



Update

January 2024

Half a Century

In the day-to-day of life, we often forget to look back. We tend to be an organisation that looks forward to the future and how we want to grow and develop. History, however, often gives us a good indication of our future. 2024 is when we will look back to our past as we celebrate our 50th anniversary. We want to celebrate all that God has done in those fifty years whilst also looking forward with hope and expectation that there is still so much more to come.

Youth for Christ has operated for over fifty years in Cheltenham and Gloucester. I recently heard of a man in Cheltenham who became a Christian in his teenage years at a Youth for Christ rally in 1948; only the second year of Youth for Christ in the UK. There were Youth for Christ rallies in Cheltenham and Gloucester throughout the fifties and sixties. It is relatively common for me to visit churches and hear stories of these rallies from members of local churches. So why is this year our 50th anniversary? In 1974, CYCLE (Cheltenham Young Christians Link-up Events) formed before becoming Cheltenham Youth for Christ in the 1980s. Since then, there has been continuous youth ministry across Cheltenham and,

more latterly, across Gloucestershire. It is the 50th anniversary of this ongoing ministry that we mark. We still look back and recognise the significance of the rallies between 1940 and 1960, but it is harder to pin exact details down. This fifty-year period may have been birthed in Cheltenham, but throughout this time, Gloucester has had a significant role, including having its own centre from 2006, before we became a single entity in 2015.

Fifty years is not insignificant and is the result of hard work by my predecessors, staff, trustees, volunteers and supporters that have brought us to this place. By marking this anniversary, we are recognising the role that everyone has played. We are also celebrating fifty years of young people's lives being changed by Jesus. I know someone who became a Christian through the Cheltenham Youth for Christ's ministry and later set up a Youth for Christ centre in France. Another young person joined us on a mission trip, despite struggling with their faith. Several years later, their faith is strong and they have been on more mission trips than I have. Numerous young people have attended our young leaders programme, Underground, and then gone on to lead

university Christian Unions, or became involved in youth ministry or other aspects of church leadership. We have seen young people battle and overcome addictions, helped them gain employment, and supported them through life-changing circumstances. Many have encountered Jesus.

These young people have their own stories, as do many more people. We would love people to send us their stories of the last fifty years by emailing them to office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk.

We certainly have a lot to celebrate, so we would love to have people join us to celebrate this history on 20th April. The National Director of British Youth for Christ, Neil O'Boyle, will join us. We hope to get as many former staff, trustees, and volunteers to join us as possible, as well as current supporters. We will have a time of celebration followed by a drinks reception.

Whilst we will be looking back, we also want to look forward as we seek to build a more significant legacy of young people's lives changed by Jesus. For this reason, we are also setting up our 50th Anniversary Legacy fund. The Legacy fund will help us push our work forward into new areas, giving us the resources to share the good news of Jesus relevantly

to even more young people. We have set an ambitious target of £50,000 for the fund. This will allow us to take on an additional youth worker to develop work across the county, increasing our reach geographically and in terms of the number of young people we will reach. The Legacy fund target comprises two parts: one-off donations towards the fund and new donors who want to provide regular income to help with the long-term viability of the ministry.

If you want to contribute a one-off gift to the fund, you can do so using the link or QR code below. There will also be an opportunity to give to the fund at the 50th Anniversary Celebration. To help boost the Legacy Fund by setting up a regular donation, you can complete the form at the back of this newsletter or use the details to set up a recurring gift with online banking.

I am excited about our celebrations, but I am more excited about seeing future generations of young people having their lives changed by Jesus. We are now working with young people who were not born when I first started as Director! As each generation arrives, they have the same need to hear about Jesus.

Paul Bennett
Director



50th Anniversary Legacy Fund

Make an impact on the next generation by donating to our 50th Anniversary Legacy Fund. Your donation will help us see young people's lives changed by Jesus.



