



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

SEPTEMBER 2026

LATEST NEWS



SEEING YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES
changed by Jesus



“ By the time you read this, I will have moved on from Youth for Christ Gloucestershire. I wanted to thank you all for your support over the last twenty-five years. In 2001, I arrived to take on the role of Centre Director of what was then Cheltenham Youth for Christ. The work had all ceased, funding was down and the centre required a complete rebuild - thanks to you, we sit in a different place today.

We are now a Gloucestershire-based ministry which has over 1000 interactions with young people per month. We have grown from one member of staff to four members of the youth work team, two part-time administrators and a gap year volunteer. We have a strong board of trustees, well able to lead the organisation through the next few months as they seek a new Centre Director. We are also in the strongest position financially that we have ever been in. None of this would have been possible without your faithfulness in prayer, financial support and volunteering.

I have tried to name all those who have volunteered, served as trustees, been part of the staff team or undertaken a gap year over the last twenty-five years, but the list is very long. It highlights that it is truly a team effort.

Besides the youth work in Gloucestershire, we have made an impact across the region and further afield. Through my role with British Youth for Christ, we have been involved in getting three Youth for Christ centres off the ground, undertaken three mission trips, and supported the centres across the South West of England.

Ultimately, the most important thing is the changed lives of young people. I recently met the parents of a young person we were involved with several years ago. The young person had been through an incredibly challenging period, but he had kept his faith. When I introduced myself to his mum, she said she knew about me as her son had talked about me due to the impact our ministry had made on his life.

The other week, I saw Jess, who we helped with job applications. Five years later, she is in the same job and loving it. I frequently bump into young people who have been impacted by our ministry over the last twenty-five years.

The impact on all these young people has been made possible by you. Thank you for being the change makers these young people needed.

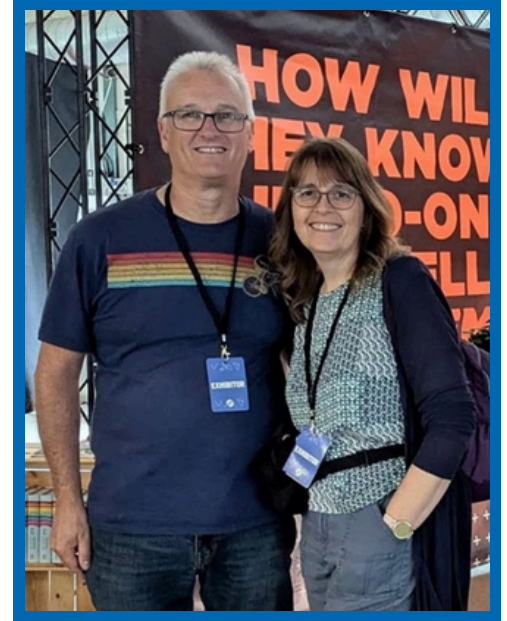
As I move on and step back, my heart for those outside the family of God remains just as strong. The heart of Youth for Christ has always been for those outside of the church, and it will always remain so. The greatest satisfaction I have received in this ministry is seeing a young person discover what Jesus has done for them, and seeing their lives transformed. I pray that the best years for the ministry are ahead. I look forward to hearing of more stories in the future of young people's lives changed by Jesus.

Please keep up the good work. Cheer loudly from the sidelines, give generously, volunteer enthusiastically, for without you, the team is weaker.

Thank you for your support, without you, the last twenty-five years would have been a lot less fun and nowhere near as fruitful. It has been a privilege and honour to lead such an amazing ministry and to be part of the wider Youth for Christ family.

Going forward, I have taken up the reins of Church leader for Tewkesbury Baptist Church. The role will be different, but the heart of the church is missional.

Over the years I have got to know many of you well. If you wish to keep in touch, or want to come and join me for my induction, the details are below. If you are ever in Tewkesbury on a Sunday morning, feel free to pay us a visit and receive a warm welcome.



”

- Paul

Induction Service information:

Saturday 26th September | 2:30pm | Tewkesbury Baptist Church
Station Road, Tewkesbury, GL20 5DR

Paul's new contact information:

Phone: 07855 408068 Email: paul.bennett@tewkbaptist.org.uk

LOOKING FORWARD



Thank you to all those who attended our 'Thank You Evenings' in July, where we celebrated everyone's contributions to the organisation over the years. We also recognised all that Paul, Nia and the family have contributed during the past 25 years.

