



Christianity

in Milton Keynes



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Churches featured on the cover

Front

Holy Cross, Two Mile Ash (Ecumenical)
New Life Church, Wolverton Mill (New Frontiers)

Stony Stratford Community Church (Baptist)
The Quaker Centre, Downhead Park (Society of Friends)

St Mary, Woughton on the Green (Ecumenical)
Church of Christ the Cornerstone, Central Milton Keynes (Ecumenical)

Rear

St Peter and St Paul, Olney (Church of England)
Newport Pagnell Methodist

The Salvation Army, Conniburrow
Olney United Reformed Church

St Mary Magdalene, Stony Stratford (Roman Catholic)
St Mary, Shenley Church End (Ecumenical)

Christianity in Milton Keynes

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A wide range of Christians have contributed to this booklet, including: staff and trustees of Milton Keynes Bridgebuilder Trust, local church leaders and Christians both young and old.



Bridgebuilder Trust

The Bridgebuilder Trust is a Christian charity which offers to support schools in Milton Keynes with the education of Christian faith and values. Their aim is to support the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of children and young people through assemblies, lessons and other projects. For further information, visit the Bridgebuilder Trust website at <http://www.mkbt.org.uk/>



InterFaith MK

InterFaith MK exists to encourage dialogue and trust between the faith communities, and to promote a multi-faith presence in the civic and cultural affairs of Milton Keynes. It is an open organisation, and we welcome people of all faith traditions and none who support our aims of celebrating religious diversity, and who are committed to harmony and understanding between the faiths. For further information, visit the Interfaith MK website at <http://www.interfaithmk.org.uk>

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Introduction

A wide range of religious practices are found in Milton Keynes with a high degree of tolerance between most of those who have a religious faith. InterFaith MK has been one place where people of different religions have met up with each other, learning about each other and also learning from each other, to the benefit of all. In 2007, InterFaith MK ran a project called Local Faith and Global Issues, asking people from different religions to reflect on what their faith had to say to them about major issues facing our world today. Many of these reflections were brought together in a publication called *Voices of Faith in a Fragmented World*.

A further project, called “Voices of Faith” began in 2009 with the support of funding from the Faiths in Action Fund. It aimed to explore ways to give young people the opportunity to learn more about, and from, the different religious groups that exist within Milton Keynes. This booklet comes out of this project and is intended, along with others in the same series, as a contribution to further development of religious understanding in Milton Keynes, particularly among young people.

Christianity is one of the faiths, alongside Buddhism and Sikhism, which has been designated for study by Key Stage 3 pupils in Milton Keynes schools. Historically, Christianity has been the main influence in shaping British and European culture. An understanding of the Christian faith is foundational to understanding our history, politics, art, literature and music – even the origins of science.

This book is an introduction to Christianity in Milton Keynes – intended to provide teachers and students with the chance to find out for themselves something about this faith, and its local expression. It is not a textbook on Christianity, explaining the religion in detail, but aims to introduce something of the way in which Christians in Milton Keynes are putting their faith into practice. It is a resource for both pupils and teachers, especially those teachers asked to teach RE who may have only a rudimentary understanding of Christian teaching and practice. This book follows the pattern of the Milton Keynes Agreed Syllabus for RE with sections entitled:

- Believing
- Belonging
- Behaving.

Many of the quotes in speech bubbles link directly to the suggested questions to help pupils learn about and learn from religion.

We hope you find it useful ...

Quotes and testimonies featuring in speech bubbles throughout the booklet are a response to a survey led by Bridgebuilder Trust. Contributions come from members of the congregation in the following churches:

St Augustine's (Roman Catholic)

St Lawrence Bradwell (Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership)

Stony Stratford Community Church (Baptist)

Holding Forth the Word Church (Pentecostal)

Shenley Christian Fellowship (Baptist)

Our Lady of Lourdes (Roman Catholic)

In the same series

Buddhism in Milton Keynes

Sikhism in Milton Keynes

Copies of these books can be obtained by emailing interfaithmk@gmail.com

What Christians believe

Christians believe that God is the source of all life, the creator of all things, that he created the universe, the earth and everything in it. They believe that God exists in three persons; the Father, the Son, the Spirit. God is not limited by time; he has no beginning and no end, he has always existed.