The Anniversary Challenge

A 50th anniversary deserves a special challenge. Over the years, we have taken on some big challenges. We have cycled to Annecy, walked the Cotswold Way, cycled the English Coast to Coast, and cycled North to South Wales.

To celebrate our 50th Anniversary, we wanted to do something a little different. Across the summer, we will be undertaking five challenges, one for each decade of ministry amongst young people. We are looking for people to join us and help to raise money that will be added to the Legacy Fund. The five challenges take in a variety of activities.

The Big Ride

This is a one day 100 mile cycle challenge covering lots of parts of Gloucestershire.

The River Walk

This 15 mile walk from Tewkesbury Abbey to Gloucester Cathedral follows the River Severn.

The Circular Walk

This 23.6 mile walk around the outskirts of Gloucester takes in Sharpness Canal, Chosen Hill and Robins Wood Hill.

The Big Row

We started in 1974, so we are going to row 197.4km in 24 hours! There will be no water involved, as it will be completed on row machines.

The Big Run

This will be the Cheltenham Half Marathon on 1st September.

Paul and Matt will attempt to take on all five challenges, but they would like other people to join them. Would you consider joining them on one or more of the challenges? If you are interested in find out more, please get in touch with Paul or Matt.

We will be publishing finalised dates on our website by the end of February.



50th Anniversary Celebration

7pm Saturday 20th April 2024

The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane,
Cheltenham. GL51 6NP

Speaker: Neil O'Boyle
British Youth for Christ National Director

Following the celebration, there will be a drinks reception.



Break Away Approaches

February brings with it one of the highlights of our year: our Break Away residential. Break Away is a residential that brings multiple churches together for a fun packed residential at the Poplars in Ledbury. This will be our third year at the centre and on 23rd-25th February, we will be joined by ninety young people and leaders from thirteen churches. During those three years, we have seen the residential grow by over 300%. This year's residential has sold out. We are already working out ways we can grow the residential further in future years so that people don't miss out. This might involve multiple weekends, or an alternative venue.

This year we will be exploring how God brings light in the darkness and takes us to a place of hope. In an age of uncertainty, we want to show young people that God's light shines in the darkness and can bring genuine hope. We will also explore how we can bring light to others.

Last year, around 15 young people made decisions to follow Jesus for the first time, or to rededicate their lives to Him. Our hope is that we will see the same this year. There is a real variety of young people, all

at different stages of faith, or yet to encounter Jesus. Break Away gives young people an amazing space to consider Jesus and what He has done.

Please pray for us as we lead up to and go on the weekend. We would particularly value prayer for the following:

- Health of the team as we approach the weekend.
- Safety for everyone at the weekend.
- Young people to encounter Jesus.
- Energy for the team, especially the catering team who will prepare around 600 meals over the weekend!
- A good atmosphere with groups getting to know each other.



Worship in the barn at last year's Break Away.

Welcome to the team

It has been fantastic to welcome Sarah and Robyn to the team at the start of 2024. Sarah joins us as an administrator for two afternoons a week. In her own words, she is an Admin Ninja who loves to use her admin skills to release other people into their ministries. Sarah will help the team in all aspects of our administration, enabling the youth work team to focus on the work with young people. She is part of Trinity Church in Cheltenham where she is also involved in the youth work.

We have also been joined by Robyn, who will spend the next seven months as a youth work intern. Robyn is from Tewkesbury and attends Encounter Vineyard in Winchcombe. She left sixth form last summer and chose to take a gap year. Since leaving school, Robyn has been on two international mission trips. She is passionate about evangelism and is keen to develop her youth work skills. Robyn started in the deep end, as her first week with us was at the Youth for Christ conference!

We still have vacancies in the team; we are looking for a part-time youth worker. If you want to join the team, please look at the advert later in this newsletter. We are also looking for interns to join us in September 2024.



Top: Sarah joins us our Administrator.
Bottom: Robyn joins the team as an Intern.

