



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

Update

October 2023

Best weekend ever



In October, we held our first Living Beyond residential in Chepstow. Seventeen young people joined as we explored the importance of putting Jesus at the centre of our lives. We also looked at how we can be more effective in sharing our faith with others.

The weekend was packed full of sessions exploring the theme along with various prayer activities and worship. The young people also enjoyed various games

including ultimate frisbee and a fantastic campfire.

It was a special residential for lots of reasons. We had young people from a variety of Cheltenham and Gloucester churches, many of whom come to Underground. Two young people from Taunton joined us along with team members from Taunton Youth for Christ, and two more young people came from London. Even though many of the young people didn't know each other, there was a great atmosphere. The young people quickly built strong and supportive



The Living Beyond Team



The bonfire at the residential.

relationships. As we explored the theme together, they were quick to encourage one another and felt comfortable worshipping together.

“I just want to say a massive thank you for making this weekend one of the best weekends of my life. I have been so blessed to be able to worship Jesus the way I did , fight my biggest anxiety and make some Christian friends.”

A number of young people were incredibly anxious about coming to the weekend, but they joined in, and along with the encouragement of others they had a great weekend. It takes courage to go to a weekend when you don't know many people. It is a real testament to the character of the young people that they persevered. Watching the character of the other young people shine through as they welcomed them and made them feel at home was also great to see.

We saw a number of young people really open up about their personal faith, and the challenges they face. The young people also returned home with a greater understanding and confidence in sharing they faith with their friends.

Residentials make a massive impact on the lives of young people, they may take a huge amount of work, but they are worth every bit of effort.

What young people said about Living Beyond

“I loved Living Beyond. I am now more confident to speak to my friends about Jesus.”

“The Living Beyond weekend was really good as there was fun games, lots of laughs and I deepened my faith with Jesus with amazing talks about evangelism and how to live for Jesus.”

“I felt closer to Jesus after Living Beyond. God has given me more confidence to help bring someone to Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit.”

“I loved the campfire as it reminded me of the beautiful ways God has created us.”



Break Away



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

23rd-25th February 2024

Take a Break Away

The clock is ticking for the early bird discount for our February residential.

Break Away is a fun weekend away for 11-18 year olds (school years 7-13) and their youth leaders from churches across Gloucestershire to explore faith and build community.

The weekend will include playing games (they might get messy), engaging worship, asking big questions, sports, delving into the Bible and taking part in a variety of other fun activities together. Weather permitting, we might have a campfire. The weekend is aimed at anyone who wants to grow in their faith or learn more about life's big questions.

You will get to know others in your youth group and meet groups from churches across the region. You might meet people from school whom 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 also believe it can be fun and exciting.

We will be returning to The Poplars near Ledbury. The Poplars has en-suite

bedrooms. No wet tents and cold muddy showers here!

Anyone between the ages of 11-18 year (school years 7-13) can come as part of a youth group with their youth leaders. If you have no youth group to come with, you can come without a leader but we would ask for an email to be sent to office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk to ensure we have adequate leaders to support you. The Early Bird rate is £90 by 7th November. After this date you pay the regular price of £100. Prices are the same for young people and leaders.

Where finance is a real challenge for you, we would request you contact us in confidence, to discuss how we can help. We would not want a young person to miss out due to finance. We will work with you to see how this can be overcome.

Book with the QR code or at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/youth-for-christ-gloucestershire>



Book here

Moving on

After five years on the team, Hanna has felt the call to a new role and a slightly different area of ministry. From November, she will be working with refugees, providing support and assistance to them as they build a new life. We are sad to see Hanna go, but excited for her as she starts a new chapter. Over the last six months, we have been using Hanna's skills to teach English as a foreign language to three young people with refugee or asylum seeker status. We had been exploring the possibilities of extending this work in schools as well as developing a youth club for young asylum seekers and refugees. It



is no surprise that Hanna now feels that God is moving her in this new direction.

Over the last five years Hanna has been involved in a wide range of our work, developing youth work in South Cheltenham and latterly in St. Luke's; she walked the Cotswold Way, played a key role as we navigated the pandemic, and has been involved in multiple residential. During this time, we have seen her develop and know that we are sending out a capable and willing worker. She will be greatly missed by the team and young people, but we wish her well and look forward to hearing all of her news.

Hanna looks back

After five years, I'm finishing my time at Youth for Christ Gloucestershire. As much as I am looking forward to starting a new challenge, it feels weird to be leaving. I have greatly enjoyed my time here and have seen God do some amazing things in the lives of young people.

When I started, I joined the South Cheltenham team and had opportunity to combine the individual youth groups and move the overall youth work in a new direction.