Man is made in the image of God; with a mind, spirit and soul, able to think, love, choose and make rational decisions. God made people to have a relationship with him. He loves people and wants people to love him. He doesn't want to force people; he wants people to choose to love him, so he gave people free will, the ability to choose between right and wrong, good and bad.

People, however, have chosen to disobey God, to do wrong and

"God is so amazing because he knows everything about me and loves me and blesses me every day in ways I don't comprehend. He is so kind and never lets me down or leaves me. I can depend on him to help me in all life's circumstances."

**Dolly Thomson,
(Stony Stratford
Community Church)**

please themselves. Christians call disobedience to God "sin". Sin spoils the friendship people can have with God, creating a barrier between them and him, because God is holy and perfect and cannot look at sin. Although God hates sin, he never stops loving the people he made. He is sad when people do wrong things.

Jesus

Christians believe that, to mend the broken friendship, God showed his love by entering the world in the form of Jesus, who was born as a Jew and lived in Israel at the beginning of the first century.

Christians believe that Jesus is fully human and fully God. They believe he fulfilled the Old Testament writings that promised God would send a Messiah (an anointed leader). Jesus came to show people what God is like, to live a perfect life and to remove the barrier caused by sin.

The punishment for sin is death; therefore the only way for Jesus to put things right and remove the barrier was to die. Even though he had never done anything wrong, he took the punishment for all the wrong things anyone has ever done and will ever do, when he died.



Part of The Adoration of the Infant Jesus by Gerardo Della Notti

He offered his perfect life to God as a substitute for our imperfect lives. On the third day after Jesus died he was raised to life. He had dealt with the sin, removed the barrier once and for all and made it possible for anyone who trusts God and confesses their sin to have a friendship with God.

Jesus' resurrection means death is not the end of the relationship with God. Eternal life with God is his gift to people – a new quality of life in this world and continuing life in the next. Eternal life is not something that people can earn by obeying religious rules. God's love is so unconditional that he accepts anyone who comes to him.

The Bible

The Bible is the foundation for Christian faith. Christians believe it is inspired by the Holy Spirit and contains God's message and his story. God spoke his message through the people he chose. He planned and guided their message from beginning to end and the Bible records that message. It gives insight into who God is and how he designed and created the people he loves. It is a guide to living a life that pleases God.

As Christians read the Bible they discover more and more about God, his love and power.

The Trinity

Trinity means “three in one”. Christians believe that, though God is one, he exists in three “persons”, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit also (called the “Holy Ghost” in old fashioned language). One way to understand this is by using an analogy of the sun:

The sun in the sky is like the Father, the rays from the sun **are like the Son**, the warmth from the rays are like the Holy Spirit. All are perfect, eternal and in complete unity.

Christians believe that God created the universe; he came to earth in human form as a baby, Jesus, and lived as a man. He was crucified and, on the third day after the crucifixion, he rose from the dead. Forty days later he returned to heaven. Ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, he and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to empower and help the church in its mission to the world.

Creeds

Creeds are statements that summarise what Christians believe about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Creeds remind Christians that their faith is based on a real person, Jesus, who lived and died as a man before being raised back to life and taken up into the heavens in a miraculous way. They also remind Christians that one day Jesus will return to earth to collect those who believe in him.

The most well-known creed is the Apostle’s creed which is recited in many churches as part of the service (see page 28).

Ideas about God from members of the congregation at St Lawrence, Bradwell

“God’s invisible but he shows himself in people’s good deeds or way of life.”

“He is an all-seeing Spirit – the omnipotent father.”

“A leader, peacemaker and mentor.”

“He’s with Jesus. He’s probably big.”

How Christians show they belong

Christians show they belong to God in several ways. Firstly by coming into a relationship with God, admitting they have disobeyed him, believing Jesus died to deal with their sin, turning from wrong and accepting Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

A Christian then shows they belong to God by the way they live their life. A Christian's actions should show they belong to God and want to please him by living according to what he says in the Bible. His Spirit should shine out of them in all they do; his love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control should be evident to all.