Big Questions

In January, Matt and Paul paid our annual visit to the Year 6 RE lessons at St. Mark's Junior School. These lessons focus on discovering evidence for Christianity by interviewing a source. What that really means is the Year 6 students ask us their "Big Questions" connected with faith and life. We find the questions vary slightly each year, and this year there were lots of questions about creation, suffering, and the evidence for God. We were also asked

why we became Christians and why we believe in God.

We had an opportunity to talk about how all these issues impacted us, and our personal experience of them. We also had an opportunity to talk about the hope we have in Jesus.

These lessons build on our regular contact with the school through our fortnightly collective worship sessions.



Together

Devotionals for the whole family

Each week, we send out a free email devotional for the whole family. These devotionals give families the opportunity to read the Bible, pray and discuss things together. The feedback from the families currently using the devotionals has been very positive. To sign up, use the QR code below.

What families are saying about the devotionals

“The Family Devotionals have established a routine of reading the bible, chatting and praying together, so thank you.”

“Thank you for this devotional. We’ve just had the loveliest lunchtime, talking it through and then praying for each other. We’ve not prayed as a family for a very long time, and I don’t think we’ve ever prayed for each other in this way. It was really special to hear my children pray for me.”

“I’m loving the family devotional emails!! They’re brilliant!”



[Sign up](#)

Join Us

Since Hanna moved on in October, we have been considering how best to structure our team. As part of this, we have brought Sarah in as an administrator for one day a week. We are now recruiting a youth worker for two days a week to add to the youth work team, and enabling us to get the team up to the level we need to maintain all our work. This post will help us re-engage with some schools we have not been able to be involved in due to lower staff numbers.

We are looking for someone with a passion for Jesus, and a heart for young people. This could be someone who is an experienced youth worker, or someone who is looking to get into youth work.

If you know of anyone who may be interested, please show them the advert found in this newsletter.

If anyone would like to discuss the role, they should contact Paul, using the details on the back page.



The Big Bash

Christmas is a time to celebrate, and our Big Bash event in December did just that!

We joined together with churches in Gloucester to provide an opportunity for both church and unchurched young people to gather and hear about the true meaning of Christmas.

One youth leader spoke to Matt about how impressed they were with the amount of elements on offer during the evening. The evening really was packed with different elements: games, a photo booth, an inflatable Nerf Gun target game, table football and loads more! This was topped off with smoke machines, indoor fireworks and snow confetti canons as well as a candy floss and popcorn machine. It was a fun-packed evening.

Eighty young people joined with us at Kingfisher Church. Following some songs of worship and a message from Paul, we witnessed five young people respond to the message of hope that Jesus brings.

Matt spoke with a small group of young people and asked if they were part of a Church. One of the young people shared that she didn't go to church because she was an atheist, but She then said that she was pleased to have come along and was really enjoying the evening.

There was much laughter in the office on our first day back after Christmas when the pastor of Kingfisher Church shared a

picture with us of some snow confetti he was still finding in his church! We encouraged him that this was clearly a reminder to continue to pray for the young people that had attended the event!

We are hoping this event is the first of many and already have dates in the diary for an event at Easter and in the Summer as well as another one at Christmas.

THE BIG EASTER BASH

FREE EVENT!

**LIVE MUSIC
FOOD
GAMES**

8TH MARCH **7-9PM**

For School Years 7-13
GLOUCESTER ELIM, GL1 5AN
DOORS OPEN 7PM

In partnership with Gloucestershire **YOUTH FOR CHRIST**

For more info contact matt@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk

Springing up

The Christian Union continues to go well in Bournside School. Last term we saw a jump in the numbers of young people attending each week. The group is made up of young people with a wide experience of faith. Some have chosen to follow Jesus, and others are questioning what they believe and are exploring who Jesus is.

We recently ran a session helping students explore big questions of life and faith. The young people openly talked about their struggles and their experiences of Jesus. Over the coming term we will explore these themes further, allowing the young people to see how Jesus is relevant in every area of their lives.