As we look to the future, we are excited for all that God has in store for Youth For Christ Gloucestershire. Matt has accepted the role of Interim Director and will be leading the team until the recruitment process for a new Centre Director is complete. Please pray for Matt and for the trustees as they conduct this process.

"It's business as usual"
- Matt

TERM IN NUMBERS

MAY - AUGUST

5

STAFF
BIRTHDAYS

22

CHURCHES WE'VE
CONNECTED WITH

6

ICE CREAMS
EATEN IN
CYPRUS

15

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB
CONNECTIONS

60

SMOOTHIES
SERVED AT
BARNFEST

210

YEAR 6'S INVOLVED IN
TRANSITION LESSONS

1552

INTERACTIONS
WITH YOUNG
PEOPLE

SPILL THE BEANS



An update from Bean



“It’s honestly hard to believe that I’ve already been working with Youth For Christ Gloucestershire for four months! And what a four months it’s been - full of new experiences, new friendships, plenty of learning, lots of laughter and, most importantly, incredible opportunities to see God at work in the lives of young people.

One of the biggest parts of these first few months has been settling into my role as the youth worker at Hesters Way Baptist Church. It’s been a real privilege to become part of the church community and to be continually inspired by their desire to serve the wider Hesters Way community. I’ve loved getting to know the young people too - they’re a brilliant bunch!



Alongside this, I’ve been getting to grips with the rhythms - and wonderfully chaotic energy - of YFC Gloucestershire office, events and team life. The last four months have been packed with The Big Bash in Gloucester, youth clubs, afterschool sessions, secondary school preparation sessions, fun days and Barnfest ...to name just a few. It’s been brilliant getting to know the team, working hard, having loads of fun and, most importantly, helping create spaces where young people can be themselves, make friends, have a laugh and encounter Jesus.



One of the biggest adventures so far was travelling to Cyprus and serving alongside Youth For Christ Cyprus at their summer camp. What an experience! From working alongside an amazing team to spending time with young people and seeing God move in some really special ways, it’s definitely something I won’t forget anytime soon. (See later on in this newsletter for more on Cyprus!)

But perhaps the biggest highlight of all has been seeing young people choose to follow Jesus for the first time. There really aren’t many things more exciting than watching a young person encounter Jesus and decide they want to follow Him. I’m incredibly grateful that God has allowed me to play even a small part in those stories - what a privilege!



Four months in, I’m definitely still learning and figuring things out, but I’m absolutely loving it! As we head into a new school year, there’s so much to look forward to, and I’m excited to see what God has in store.

A huge “thank you” to God for an incredible first four months. I’m so excited for the next chapter with YFC Gloucestershire - let’s see what He does next! ” -Bean

TRANSITION LESSONS

In July, we visited primary schools to lead transition assemblies - we went to St Marks Junior School, Shurdington Primary, Christchurch Primary, and Holy Trinity Primary School.

We use the It's Your Move Year 6 Transition books from Scripture Union England and Wales, which aim to prepare the students for change and include practical tips for moving to secondary school.

We started by exploring how the young people feel about the change they are facing, including both the fears and excitement. We then shared practical tips around moving to secondary school - from what equipment to pack, to how to navigate friendships, and even how to tie a tie!

We also got to share the story of Jesus calming the storm - and explore how Jesus is always with us, and how He can help us as we face times of uncertainty.

Thanks to the schools for having us!

Estella

from Bournside CU

Estella joined us for work experience in July. We know her from the Christian Union we run at Bournside Secondary School. She helped with a variety of activities and it was great to have her with us!





FREE EVENT

**GATHER WITH OTHER CU'S FROM
SCHOOLS ACROSS GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**PRAY FOR YOUR SCHOOL
ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER
WORSHIP TOGETHER
GET READY TO SEE GOD MOVE IN YOUR SCHOOL**

**FIRST MEETING:
25TH SEPTEMBER 2026, 7PM-9PM
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, GL3 2JT**



**Gloucestershire
YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

**FOR MORE INFO, EMAIL
OFFICE@YFCGLOUCESTERSHIRE.CO.UK**

BARNFEST 2026

In June, the team had the privilege of being invited to head up the youth programme at Barnfest. The whole weekend was centered around hope.



800 individuals came over the weekend, with 64 churches represented.

WHAT DID WE GET UP TO?

On Friday evening, we hosted sessions for youth and young adults. We gathered for an evening meeting with guest speaker Martin Saunders, followed by an after-hours event of Party Bingo.