An open air baptism in the River Ouse, near Wolverton

Church

Christians also show they belong by joining together with other Christians to pool resources and serve people in their communities and beyond. It is important for Christians to belong to a church and meet with other believers. By being part of a church community Christians encourage one another; they study, learn, pray and worship God together. It is important for Christians to have "fellowship". This means meeting to encourage each other, to worship, pray and study the Bible together, to pray for each other and help each other when in need, fulfilling Jesus' command to love one another.

I was baptised as an infant into the Catholic faith and went to Catholic schools. As a Catholic I go to mass most Sundays. As I grow older I appreciate growing up as a Catholic because of the teachings of the church.

- Therese, (St Augustines)

There are many different types and styles of church to suit different personalities and cultures. Most differences between churches are about the way the church is organised, there are only a few differences relating to Christian beliefs. Christians the world over believe the same basic principles about who God is; that he is the creator and three persons in one, and that God desires everyone to have a relationship with him which he made possible through Jesus' death and resurrection.

The ceremonies of baptism and communion are two important ways that Christians show that they belong to God and belong together.

Baptism

Baptism is a ceremonial washing that marks the beginning of a person's life as a disciple of Jesus. Some churches baptise babies, usually by pouring water over the head. Parents and Godparents make promises on behalf of the child. Other churches keep baptism for people who are old



A font, used for infant baptism in an Anglican church

enough to understand what it means and decide for themselves. They would normally be immersed under water as a sign of a new life with God.

Communion

In Holy Communion, Christians share bread and wine to recall Jesus' death and resurrection and to affirm their ongoing commitment to God. By doing this they fulfil Jesus' command at the last meal he had

with his disciples when he broke bread and poured out wine and said "Do this in remembrance of me." Communion is also called the eucharist (from the Greek word for "thanksgiving"), the Lord's supper, the mass or the breaking of bread.

Belonging to a church means I can share my problems and help myself to grow in faith. I go to church to build myself up as a Christian.

- Ajala Oluwatobi (Holding Forth the Word Church)

Lifestyle, behaviour and choices

Christians try to live their lives the way God would want, by following Jesus' example, trying to put God first, to love him with every part of their being, to live by his values and to follow his will in all they do.

Their motive for this is not to gain favour with God but to show gratitude for God's mercy. They may fail but they know God's forgiveness is always available.

Being a Christian is about having a friendship with God the creator. As with any relationship, it needs to be sustained. Christians spend time with God by:

- reading the Bible, God's inspired message, to find out more about him, his nature and his desire for their lives;
- talking to God through prayer. No special words or rituals are needed, though these can be helpful. Christians can pray at

any time, anywhere, on their own or with others.

- worshipping God through singing or quiet adoration.

God wants his followers to obey him; to share their faith, to show kindness and acceptance, to help others and to treat all people fairly. Christians should speak wisely and always show humility. They should forgive others in the same way God has forgiven them.

A number of passages in the Bible are important in forming Christian values about lifestyle and behaviour. These include the Ten Commandments that God gave to

Moses, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the teaching of the apostles.

Having a faith in God, believing who he is and what he has done, should affect every part of a Christian's life, their relationships and attitudes.

I know what is right and wrong because I develop my conscience and relationship with God so that I can hear his voice when He speaks to me. And there's also the Bible and Pastor who can answer some questions and guide us when we are not sure of what is wrong or right.

- Yvonne, Stony Stratford Community Church

Because I am taught in the ways of the church, I see everything in the eyes of a loving Christian, so I would solve issues by using the teaching of the Bible.

William (St Augustine's)

This is not always easy, but Christians believe that God helps them through his Holy Spirit. When anyone turns away from wrong and takes Jesus as their Lord they are filled with the Holy Spirit. They must ask God to keep them continually filled with his Spirit to guide and help them.

Although Christians try not to do wrong, it is inevitable that they will sometimes fall short of God's standards, so it is important to acknowledge any faults, confess them and try not to repeat them again and again. Being forgiven by God brings with it the obligation to forgive others.