This academic year, we have been greatly encouraged by the number of Christian Unions springing up in schools across the county. We have heard great stories of how young people are approaching their schools to start Christian Unions and quickly seeing them grow. One of the young people from Underground shared how the CU he started just before Christmas has already grown to fifteen students. Amazingly, this is not a sixth form student, but a student in Year 9. Every time we hear of a student who is starting a Christian Union, we are giving them our Yetti resources to help them.

Praying for change

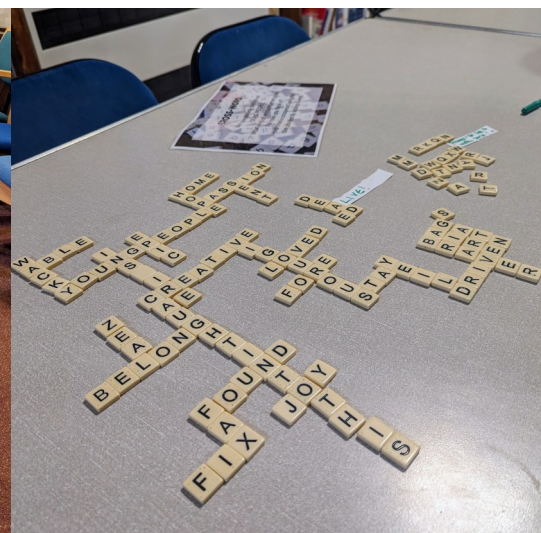
We love working alongside churches as we seek to reach young people and see them changed by Jesus. An increasing number of connections and relationships have been formed in Gloucester.

In January, we joined with churches throughout Gloucester to coordinate an event to pray for young people in the city. We have reached a time when church engagement with young people is at an all time low. Only 20% of churches have four or more young people, and only 8% of young people view the church positively. Yet there is hope, as 36% of young people

want someone to share about their faith with them. Now is a good time to get on our knees in prayer.

The evening consisted of prayer, worship, prayer stations, a testimony from a young person and as encouraging words of hope that by working together, we can make a change.

In the preceding weeks, Matt gathered prayers from the young people at St. Catharine's, and it was wonderful to see these being read out by people of all ages as part of the evening.





Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

Youth Worker

(Part time 0.4 FTE)

We are looking for an energetic and collaborative individual to work with young people in Gloucestershire. You will be involved in our existing youth ministry across Cheltenham and Gloucester. You will be involved in developing our schools' ministry and starting new initiatives. This role has the flexibility to use and develop your skills and gifts.

You may be an experienced youth worker or just beginning your youth work journey. 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 (pro rata) per annum, depending on experience and qualification.

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

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

Youth for Christ Gloucestershire is a registered charity: 1163587





Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

Internships

Are you considering taking a year out, either in 2024/5 or later?

Do you want to see young people's lives changed by Jesus?

Do you have a heart for evangelism?

We are recruiting for gap year volunteers for the next academic year. Whether you are about to finish school or university, we can offer you an experience that will change you.

Set a year aside to make a difference and be changed.

To explore what a year out could look like scan the QR code.



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 Monday and Thursday morning at 9.30am 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, so, 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.

February

4th Paul Preaching at CNC/
Emmanuel
Matt sharing at Holy Apostles
5th Youth Workers prayer
10th Paul Speaking at Swindon
Youth for Christ Residential
11th Paul preaching at Hesters Way
Baptist Church
20th Gloucester Youth Workers
23rd-25th Break Away

March

8th Big Bash
11th Youth Workers prayer
19th Gloucester Youth Workers
24th Paul preaching at C3

April

15th Youth Workers prayer
16th Gloucester Youth Workers
20th 50 Year Celebration
28th Paul preaching in Norton St.
Philips

Donate by text

Text YOUTH followed by your donation amount to 70490 to give that amount. E.g. YOUTH20 to donate £20
Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message.



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 to the right.



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