On Saturday, we hosted an open youth drop-in, with a range of activities including 9-Square, chilled board games in the marquee, Gaming Cubes and a football cage. We also ran a Smoothie Hour from 2-3pm, serving free smoothies to all the young people at Barnfest. This was a fantastic opportunity to connect with young people and build relationships in a relaxed setting. Paul also led a seminar exploring the theme of 'Hope in an Anxious Generation'.

On Saturday evening and Sunday morning, we led youth-specific sessions filled with games, challenges, times of worship and opportunities for prayer. These sessions also featured inspiring talks from Matt on 'Understanding Biblical Hope' and Sarah on 'Living with Biblical Hope in the Everyday'.



We prayed for a number of young people on Saturday evening including one young person who was struggling to be a 24/7 Christian and life was really weighing her down. As we finished praying for her there was a visible lightness to her appearance as a smile lit up her face. We saw her on the Sunday morning, and she spoke of how good she was feeling following the previous evening. It was encouraging to see her at the Big Bash event a week later and to hear her talking much more positively about life and her faith in God!



Huge thanks to Counties for having us - we loved being involved, and we loved getting to know the young people who came along. We are very excited to say that we will be back for Barnfest 2027!

HOLIDAY CLUB

During August, Matt and Laura helped run a Holiday Club at C3 Church, Cheltenham - one of our supporting churches and the church that Laura is interning with.

Matt was invited a year ago to work alongside staff and volunteers from the church to help plan and resource this year's holiday club, in the hope the church would feel equipped to continue it on in future years.

feedback from the week...

One child turned down going to Alton Towers to come to holiday club because they were enjoying it so much!

One child had to be persuaded to come on day one. On day two they had to be encouraged but on day three they were overexcited and couldn't wait to get out of the house and attend.

One parent commented how well their child (who has some additional needs) had settled when usually they find things all too much. They were beyond grateful.

This year's theme was Under the Sea which included Laura dressing up as an octopus!

During the week the team helped the children understand that God can be trusted, that God is powerful, that He is merciful and that He is loving. They unpacked stories including Noah, Moses and the Red Sea, Jonah and the Whale, and Peter walking on water.

The gospel message was presented and the children were encouraged to put their faith in God. Over the course of the week, 15 children became friends with Jesus.

The church are committed to running another holiday club in 2027!



Quiz-mas

Christmas trivia, friendly rivalry, great prizes, and festive fun!



Join us and battle for the ultimate festive bragging rights. Teams welcome, solo players too!

7-9pm
5th December



Scan to get
your tickets!



The Pavilion
GL51 6PN



Big Weekender

12th - 14th February 2027

The Poplars, HR8 1QY

BOOKINGS ARE OPEN

The Big Weekender 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 is aimed at anyone who wants to grow in their faith or discover more about who Jesus is.

£125 per person
or £110 with our early bird discount,
which ends 29th November

SECURE YOUR SPOT:

[www.tickettailor.com/events/
youthforchristgloucestershire/2326968](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/youthforchristgloucestershire/2326968)

LAURA AT LIMITLESS

Around 6,000 young people gathered at Limitless Festival this summer, with 554 making a first-time commitment to Jesus!

Laura had the opportunity to serve alongside Youth for Christ workers from all around the UK in the Drop In venue, a space where young people could relax, play games and take part in workshops and crafts. It was also a space where the team could **build relationships with young people and create opportunities for meaningful conversations about faith.** From pool and air hockey tables to gaming cubes, rap, drama and dance workshops, there was something for everyone!

Each evening, the venue also hosted events such as Party Bingo and Open Mic nights, bringing everyone together for lots of fun and singing.

“Seeing so many young people encounter Jesus and hearing from them their experiences made every long day completely worth it!”

-Laura



AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

We began running our after school club in conjunction with Leckhampton Baptist Church in September 2025. The club has continued to grow - in fact, since May we have interacted with 14 different young people through the group. We've even introduced them to 9-Square!

They continue to enjoy the various activities, games and snacks that we offer and we have begun introducing Jesus to them.

Our prayer is that we might see some of them attend our Big Weekender in February. Please join with us in praying for these young people and the club.

STAY CONNECTED WITH US

Don't miss out!

We regularly share the latest updates, events, news and behind-the-scenes moments on our social media channels.



Facebook

[Facebook.com/YFCGloucestershire](https://www.facebook.com/YFCGloucestershire)



Instagram

@YFCGlos

Give us a follow & stay connected!

HAF YMCA Cheltenham

Matt and Laura ran activities (including 9-Square) at YMCA Cheltenham's HAF Provision.