Surprisingly, we saw a significant increase in numbers during the lockdowns, which continued once we met back in person. Even though the group grew significantly in these times, the young people were great at welcoming new members and making them feel welcome and part of the group. Seeing the young people form strong friendships and meet up in their

spare time was great.

The most encouraging aspect of the group was seeing them take their faith seriously. I saw young people give their lives to Jesus



on weekends away, get baptised, or start to get involved in church life and take on responsibilities.

I also got to mentor a young person struggling with a recent diagnosis. We met up regularly to talk and check in on how they were adjusting to life. I saw her go from a shy and withdrawn individual to an outgoing and confident teenager who supports and encourages others who have been through similar situations. She is outspoken about what is right and is always the first to help a friend in need. This has been wonderful to see.

Over the last year, I have worked with St Luke's in various ways, from supporting and leading the youth group to reestablishing their toddler group and developing their social media. Running a toddler group was completely new to me and challenging at times. Several of the parents have started visiting church off the back of it. One mother had her child christened at St Luke's too! When she had to return to work in September, she mentioned how much the group had meant to her as she hadn't been able to visit one with her first child due to the pandemic. Our toddler group had enabled her to make friends with other parents and spend a morning a week doing something special with her child. She also mentioned how she had taken to going to church for herself and how nice it had been to share that experience with her wider family at the Christening.

In the last few months, I have worked with refugees and asylum seekers, teaching them English, which has been challenging and rewarding. I've been trusted with their stories, asked for advice and been able to show support in practical ways. The

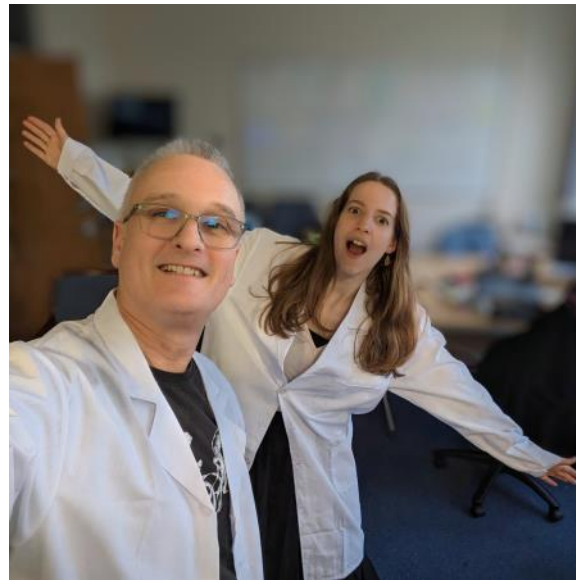
lessons started quietly, coaxing out language and gauging the different levels of each student. As the lessons end, there hasn't been a single week where I haven't been able to laugh with my students and share funny stories, hear about their school lives or if they finally won one of their weekly football matches. All of them have shown an increase in their understanding and use of their English language, mainly due to their hard work and dedication to learning and speaking more.

Sometimes, even small successes can feel huge. I have been teaching one Year 7 student who could barely introduce himself. Due to this, he has been struggling in school and not connecting with his classmates. Early on, I realised he loved cars and incorporated them into our lessons. A few weeks later, his older sister told me he talked with a classmate

about what cars he does and doesn't like on his way home. He wouldn't have had the confidence or ability to do so a few months ago. His sister and I celebrated this as the big win it was.

I have enjoyed and valued my time at Youth for Christ Gloucestershire. When I started, I said that being a youth worker is the best job, and I still stand by that. It is a privilege to walk alongside young people in their faith, listen, support, and point them to God. I was surprised when I felt God had given me a new challenge but excited to take it up. Even though youth work might not be my paid profession anymore, I will always be a youth worker at heart and hope to get involved in it voluntarily once I have settled into my new role.

I look forward to exploring a new calling after being in youth ministry for over six years, and I am leaving with a grateful heart.





Fun and Food in the Park

In August, we once again had the pleasure of working alongside the amazing team at Family Space, providing Holiday Activities and Food (HAF). The HAF programme is designed to provide support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods.

We ran various organized games including football and rebound as well as several water-based games which proved very popular. We also helped serve food and engaged with the many families who attended.

One young person came along for a session but didn't want to be there. We spent some time with them on a toy archery set. After a while, he began to teach younger children how to play. He gradually grew in confidence and left the session having enjoyed themselves. Other families came to make the most of the one good meal that they could enjoy that day without worrying about the cost.

Four sessions were held throughout August, with 100 people attended each of the four days. We have started talking about how we can develop it further for August 2024!



The Big Christmas Bash

Friday 15th December, sees the first Big Christmas Bash take place in Kingfisher Church, Gloucester. The evening will be full of fun, festive cheer, food and chance to explore what Christmas really means.

We are running this in partnership with a

number of Gloucester churches. If you have a youth group in the area, bring them along for a great evening. This is a free event, including the food!

