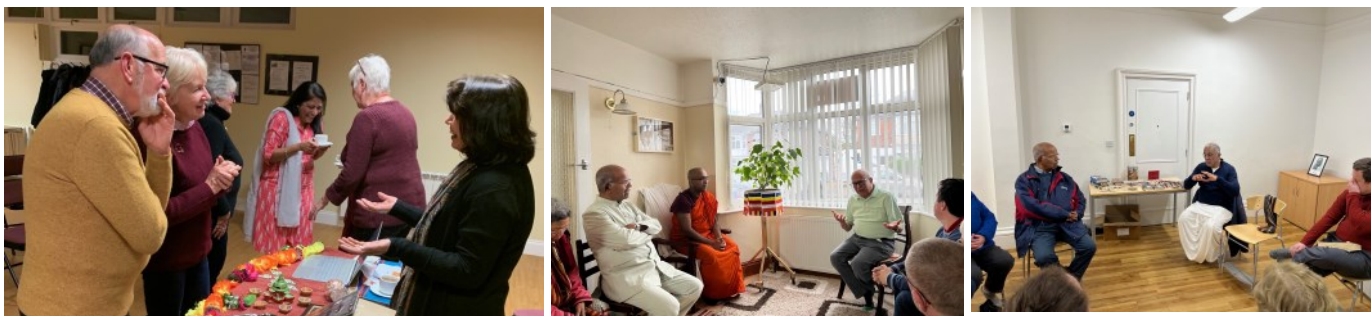
Tom Wilson

James' Reflections on his work at St Philip's Centre

As my time working at St Philip's Centre draws to a close, I've been reflecting on how we have worked to help people live well together during that time. Most of my work has been around the Leicester and Leicestershire areas but has also been a privilege to travel around various places of the Methodist Connexion speaking to groups about interfaith and helping to facilitate conversation.

Some significant highlights for me have been: hosting a workshop with Solutions Not Sides to help local Christians think through the complicated issues of the Middle East; leading a workshop on *Hospitality, Service and Proclamation* at the Methodist Conference, being part of the panel about interfaith work organised by the Nottingham University Chaplaincy; working with groups of those training for ministry to enable them to encounter people of other faiths, ask questions and visit places of worship; working with local churches to meet people, often for the first time, from other faith communities in their area. I have also really enjoyed visiting local churches with people of other faiths and taking part in Sunday services or women's groups, Mothers' Unions and Leaders of Worship and Local Preachers' meetings. Please do continue to get in touch with the Centre if sessions such as the ones listed would be of interest to your church or group.

James Blackhall



Job Vacancy



**Confident
Christianity**



Churches Training Officer

*The main purposes of the role:
Promote, develop and encourage Christian interfaith engagement*

Ensure the Centre delivers the objectives set out in the project "Confident Christianity," which is funded by the Northampton District of the Methodist Church

Explore the potential for new activity which supports and strengthens associations between Christians and people and groups of different religions and ethnicities, including people of no faith.

**15 hours (2 days) per week
Pay: £10,724 per annum**

This is a fixed-term contract for the duration of the Confident Christianity project, to August 2029. There is a genuine occupational requirement that the post-holder is a Christian.

The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis.



Full details, including application pack at:
<https://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk>

For an informal conversation about the role please contact the Director
Revd Dr Tom Wilson
director@stphilipscentre.co.uk

The **Methodist Church** 

Download the application pack:

[Job description and person specification](#)
[Application form](#)

Funding Support

St. Philip's Centre is grateful for the funding it receives from the following and from many individual supporters, Friends, Associates and Member Churches.

All Saints' Educational Trust;

Anglican Diocese of Leicester;

The Garfield Weston Foundation;

Home Office;

The J R Corah Foundation Fund;

Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation;

The M B Reckitt Trust;

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P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust;

Shire Funding.

**Thank
You**



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