Jesus commanded his disciples to "make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (see Matthew 28 v 19). Christians believe that Jesus' message is good news for everyone and is thus an international faith, not linked to any one race, nation or culture.

Charities

As an expression of God's love, Christians across Milton Keynes are co-operating in a number of charitable projects, among them are the following:

Eclipse

A counselling service that specialises in helping people overcome addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

www.eclipse-addiction.org.uk

Money Lifeline

A service that offers advice and support for people in debt.

www.mkmoneylifeline.org.uk

The Food Bank

Provides food parcels for those who would otherwise go hungry.

www.mkfoodbank.org.uk

The Food Cupboard

Also providing food parcels, based at St Mary's church, Bletchley.

Open door

An organisation that helps those who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

www.opendoormk.org.uk

These organisations are all run by Christians but the help they offer is available to anyone.

The Bible

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written over approximately 1,600 years by about 40 authors, in three different languages (mainly Hebrew and Greek but also Aramaic). The Bible claims to be the inspired word of God. “All scripture is God-breathed...” (2 Timothy 3:16)

It is a story of love between the creator God and mankind. It explains that mankind turned away from God and describes how God chose the Israelites to be a special people and promised, through them, to restore mankind’s relationship with him.

The Bible contains several different styles of writing. It is organised into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament was written before Jesus was born. It includes:

- historical books that tell the story of the Israelites and show

I read, study and memorise the Bible. I meditate on it and make a conscious effort to live by its standards.

Ken Wilson, Holding Forth the Word Church

how God is involved in human history;

- the five books of the law that contain the commandments and laws that God gave the Israelites;
- literary writings, including stories, proverbs and poetry, that tell us more about God’s character and his plans.

These provide the background for the New Testament.

The New Testament

The New Testament is about Jesus’ life, his teachings, his death and resurrection and the beginnings of the Christian church. It contains:

- four accounts of the life of Jesus; and
- letters from some of Jesus’ apostles addressed to individuals, churches or groups of churches. These give correction and guidance for Christian living and therefore have relevance for Christians in every age.

What happens in a church?

Churches do not operate only on Sunday. Most

Sunday services

Nearly all churches have services on Sunday morning. Some have services on Sunday evening, too.

Shops

Some churches run cafés, bookshops or charity shops.

House groups

Small groups enable people to get to know each other more so they can pray for each other and help each other follow Jesus.

Craft activities

Churches often organise craft activities, such as flower arranging, making banners to decorate church buildings, or making things to sell to raise money for good causes.

Courses and conferences

Many churches offer an Alpha course that helps interested people and new Christians to find out more about becoming a Christian.

Many churches organise courses and conferences to help people grow in their faith and train for service in the church.

Fitness activities

One church in Milton Keynes runs a weekly football session as a way of making contact with people. Several famous football clubs started as teams organised by churches.

Drop in sessions for lonely people

These provide somewhere for anyone who is lonely to go and meet other people.

Men's meetings

Men from one Milton Keynes church meet for breakfast at a supermarket café on a Saturday morning.

Christian church?

It has activities going on all through the week.

Music

Music is an important part of Christian worship. Many churches have choirs, orchestras or worship bands and the Salvation Army usually has a brass band.

Night shelters and soup runs

In many places Christians work to make sure that homeless people have food and shelter.

Fund raising for charity and mission

Relief organisations such as Christian Aid, TEAR Fund and World Vision are largely financed by the fund raising activities of local churches.

“Hatch, match and dispatch”

Special services are held in churches to celebrate the birth of a baby, to consecrate a marriage or to give thanks for the life of someone who has died. Church ministers often give advice and support to people at these important times in their lives.

Activities for young people

These might include youth clubs, organisations like Scouts and Boys’ and Girls’ Brigade as well as special young people’s Bible study groups.

Counselling and pastoral care

Churches are there for people when they are in need, to provide advice, prayer and counselling.

Women’s meetings

The Mothers’ Union, part of the Church of England, is the most famous. Other denominations have similar meetings for women.

Sunday school and children’s clubs

Most churches arrange for children to be taught the Christian faith. This used to be called Sunday school but often today it has a “cooler” name, such as “J-Team” and may not be on a Sunday.