YMCA Cheltenham understand the pressure feeding a family and providing activities can have, and so aim to support families in what is often an isolating time; where the change of rhythm to family life can affect the whole family's well-being. At HAF, children and their families can enjoy enriching activities in a safe, inclusive environment.

It was also great to have one of our young people, Aaron, join the team - he had just finished his GCSEs and came along to lend a hand.



FAREWELL BECCA

At the end of August, we also said goodbye to Becca Jackman, one of our youth workers.

Becca is leaving her role to train to become a secondary school science teacher. Despite the fact that she has not been with us long, she has been a big asset and we have loved having her as part of the team. We will miss her!

Here is what she had to say as she reflected on her time with us and with Hillview Church:

“As I come to the end of my time in this role, I am incredibly grateful for the year I have had. It has been such a privilege to work across two great places,

alongside two amazing teams, and to be part of all that God is doing through Youth For Christ Gloucestershire and Hillview Church.

One of the things I have loved most has been the variety of the role. From weekly activities at Hillview, to the afterschool club at Leckhampton, to school collective worships, to residential weekends away; every week has brought new opportunities to connect with young people, build relationships and share the hope of Jesus. I have particularly loved seeing the different ways God works through these opportunities. Sometimes it has been through small, quiet moments – a conversation, a question or a subtle change in a young person's perspective. At other times, it has been through big declarations of faith and seeing young people choose to put their trust in Jesus. Being able to witness both has been such a joy.

I will very much miss working in this role and being part of an organisation with such a strong heart for young people. I am so thankful for the people I have worked alongside and everything I have learnt throughout the year. I'm excited to keep following all that the team are doing, celebrating the ways God continues to work through them, and joining them again as a volunteer in the future. ” *-Becca*

BIG BASH

15 CHURCHES 115 YOUNG PEOPLE

In July we hosted the Big Bash at Kendal Road Baptist Church. Laura Hancock from National Youth for Christ came and spoke about what it means to have the peace of Jesus. Young people gathered to worship and there was a real sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit!

“It was such a pleasure, and a total joy, to see the hard work that you guys put in and the amazing job you are doing of bringing churches together! It was brilliant!”

-Laura Hancock

DECEMBER
FRIDAY | 11 | 7-9PM
KINGFISHER CHURCH | GL1 4NJ



OPPORTUNITIES

WORK FOR US

YOUTH WORKER (F/T) - we are looking for an energetic and collaborative individual to work with young people. They will be involved in the existing youth ministry within Hillview Church and developing the work of Youth For Christ Gloucestershire.

The worker will be responsible for leading the youth work team within the church and developing the existing ministry, as well as being part of the Youth For Christ team, involved in our schools ministry and starting new initiatives.

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

Salary: £26-28,000 per annum, depending on experience and qualifications.

For more information, contact Matt Craig on 07857 670232 or office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk

Closing date: Sunday 13th September 2026

There is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder is a practicing Christian and will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure. You must have the right to work within the United Kingdom.

THE YEAR OUT: 'YEP'

Looking for a gap year that will help you grow in evangelism and engage with young people?

If the answer is "YEP", then you're in the right place!



The Young Evangelist Programme (YEP) is a one year immersive training and ministry experience for 18-25s who feel called to share Jesus with young people. The programme will equip a new generation of evangelists to reach young people nationally, regionally, and locally - combining hands on mission, structured training, and intentional discipleship.

The year will run from September to July, and applications are open for September 2027.

The heart of the programme is simple: to raise confident, skilled, spiritually grounded evangelists who can communicate the gospel to today's youth culture with clarity, compassion, and creativity.

For more information, head to their website.

 **[YFC.CO.UK/YEP](https://yfc.co.uk/yep)**

VOLUNTEERING

Do you have some time in the week that you could use to help us?

It could look like coming into the office during the week to help us with tasks, or helping at our events, such as weekends away or fundraisers. We would love to work with you to see how you can fit in the team. If you are interested, please get in touch with Matt.

TRUSTEE

Do you have the skills that we are looking for to support our mission?

Our trustees play a key role in working with the team to ensure we fulfil our mission - to see young people changed by Jesus. If you have a heart for this mission, and think your skills could be used, we'd love to have a conversation.

The trustees meet 10 times throughout the year, with some responsibilities in between meetings. At the moment, we are particularly looking for people with finance or IT skills. You may have experience of governance in a different context, or none whatsoever: that is ok! We can support you in your role to ensure your skills are used well for the organisation. If you would like to find out more or start exploring whether this is your next step, please get in touch with Matt.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Looking for somewhere to complete work experience?

