



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

Update

September 2022

Picnics in the Park

The summer holidays can seem a long time for parents. If you are a family that receives free school meals, there is also extra food expense when finances are already stretched due to the cost of living crisis. The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme was established to address this issue. During August, activities were provided across the county; one such activity was a weekly Picnic in the Park, provided by Family Space. They asked us to join them in delivering sports and games to young people and their families as part of the picnics. These took place at King George V playing fields in

Rowanfield. Sports, games, craft activities, and a good quality meal were provided for families of young people of school age. Over 300 meals were distributed to the families who came along over the four weeks.

The sessions had a real family feel to them, with the activities providing an opportunity for parents to talk with staff from Family Space whilst the young people were engaged in activities.

Each week we would offer different activities and games. To cope with the heat, we ran a series of water games, which went down a treat. Alongside these,



we also ran football, parachute games and other team games. Throughout the picnics, we had great opportunities to support and encourage young people and hear their stories. As the activities were walk-up sessions, we didn't know who or how many young people we would have each week, and we met many young people we had not met before.

It was terrific to have a young person who has been involved in our work, volunteering alongside us for one of the sessions. Providing young people with an opportunity to volunteer allows them to

gain a greater understanding of the lives of other young people. Many young people in our region live in poverty, with the current inflationary pressures on food and fuel expected to worsen the situation. When young people volunteer, they see the reality of the crisis with their own eyes.

We are currently exploring options for helping more young people in this situation over the winter months. We are particularly keen to develop a resource for churches to support young people in their communities. Please get in touch with us if you would like to explore this.

All good things

Over the last five years, we have been supporting the youth work of the South Cheltenham Churches. For four years of this time, Hanna has been the youth worker responsible for the project. When we first started our partnership with the South Cheltenham Churches, it involved providing youth work after the departure of the previous youth worker. We ran one group for the first year prior to Hanna starting in 2018; this ensured some youth work continuity whilst we made the appointment. The partnership aimed to help the churches develop their youth work whilst supporting the youth worker. Over the four years since Hanna's appointment, the groups have grown. With the youth work in a healthy place, the churches have decided to bring the management of the youth work back in-house. Rev. Nick Davies, the Team Rector, said, "This is a really exciting next step for our youth work programme and is a recognition of the hard work of Hanna and her team and the professional support that we have received from Youth for Christ." With this change, Hanna had to decide whether she would remain with the South Cheltenham Churches or with us. After her time in the role, Hanna felt the moment



was right for a change for her as well. As a result, Hanna will continue to work for us full-time, but in a new role.

We have enjoyed supporting the work of South Cheltenham over the last five years. The project's success is not just in the numerical growth in the youth work, but the sustainable structure which is in place to help take the youth work forward to the next stage. We will continue to support the work of the South Cheltenham churches, but in a new capacity. We look forward to working with them and their new worker once they are in the post.

The Big Weekender Anchored to the Rock

24th-26th February 2023



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Swindon
**YOUTH
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Our annual youth group residential is back, but this time, it will be bigger and better! This year also features a new name. The Big Weekender 2023 will see us combine our residential with Swindon Youth for Christ. Both centres have built up successful weekends away, but we can offer even more by uniting, whilst fixing our price at the same cost as last year. It also allows us to provide an even greater range of activities. Following the great feedback last year, we will once again be using the Poplars in Ledbury, but this time we expect to fill it.

The weekend will include playing games (they might get messy), engaging worship, asking big questions, sports, delving into the Bible and participating in various other fun activities together. We might have a campfire, weather permitting. The weekend is aimed at anyone aged 11-18 who wants to grow in their faith or learn more about life's big questions.

This year we will be looking at the theme of "Firm Foundations" as we explore where we can place our trust in a world where everything seems constantly moving. When we are faced with so much change, where can we put our trust? On what can we build firm foundations? The Big Weekender will give you the space to consider all these things whilst

having great fun. You will get to know others in your youth group and meet groups from churches across the region. You might meet people from school you didn't know went to church. You might make new friends. The team at Youth for Christ know the challenge of being a young person trying to explore faith and serve Jesus. While following Jesus can be challenging, we believe it can be fun and exciting. Join us and break away from the things that hold us back, and have an exciting adventure with Jesus.