The Codex Sinaiticus is the oldest surviving copy of the complete New Testament. It was handwritten 1600 years ago.

Why the Bible is important

The Bible is important to the Christian faith because it reveals God's nature and character: his love and forgiveness, his justice and truth, his grace and mercy. It contains God's message and shows Christians how to apply his message to their lives. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105).

I read the Bible every morning and, with Bible notes, it starts my day on the right foot... It is God's word, which I use for guidance and to get to know God.

**David Charter,
Stony Stratford
Community Church**

The Bible today

Because the Bible was not written in English it has to be translated. There are several different versions of the Bible in Modern English and the Bible has been translated into more than 2,800 different languages. You can find out more about Bible translation from the Bible Society (<http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/>) or Wycliffe Bible Translators (<http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/>).

Nowadays the Bible is available in electronic formats and many Christians read the Bible on notepads, mobile phones or e-readers.

Holy communion



A Church of England communion service

Holy Communion involves eating a small piece of bread and drinking some wine or fruit juice while recalling Jesus' death and saying "thank you" to God for our salvation. Different churches use different names for communion such as: the Mass, Breaking of Bread, Eucharist, Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. These all refer to the same thing. It helps Christians remember how Jesus initiated a new covenant with his disciples. They had met together, just before Jesus was arrested, to share the Jewish Passover meal. This meal is an annual reminder to Jews that God delivered their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. The food they eat in the Passover includes bread and wine. It was during this meal that Jesus took the bread and wine and gave them a new meaning by saying they were symbols of his body and

blood that would soon be broken and poured out as he died on the cross. He told his disciples that they were to continue his example of sharing bread and wine when they met in order to remember him and to look forward to his coming again. Observing this practice is also a time for Christians to examine themselves; to renew their relationship with God and with each other and to express unity through Jesus Christ.

There are some different views of what happens at communion. Some denominations believe that the bread and wine are only symbols to remind us of what Jesus did. Many Christians believe that Jesus actually meets his followers through the Holy Spirit as they receive the bread and wine. Catholic Christians believe that Jesus becomes present in the bread and the wine so that they become his body which is offered afresh to God as a sacrifice.



Bread and wine prepared for communion in a Baptist church

Prayer

Prayer is communication with God. It is talking to God, listening to God and enjoying the presence of God. Through prayer Christians experience a relationship with God and are able to connect more intimately with him.

Christians can pray any time and anywhere. Praying can have many forms: worship, praise, thanksgiving, confession, asking for things and waiting. It can involve reading prayers that others have written, or just talking to God in your own words.

Christians often say “Amen” at the end of a prayer. This is a Hebrew word that means “Let it be so”. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray and gave an example for all who want to pray. Christians call this the Lord’s Prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever.
Amen.

I feel a lot happier since I have become a Christian and God has answered some of my prayers and guided me through troubled times.

**Bethany Aitchison, Shenley
Christian Fellowship**

Worship is telling God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit that they mean everything to us and we love them and thank them for all their goodness to us.

I like to dance and sing and shout aloud to express how I feel. I also cry when I realise how unconditional his love is and he loves me as I am.

**Jill Scoing, St Lawrence,
Bradwell**

Worship

Worship is first of all an attitude of heart to God that should be expressed in everything a Christian does. It is also expressed in singing songs of worship and praise (sometimes called hymns).

Churches have many different styles of worship. Some use organs or orchestras, choirs and special robes. Others express their love to God in contemporary popular music styles involving worship bands with guitars, drums and keyboards. The Salvation Army have military style bands, while the Quakers prefer to sit in silence. Christian services often include holy communion and normally a service will include a sermon where a preacher will explain part of the Bible and apply it to everyday life.



The organ in the Church of Christ the Cornerstone

Sunday

Almost all Christian churches hold their main worship event on a Sunday. The Old Testament tells how God rested on the seventh day when he had completed his work of creation. To remind themselves of this, God commanded his people to keep one day in seven as a holy day (Sabbath) when they would not travel or do any work but rest and worship God. Jews and some Christians still keep Saturday as their holy day but most Christians keep the Sabbath on the first day of the week, because it was on a Sunday that Jesus was raised from the dead.