If you are aged 11-18 years come and join us.

FREE EVENT!



THE BIG CHRISTMAS BASH

**15TH
DEC**

7-9PM

**FOOD
GAMES
LIVE MUSIC**

For School years 7-13

KINGFISHER CHURCH, GL1 4NJ
DOORS OPEN 7PM

In partnership with
Youth for Christ Gloucestershire
matt@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**



Showcase and Commissioning

On 16th September, we held a Showcase and Commissioning service. Young people shared stories of how their lives had been changed through our ministry. We also shared stories of the things God has done over the last year. We commissioned all of our staff, volunteers and trustees as they started a new school year. It was great to be joined by a number of people from the church Matt worked with in Hillingdon as we celebrated the start of his ministry in Gloucestershire.

It is an exciting time as we establish a new team, and grow into new areas. If you would like to be involved, we would love

to extend our volunteer team. You could get involved in any of the following areas.

- Schools Collective Worship team
- Residential catering team
- Residential youth and worship team
- Admin volunteers
- Trustees
- Youth work team
- IT team

Get in touch and we can talk about how you could be involved in changing young people's lives.



CHEESE AND WINE EVENING

3rd February
2024

An opportunity to meet the team and hear stories of young people's lives changed by Jesus.
More details to come.



Together

Devotionals for the whole family

During the Spring we launched a pilot scheme of family devotionals which ran over the course of several weeks. After receiving lots of positive feedback we decided to make a few adjustments and create our weekly family devotional resource called 'Together'.

'Together' is a series of weekly emails designed to work with all ages and help families fit Jesus into the busyness of everyday family life. One thing we have added to the resource is a memory verse for each family to learn and be inspired to memorize scripture.

Currently, 20 families have signed up to

receive the email every Sunday which also includes a short bible passage, some discussion questions, and a few activities for the family to do together. Each week's memory verse

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

can also be viewed on our social media platforms.

You can sign up today using the QR code.



Sign up

Gloucester Growth

During the Summer we were approached by St Catharine's Church in Gloucester to help them with their Sunday evening young people's group.

Since September, Matt has enjoyed working with the volunteers, getting to know the young people, and introducing new games including the Youth for Christ game Yetti.

The group is made up of young people who attend church and those who have little to no faith background. It has been

encouraging to see 12-15 young people attend most weeks.

Due to Matt helping with St Catharine's, we have been able to engage with some of the youth workers within Gloucester. Matt and Paul are now part of a monthly group of Gloucester based youth workers and volunteers that meet to share and pray together. In December, we will be working in partnership with them to organise and run a Christmas event for the young people of Gloucester providing an evening of fun, food, music, and a gospel message.

Back to School

September is always a busy time re-establishing work in schools. In her role with St. Luke's, Hanna has restarted the lunchtime Faithfu(e)l club in St John's Primary School. They have been making their way through the big Bible stories and getting to know the characters of the Old Testament. The group started out small; we often had around four young people show up regularly, but now we have at least 15 young people a session. Given the young age of the pupils, it is a fast-paced group, filled with games and activities, during which we tell them the Bible stories and ask for their opinions. We have had great conversations about Jesus, heaven, and how to treat others. It has been encouraging to see the children bring their friends along and engaging in the stories, asking questions, and sharing their opinions.

In September, Matt began leading the Christian Union at Bournside School every Monday at the end of the school day. He is joined by Becca, the Youth Worker at St. Matthew's Church.

We started the term challenging the students to invite their friends along to the group. It has been encouraging to see them take this seriously. A member of the group invited a friend who came at the start of the term, they in turn brought

three friends along the following week! Some young people have a strong faith, whilst others are starting a journey of exploring faith. Recently, we have enjoyed discussing what it means to be generous with our money, gifts and our time as well as playing games, eating snacks and providing space for the students to share and pray together.



The Headteacher at St. Mark's Junior School joining in the fun.

Alongside this work, we have also led Collective Worship in four schools. We have continued our fortnightly sessions in St. Mark's Junior School, and half termly sessions in Shurdington Primary. We also led our first session in Kingsholm Primary, with more to follow later in the year. We finished off the first half term with a session in St. John's Primary in Cheltenham. Our collective worship sessions feature a mixture of games, illustrations, Bible stories, prayer and lots of fun. The teachers are always willing to volunteer, albeit rather reluctantly at points. We want to bring vibrancy and fun to collective worship to make it a valuable learning experience. As we were leaving a school recently, a member of staff stopped us and



said "I love these sessions". We do as well, watching a few hundred children having fun and learning about Jesus is hard to beat!

If you are available in the day, and want to be part of the team, we are looking for volunteers who can get involved in working with us and forming part of our school's team. Get in touch with us using the details on the back page. You could be involved bringing joy to schools and making Jesus relevant.