We have held ticket prices at the same as last year. Until 15th November, you can get an early bird price of £80; after that date, the price rises to £90. The cost includes food, accommodation and activities. Where finance is a real challenge for you, we would request you contact our Director, Paul Bennett, in confidence to discuss how we can help. We would not want a young person to miss out due to a lack of finance. We will work with you to see how we can make attendance possible for you.

We expect to be oversubscribed this year, so please book early. Book via the QR code or <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/youth-for-christ-gloucestershire/the-big-weekender-2023/e-oxpmeo>



Book Tickets



Hanna Looks back

As my time with South Cheltenham comes to a close, it has allowed me to reflect on our four-year partnership. It has been an interesting four years with many fond memories and unique challenges, a global pandemic being just one of them.

When I started, the role I took on had not existed in this structure. CNC had just joined the South Cheltenham Churches' youth work partnership, and Youth for Christ

Gloucestershire was holding a new role with the churches. This new beginning was an excellent opportunity for me to get to know each church's worshipping and community styles and draw up new structures for the youth work.

One of the most significant changes I implemented was the creation of two midweek youth groups for the young people, bringing together young people from all the churches with different backgrounds, theologies, and paths of faith.

This diverse group grew in its first year through young people joining after growing out of the children's group, group members bringing their friends along, and new families joining the different churches.

Surprisingly, the most considerable

increase in numbers and community feel was established in 2020 when the first lockdown started. At this point roughly ten young people, who had only recently gotten to know each other, really gelled over our Zoom nights. Even though Zoom was limited in many ways, it allowed for opportunities to get to know each other in ways we wouldn't have in person. It

provided brief glimpses into home life, decorated bedrooms, and of course, we all got to know each other's pets incredibly well!

Going into lockdown, I worried the group could become disengaged, but sharing their difficulties, faith, and successes online each week made the young people grow together in a way it would not

have otherwise. Several new members joined Rock Solid online for the first time and were welcomed as if they had always been part of the group. The support and encouragement the young people showed each other during this time was incredibly touching and still something I think about often. One of my favourite aspects of church life is the community it creates, which was visible in the youth group during a challenging time.

Of course, the best part of the job is



seeing young people's lives changed by Jesus and seeing them grow up. Emily joined us during the first lockdown. She was in the choir at Pip and Jim's but hadn't been along to youth group before. Her mother contacted me during lockdown to ask if Emily could come along to a few sessions to fill her evenings. I was a bit nervous as this was the first young person to join during our "Zoom Era". But even though Emily was quiet at first, she would join in the discussions and share her thoughts. The rest of the group treated her like a long-term member from the first session. The real breakthrough came during game evenings when we played Among Us, an online game, as a group, and Emily won several rounds, a real bonding experience for everyone! Once we started to meet in person again, Emily came along and has been a regular member ever since, forming close friendships with the other girls in the group and coming on our weekend away with us. Seeing her becoming more confident and growing in her faith has been great.

Josh was a young person I saw once a

month, as he is a member of St Peter's choir. He didn't come along to youth group but did join us with some friends for our nerf gun Humans vs Zombies night. During this time, he had several good conversations with Michael, a gap year volunteer, who convinced him to try out Rock Solid. Josh came along to the first few sessions and was very quiet. However, over time, he became more confident, shared his opinion, and became more competitive with games. With time, I asked him to be a young leader for the group, meaning he would look out for newcomers and help keep discussions going when people were quiet. A role he thrived in, giving others the support he first needed and sharing his thoughts on God and his faith with others. Josh is now also in Underground, our young leaders' group. He has gone from a shy young lad to a confident, helpful, and caring young man, who looks out for others, and has developed a strong faith.

I am very grateful to be able to look back on my time in South Cheltenham with such memories and thankful for the time I spent there serving their young people.

Superheroes and royalty

This term, we have continued our assemblies at St Mark's Junior School, talking to the young people about how faith ties into their school values and how we can live them out in our daily lives.