This sound mixing desk at one Milton Keynes church makes it possible to use a range of different instruments in worship

Christian festivals

Advent

The word 'advent' comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming". It is both the end and the beginning of the Christian calendar – the end because it reminds us that Jesus promised to return to earth again in the future and the beginning because it prepares us to celebrate his first coming. It starts four Sundays before Christmas day.

During advent, some churches hold a Christingle service. Each child is presented with an orange, representing the world, around which is a red ribbon, representing the blood of Christ. Dried fruits skewered on cocktail sticks are pushed into the orange, representing the fruits of the earth. A lit candle pushed into the centre of the orange reminds them that Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

Christmas

Christmas (25th December) celebrates the birth of Jesus and the belief that God himself became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ, fulfilling predictions made by prophets hundreds of years before and showing both his amazing love and plan to save mankind.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Angels announced his birth to shepherds in nearby fields and magi (wise men) came looking for him because they had seen a star that they believed announced the birth of a special king. Christians believe that Jesus was a descendant of King David and so an heir to the throne of God's kingdom. The events of the Christmas story can be found in the Bible: Matthew 1 and 2, Luke 1 and 2



A Christingle service

Easter Tide

Catholic and Protestant churches celebrate Easter Day on the day fixed by the Council of Nicaea in 325AD, which is the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the Vernal (spring) Equinox. This is why the actual date varies. The Council chose this date to coincide with the Jewish Passover. Christians remember several things at this time:

Lent

Lent is the 40 days leading up to Holy Week, starting on Ash Wednesday (Sundays are not included in the count). Many Christians observe Lent as a time to fast or give something up. It is a time to remember Jesus' sacrifice, his life, death and resurrection.

Holy Week

This is always the last week of Lent and includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Palm Sunday is the start of Holy Week and recalls how the crowds waved palm branches as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

On **Maundy Thursday** Christians remember when Jesus met with his disciples to celebrate the Passover Meal. This was when Jesus was arrested, the night before he was crucified.

Good Friday is the Friday of Holy Week when Christians remember Jesus' death on the cross when he took the punishment for all the bad things anyone has ever done.

Easter Sunday is the third day after Good Friday. Christians celebrate that Jesus came back to life, having broken the barrier between God and mankind, mended the spoilt friendship and made it possible for anyone who believes in God and confesses their sin, to have a friendship with God. You can find the events of the Easter story in the Bible: Matthew 26–28, Mark 14–16, Luke 22–24, John 18–20

Ascension Day and Pentecost

Ascension Day is always on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter. It marks the day when Jesus returned to heaven. You can read about this in Acts 1 v 1–11.

Pentecost (sometimes called Whit Sunday) commemorates the day the first Christians were empowered by the Holy Spirit to start their mission to the world. The message of salvation through Jesus is for people of all nations and to show this the Holy Spirit enabled the first Christians to proclaim the message in different languages. You can read about this in Acts 2.

Harvest

Many churches give thanks to God for the harvest in September or October. People often bring gifts of flowers and food to decorate the church building. The food is then distributed among people in need within the local community.

Our local Christian heritage

Although Milton Keynes is a new town, the surrounding area has an inspiring historical Christian heritage. Here are some suggestions of places to visit connected with the Christian heritage of Milton Keynes. The websites mentioned supply further information.

Church of Christ the Cornerstone

The City Centre parish church is jointly owned and run by four denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed). The building is also used for Roman Catholic Services.

<http://sites.google.com/site/churchofchristthecornerstonemk/Home>

Other parish churches

There are many other parish churches in Milton Keynes and the surrounding villages, some very old and some quite new. All are worth a visit.



The Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney

The Old Baptist Meeting House, Winslow

Benjamin Keach (1640–1704) led Baptist churches in Winslow and Stony Stratford. He was put in the stocks for writing a children's catechism that contradicted the Church of England's teaching about baptism. Later, he became an enthusiastic supporter of the new practice of hymn singing. The Meeting House in Winslow where he preached is preserved in its original condition.