Growing through service

Over the years, we have seen young people from our young leaders group, Underground, do many different things. Some have been involved in leading Christian Unions, some have taken gap years with churches or other organisations. We recently visited St. Andrew's Church in Churchdown and one of them was leading the worship.

Underground exists to help young people gain the character, confidence and skills needed for them to make an impact around them. The current group consists of twelve young people all between twelve and seventeen years of age. All of them are people who can influence those around them, but we all need some advice and guidance. We don't talk about one leadership style, but look to help each young person find out how God wants to use them and to discover the skills and gifts that God has

given them. Alongside all of this, we seek to help them learn how to share their faith with their friends in a positive and effective way.

One of the newest members of the group has just set up a Christian Union in Crypt School. After approaching the school for permission to start the group, they met for the first time in October, with nine young people turning up for the first session. To help them get off the ground, we gave them a copy of our Yetti game for use at the Christian Union.



Paul and Ian visiting St. Barnabas Church in West Cheltenham.

Another one of the young people, Ian, has started to join Paul when he visits churches. This may involve taking part where appropriate. Ian also shared about his involvement with our

work at our recent Showcase and Commissioning service. Other young people will be exploring other opportunities with other mentors.



Cyprus Summer Camp

This summer Paul and Nia travelled to Cyprus for the Youth for Christ summer camp. It was Cyprus Youth for Christ's first camp since the pandemic, with thirty-eight young people attending from across the island.

There is something very special about going out of your normal environment and sharing Jesus with people. It is both challenging and refreshing. The theme for the week was "Out of the Wild", exploring the grace of God and how that moves us to a place of freedom. Throughout the trip we saw a number of young people make a decision to follow Jesus for the first time. One young person came to the camp from a difficult situation. During the camp they opened up to one of the camp leaders and made a decision to follow Jesus. During a time of worship, they said they felt peace for the first time. Upon their return from camp, the Pastor of the church they attended said that if he had not known this young person had gone to camp, he would want to know what had happened to them as the change in their life was staggering.

Another young person drew pictures during the talks as a way of taking notes. She is an amazing artist and her pictorial notes were a great way for her to process what was being said. Other young people



The visual notes one young person made in one of the talks.

returned from camp sharing about how they had made decisions to follow Jesus. One young person wanted to understand what it meant to "give your life to Jesus". Without a Christian upbringing, it was new language to her. When it was explained that it involved putting Jesus first she began

to understand. The following morning, she chose to give her life to Jesus.

One wonderful aspect of the team was the wide range of nationalities involved. In a team of ten people, ten nationalities were represented. Despite this, and not knowing each other, everyone came together and had one thing in common, a love for Jesus and a desire for young people's lives to be changed by Him.



Paul, and Nia with some of the young people from the camp.

Do you have what it takes to be the ultimate quiz champion?

11TH NOVEMBER
7-9PM

 Gloucestershire
YOUTH FOR CHRIST

 **The Pavillion, Hatherley Lane,
Cheltenham. GL51 6PN**

On Saturday 11th November, the big Youth for Christ Quiz returns. Join us for a night of fun and challenge at The Pavilion on Hatherley Lane. Come as a team (up to 8 people), or come on your own and join a team on the night. Could you be part of the winning team that win the price, or are you more likely to win the evenings wooden spoon. As ever, our expert quiz master and designer is our very own Chair of Trustees, Rod Pellereau. Rod always creates a fun quiz with a little of something for everyone.

Most importantly, we want everyone to

have fun whilst we raise money to help us make a difference in the lives of young people.

Soft drinks and snacks will be available at the quiz.

Entry costs £5 per person. You can pay on the door, or guarantee your place by booking in advance



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

5

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER

100

people fed through HAF each week

20

families signed up to the Together Devotionals

3

young people having TEFL classes

38

young people's lives changed at camp

45

degrees centigrade during the Cyprus summer camp

Christmas is coming



Who wants to think about Christmas puddings in October? Paul does. For the last four years, he has been cooking Christmas puddings to support our

work. Last year, he cooked 130 puddings. He started cooking in September, and has roped Matt in this year. 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/e/CFp97hCFtB> or use the QR code.



Order here



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. They often sell out quickly, so place an order to avoid disappointment.

Diffusers can be ordered via the QR code or

<https://forms.office.com/r/7gBwsH5Wrb>



Order here

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.

November

7th Early Bird deadline for Break Away
11th Quiz night
13th Youth workers prayer
16th Underground

January

8-11th Youth for Christ Conference

February

3rd Cheese and Wine evening
23rd-25th Break Away

December

11th Youth workers prayer
14th Underground
15th The Big Christmas Bash

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 to the right.



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