We voted if Paul or the Queen would be treated better in a restaurant to reveal how Jesus cared for everyone equally, we dressed as everyday superheroes to demonstrate how everyone plays an important part in our community and hosted our own version of "Split or Steal" to show the importance of being truthful.

As always, we immensely enjoyed spending time in St Mark's and look forward to continuing our partnership in the new school year.



New partnerships

As the new academic year starts, we are pleased to be able to share two new partnerships we are developing. From September, we will collaborate with St. Luke's Church in Cheltenham to provide youth work. Hanna will join them as their youth worker for two days per week as part of her role with us. The joint working with St. Luke's has a special significance to us, as we had previously worked together when Wes was employed to do a similar role fifteen years ago. As we work closely to develop the existing youth provision, we will also be looking to expand the work further and establish outreach to local schools.

We are also recruiting a new youth worker in partnership with Abbey Church in Gloucester. This worker will have their time

split 50/50 between ourselves and the work with Abbey Church. This worker will have a brief to develop our work in Gloucester. Building on our existing good relationships with churches and schools in the city, they will establish new projects as we seek to reach out to more young people.

We are also looking to recruit an intern who can take an opportunity to grow and develop whilst they learn youth work skills. This role will suit someone post sixth form or university looking to gain experience or trying to work out their next steps.

These are exciting developments that will allow us to support more young people. Please pray as we seek to recruit that God provides the right people.

Church Partnership Youth Worker (Full time)

We are looking for an energetic and collaborative individual to work with young people in Gloucester. Employed as a member of the local Youth for Christ centre, you will be involved in the existing youth ministry within Abbey Church and developing the work of Youth for Christ in Gloucester. You will be responsible for growing and leading the youth work team within the church whilst looking for ways to develop the existing work. You will lead the work of Youth for Christ in Gloucester, developing our schools' ministry and starting new initiatives.

We are seeking an experienced leader with the ability to work in a range of environments, both inside and outside the local church context. The role requires someone with a passion for Jesus, a heart for young people and a desire to see their lives changed by Jesus.

Salary: £23-27000 per annum, depending on experience and qualification.

For more information contact: Paul Bennett 07855 408068 or paul@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk

Closing Date: Sunday 30th October 2022

There is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder is a practising Christian and will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure.



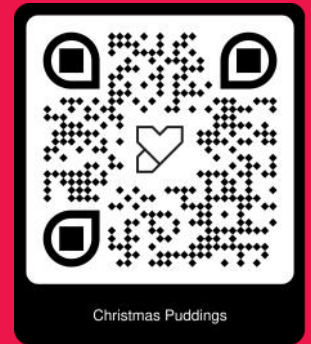
Seeing young people's lives changed by Jesus.

Christmas is coming

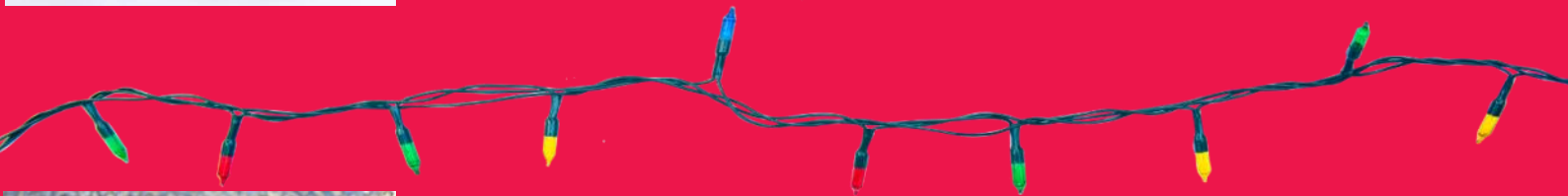


Who wants to think about Christmas puddings in September? Paul does. For the last three years, he has been cooking Christmas puddings to support our work. Last year, he cooked 130 puddings. If he doesn't start in September, he won't have time to cook them all. Someone has said their pudding was "the best Christmas pudding we ever had". Repeat orders are already coming in. Gluten and lactose free options are also available.

If you would like to order your pudding, go to <https://forms.office.com/r/8tfdtp6N4e> or use the QR code.