<http://www.keachsmeetinghouse.org.uk>

John Bunyan Museum, Bedford

John Bunyan (1628–1688) was garrisoned in Newport Pagnell as a soldier in Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army. Later, he became a Nonconformist preacher and stood up for toleration and religious freedom. He was imprisoned in Bedford gaol for holding illegal services. While in gaol he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the most popular books ever written. It tells the story of Christian who escapes from the City of Destruction and has many adventures on his journey to the Celestial City.

<http://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/museum>

The Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney

John Newton (1725–1807) was the vicar of the parish church in Olney. As a young man he had been a slave trader but later campaigned against the slave trade. He is famous for writing the words of the popular hymn “Amazing Grace”. His friend, William Cowper (1731–1800) was an accomplished poet and also wrote many well-known hymns that are still sung in churches today. <http://www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk/>

The Carey Experience

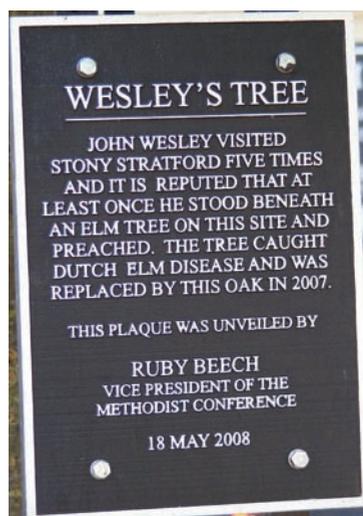
William Carey (1761–1834) was born in Paulerspury. He was fascinated by exploration and inspired by Jesus’ command to make disciples of all nations. He lived in Hackleton before moving to Moulton, near Northampton, where he was the village shoemaker, schoolmaster and Baptist Pastor. He helped to start the first Protestant missionary society and went to India as its first missionary. While there he campaigned to abolish the practice whereby widows were burnt alive on their husband’s funeral pyre. He famously said “Expect great things from God – attempt great things for God.” <http://www.thecareyexperience.co.uk>

Stony Stratford

In the 17th century it was illegal to hold services outside the Church of England and a special militia was raised in Buckinghamshire to put down Catholics and Nonconformists, who continued to meet in secret in spite of the threat of imprisonment. Stony Stratford Community Church in Horsefair Green has a window preserved from an older chapel on the same site, through which the congregation used to escape when soldiers came to break up the services.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Movement, once preached under a tree in the Market Square.

Stony Stratford is also home to Milton Keynes’ only Greek Orthodox church.



Christian organisations in MK

Milton Keynes is home to the headquarters of several national or international organisations that exist to promote or apply the Christian faith. Some of these may be able to offer resources for local schools. They include:

Authentic Media

A Christian publishing company, based in Crown Hill.

<http://authenticmedia.co.uk>

Bridgebuilder Trust

Bridgebuilder Trust, based in Bletchley,:

- Educates young people in Christian faith and values
- Empowers young Christians to share their faith
- Engages young people with the Christian community.

<http://mkbtr.org.uk/>

Chinese Overseas Christian Mission

COCM has its headquarters in Fishermead. It communicates the Christian message to Chinese people and supports and trains Chinese Christians and Chinese speaking churches throughout Europe.

<http://cocm.org.uk/>

Interserve

Interserve, based in Old Wolverton, is a Christian mission agency. It is involved in Christian missions across Asia, the Middle East and the

UK, “seeking to bring God’s love in word and deed to those who need it most”.

<http://interserve.org.uk/>

Toybox

Toybox, based in Bletchley, is a Christian charity committed to helping children who live or work on the streets, or who are at risk of doing so, principally in Latin America.

<http://toybox.org.uk/>

Scripture Union

Scripture Union is based in Bletchley. Its vision is for every Christian to engage enthusiastically with the Bible and grow in their faith.

<http://scriptureunion.org.uk>

World Vision

Based in Fox Milne, World Vision is the world’s largest overseas aid charity, “It brings real hope to children in some of the world’s poorest countries as a demonstration of God’s unconditional love.”

<http://worldvision.org.uk/>

Words Christians use

In common with other faiths, Christianity has its own vocabulary with some words that may be confusing to people who have not come across them before. This is not a complete list but helps to explain some of them.

Anglican

To do with the Church of England, the state church that Henry VIII established in the 16th century.

Apostle

From a Greek word meaning "sent". Jesus chose 12 apostles to spread his message.

Atonement

Making a payment in reparation for sin. Jesus made atonement on our behalf through his death.

Baptise

From a Greek word meaning to "bathe" or "wash". Jesus told his apostles to baptise people when they become his disciples.

Baptist

Many churches baptise babies but Baptists believe that only people old enough to know their own mind should be baptised. Usually Baptists dip people completely under the water when they baptise them.

Catholic

Means "universal". The Roman Catholic Church recognises the

Bishop of Rome (the Pope) as the leader of the Church. Anglo-catholics share many Roman Catholic ideas but are in the Church of England.

Charismatic

From the Greek word *charis*, a gift. Christians who believe that supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit referred to in the Bible, like healing and prophecy, can still happen today.

Christ

In the Old Testament, kings and priests were set apart by having oil poured over them. This is called "anointing". "Christ" is a Greek word that means "the anointed one". The Hebrew word for "Christ" is "Messiah".

Congregational

A way of governing the church where each member has a say.

Denomination

A Christian church organisation. Each denomination has different ways of worshipping and organising the church and sometimes slightly different teachings.

Diocese

A territory and group of local parishes presided over by a bishop.

Disciple

Anyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ.

Ecumenical

Ecumenical means "the whole world". The ecumenical movement tries to break down barriers between Christians so they work together instead of in competition. Milton Keynes has several ecumenical parishes which belong to more than one denomination.

Evangelical

"Evangel" means "good news". Evangelical Christians believe the good news that, by his death on the cross, Jesus made it possible for us to have our sins forgiven.

Evangelism

Spreading the good news of Jesus' message. Jesus told his followers to "go into all the world and proclaim the good news."

Evangelist

Anyone who works at telling people the good news of Jesus' message.

Incarnation

God taking on human form to visit the earth in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Methodism, Methodist

A large Christian denomination that owes its origin mainly to an 18th century preacher called John Wesley.

Minister

Someone who is ordained to preach and lead worship in a church. In some denominations ministers are called pastors, elders or priests. In the Church of England there are various names for ministers that relate to their status and how they are paid (for example, vicar, curate, canon, rector, dean).

Mission, Missionary

Mission means "being sent". Missionaries are people who travel to another country to show God's love for people and tell them about it.

Ordain, ordination

To set someone apart to be a Church leader or minister.

Orthodox

Means "teaching correctly". Orthodox churches trace their origin to the early church but don't accept the bishop of Rome as their leader.

Pentecostal

A movement that encourages Christians and churches to claim and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.

Priest

A minister who is ordained to preside at holy Communion in the Orthodox churches, the Roman Catholic church or the Church of England.

Protestant

People who wanted to reform the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century "protested" at things in the church they thought were wrong and so were called "protestants". Today it means any Christian who is not Roman Catholic or Orthodox.

Redeem, redemption

To pay a price to buy something back. Christians believe that Jesus redeemed his followers by shedding his blood when he died on the cross.

Reformation

A movement in the 16th century to change the teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church.

Reformed

Churches which started during the Reformation, especially those that follow the teachings of the Swiss reformer, John Calvin.

Saint

Someone who is dedicated to God. Some churches refer to all Christians as "saints"; some reserve this term for exceptionally effective Christians in the past.

Salvation

Having your sins forgiven and gaining a place in heaven when you die.

The Milton Keynes Mission Partnership

Our exploration of Christianity in Milton Keynes would not be complete without a mention of the Milton Keynes Mission Partnership which plays an important role in uniting and representing the Christian community in Milton Keynes. It draws many of the Christian communities from Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas together in mission to:

- proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God;
- teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- respond to human need by loving service;
- seek to transform unjust structures of society;
- strive to safeguard the integrity of creation; and
- sustain the life of the earth.

<http://missionpartnership.org.uk>

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen