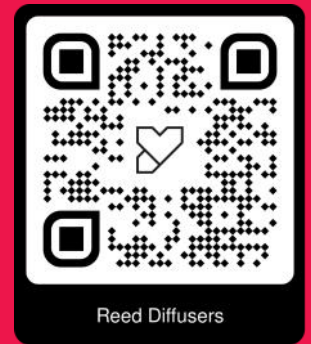


Christmas Puddings



Last year, our reed diffusers proved popular Christmas presents. We will be selling them again this year. We have seen these exact fragrances on sale for £25! We sell them at a bargain price of £10 each or £9 each if you buy two or more. Last year they sold out quickly, so place an order to avoid disappointment.

Diffusers can be ordered via the QR code or <https://forms.office.com/r/7gBwsH5Wrb>

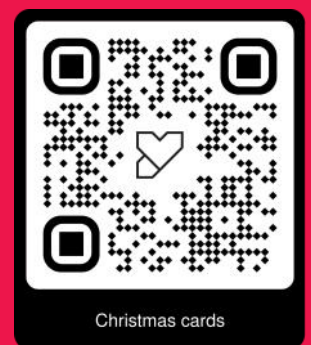


Reed Diffusers



If you would like to show your support during the Christmas season, you can now buy professionally printed Youth for Christ Christmas cards. Each pack of twelve cards features four designs. A pack of twelve cards and envelopes costs £3.00.

Cards can be ordered via the QR code or <https://forms.office.com/r/vNyhSk50Lc>



Christmas cards

QUIZ NIGHT

15th October 7-9pm
Elim Christian Centre
117 St George's Rd, Cheltenham GL50 3EG

Our autumn quiz night is back. Join us for a fun night that will challenge and entertain. Come as a team of up to eight, or join a team on the night. This year we will be raising funds to support young people affected by the cost of living and fuel crisis. At the quiz, we will be outlining some of our plans for supporting young people over the winter. We know that not everyone can afford a night out at the moment. If you are in this position, we don't want you to miss out. This year there is no ticket price. Instead, there is the option of making a donation. Only do this if you can afford it. If you can afford it, why not consider making an extra

donation on behalf of someone who can't afford to do so?

At the quiz, soft drinks and snacks will be available.

Tickets can be booked at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/youth-for-christ-gloucestershire> or by using the QR code below.



Afternoon tea



A massive thank you to everyone who came and supported our afternoon tea in June. Including all donations through the event, we raised £890, which is an



amazing total. Special thank go to all of those people who made and served at the event, making it possible. We are also incredibly grateful to Rodda's and Tiptree for donating the cream and jam to go with the homemade scones.

Moving on



After her terms placement with us in the summer, we said farewell to Aimee (pictured left at an assembly).

Aimee's year in Cheltenham came to an end and she now heads further South to Devon where she will be studying for a youth work degree. As part of her degree, she will be on a three year placement with Ivybridge Youth for Christ. We will continue to see Aimee at Youth for Christ events.



God's love and call

In June, Paul and Steph (one of our trustees) joined Holy Trinity Tewkesbury for their bi-annual church weekend away. This was the fifth time we have joined them to run their youth work at the event, which is always held at Cefn Lea in mid Wales, surrounded by beautiful hills. During the weekend we explored God's love and the call He has placed on all of our lives. Residentials are a great opportunity to build relationships with

young people as well as to explore a theme in more depth. We already knew a number of young people having previously been involved in the church's residentials. We explored God's love and call through our usual mixture of fun, games, Bible study and application.

Not only do we get to spend time with the young people, but it is also a wonderful opportunity to get to know adults in the church and to hear their stories.

The Beryl Williams Memorial Fund



Beryl Williams was a wonderful lady who spent a significant part of her life supporting young people in Gloucestershire. Beryl was an everyday hero, spending her life volunteering, always with her trademark

smile! She invested in countless young people's lives and continued to be involved in youth work until her sad passing in 2022. At her funeral, people were asked to make donations in Beryl's memory, which totalled £450. We felt the

most appropriate way to use these gifts was to create a fund that reflected Beryl's passion for youth work and her desire to see young people encounter Jesus.

We have therefore setup the Beryl Williams Memorial Fund to provide financial support to young people whose circumstances make paying for activities with us challenging. We do not want young people to miss out due to financial hardship.

If you would like to make a contribution to the fund, you can do so by making a donation in the usual ways but reference the Beryl Williams Memorial fund.



Planting a tree

During the summer, two of the young people we have been working with closely decided to get baptised. Lizzie and Ruth are part of the South Cheltenham youth groups and joined us at Breakaway 2022. Over the last few months, both have been reflecting on how God has impacted their lives, which led to their commitment to follow Jesus!

Lizzie had seen how God was there for her in challenging moments, and even though they didn't get easier, she felt like she wasn't alone in them. Ruth had been considering the step for a while as she felt more confident in her faith and started leading the Christian Union at her school. The deciding factor for her was during the Break-Away weekend, when Paul quoted a Chinese proverb, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." Paul was encouraging young people to decide to follow Jesus now; this was what she needed to hear to make her commitment to Jesus.

Seeing them share their testimonies at church and taking the plunge in the freezing cold paddling pool was a great moment to witness. Seeing young people grow in their faith and

having their life changed by Jesus is why we do this job, and being able to celebrate alongside them is a wonderful privilege.

Please join us in praying for them as they continue their walk with God.



I would like to become a Youth for Christ Gloucestershire partner.

Title: Full Name:

Full home address:

Postcode: Email:

Telephone: Church:

Are you involved in youth work?

Communication Preferences

I would like to receive from Youth for Christ Gloucestershire newsletters and information on events and fundraising activities/ appeals. I am happy to receive communication via (please tick all that apply)

Post SMS/text message Email

I enclose a cheque made payable to YFC Gloucestershire for £_____

Gift Aid declaration

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by Youth for Christ Gloucestershire from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current tax payer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the appropriate box below.

I want to Gift aid my donation of £_____ to Youth for Christ Gloucestershire

I want to Gift aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Youth for Christ Gloucestershire

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signed Date

Please notify us if you: 1. Want to cancel this declaration. 2. Change your name or home address. 3. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Youth for Christ Gloucestershire Standing Order Authority

Your Bank Name and address

Account No: Bank Sort Code:

Please pay: Youth for Christ Gloucestershire. Account no: 00028687 Sort code: 40-52-40

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent. ME19 4JQ

The sum of £ on the and thereafter from my account

monthly / quarterly / annually (delete as applicable) until further notice. This instruction cancels all previous instructions for standing order payments to Youth for Christ Gloucestershire.

Signed Date

Please return to: The Treasurer, Youth for Christ Gloucestershire, 115 St. George's Road, Cheltenham, GLOS. GL50 3EG Charity no. 1163587

We only use your data in connection with our work and will only use it in ways you request. To read our privacy policy and find out how we use your data please visit www.yfcgloucestershire.co.uk/_tos.html

Events Diary

Each week at 9.30am Monday and Thursday mornings we gather for our prayer meetings. All are welcome to come and join the team to pray for our work. The prayer meeting is available on Zoom, if you would like to join us, please email office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk for the Zoom codes.

The following are a few of our less regular dates for this term. Please do pray for these events.

September

20th Assembly

October

5th Assembly

13th Assembly

15th Quiz Night

19th Assembly

November

2nd Assembly

5-6th Youth worker interviews

13th Paul preaching at C3 Cheltenham

15th Final day of early bird rate for The Big Weekender

16th Assembly

30th Assembly

December

14th Assembly

Donate by text

Text YOUTH followed by your donation amount to 70490 to give that amount. E.g. Youth 20 to donate £20

Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message, and you'll be opting into hearing more from us. If you would like to donate but don't wish to hear more from us, please text YOUTHNOINFO instead.



How to get in touch

Feel free to get in touch with us. We love hearing from our supporters. It is always worth checking we are in the office before popping round as we are frequently out working with young people.

For general enquiries, please email office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk

We can also be messaged via our social media accounts.

To contact a staff member directly, please use the details below:



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07855 408068



Hanna Stürcken
Church Partnership Youth Worker
hanna@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk
07856 156580