By the end of the year, we will have had three young people with us for work experience. All for a week, they have helped us out in the office, gone with us to primary schools and spent time in our afterschool club.

If this is something you are interested in, get in touch with Matt to talk it through.

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT

Yes, we said it, in September...

REED DIFFUSERS

£12

**hand made by
the staff team**

REFILL AND SAVE

Already lucky enough to have one?

Get it refilled for £8

Bring us your old bottle and we will replace it, along with a full set of new reeds.

All profits go towards supporting our mission.
Contact us to order and arrange collection.



Paul & Bean

CYPRUS YFC CAMP



“ This summer, Paul and I had the privilege of travelling to Cyprus to partner with Youth For Christ Cyprus at their summer camp. It was such a joy to spend time with an amazing team, serve the young people and, most of all, see God at work throughout the week.

Paul had the opportunity to be the camp speaker, sharing a message of hope in Jesus and encouraging the young people to think about what it looks like to live out their faith in Jesus in their schools and colleges. I was there to partner with the team in a few different ways — facilitating the times of sung worship, running a couple of wild and energetic games, and providing pastoral support and encouragement for some of the lads.

One of the most beautiful parts of the week was seeing some of the young people make decisions to follow Jesus. One moment in particular really stayed with me. There was a girl whose English wasn't great, so we found ourselves having conversations about Jesus with the help of translation apps! Despite the language barrier, God was clearly at work, and it was incredibly special to hear that she responded to the message of the gospel on the last evening.

There were also opportunities to spend time with young people who were struggling with their mental health and facing difficult things in their lives. We were able to listen, encourage them and point them towards God — reminding them that they don't have to face everything alone, and that they can ask God for His help in the middle of their struggles.

Of course, it wouldn't be a summer camp without a few memorable moments! The funniest — and perhaps slightly questionable — moment came when I found myself shut inside a pitch-black steel container up in the mountains, while the young people were sent off on a scavenger hunt to find us. There was also some sort of creature moving around in the darkness with me, which definitely added to the experience! Unfortunately, the young people weren't particularly good at the game, and I ended up stuck in that box for an hour and a half. Not exactly the glamorous side of mission work!

We're incredibly thankful for the new friendships we made with the Youth For Christ Cyprus team and for the opportunity to partner with them in what God is doing among young people in Cyprus.

But above everything else, we're thankful that God was so incredibly faithful throughout the entire trip. He protected us, met with us, gave us opportunities to share His love, and worked in the lives of young people in ways that we could see — and in many ways that we probably won't fully understand this side of heaven.

Thank you to everyone who prayed for us, supported us and helped make the trip possible. We came home encouraged, grateful and reminded once again that God is at work, and He is faithful. ” - Bean

FOCUS TOUR

Connecting, Encouraging & Sharing

In June, our team had the opportunity to attend Focus Tour - a one-day Youth for Christ event that takes place in each region, bringing together the relevant local centres and members of the National team. It's an important mid-year connection point for centres across the country.

While our annual Conference in January brings us together nationally, Focus Tour provides an opportunity to reconnect, be encouraged and share what God is doing in our different local centres throughout the year. The day is a great mix of worship, encouragement, prayer and practical input, all designed to strengthen our relationships with one another and help us learn from each other.

Members of the national team also spend time sharing updates on the wider organisation's strategy and vision, as well as highlighting new developments and opportunities. It's helpful to hear the bigger picture and understand how the work happening in our local centre connects with the wider vision.

For us, one of the most encouraging parts of the day was having time to connect with other local centre workers. Hearing stories of how God is moving in different communities is always inspiring, and it's a real reminder that, although each centre has its own unique opportunities and challenges, we are part of something much bigger.

There was also plenty of opportunity to share ideas and practical tips from our day-to-day experience. Those conversations are invaluable - sometimes a simple idea or piece of encouragement from another centre can make a real difference when we return home and put it into practice.

We came away from Focus Tour feeling encouraged, refreshed and better connected, with lots to reflect on and bring back to our own centre. We're grateful for these opportunities to pause, look at the bigger picture, celebrate what God is doing and continue learning from one another as we serve our local communities.

RESOURCES

FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM

Did you know that National Youth For Christ have resources that are all about equipping you and your team for youth work in your church, local schools and wider community? Check them out!

[RESOURCES.YFC.CO.UK](https://resources.yfc.co.uk)



GIVING

*WHAT DIFFERENCE
COULD YOU MAKE?*

Help us reach more young people.

Every young person deserves the opportunity to be heard, to be given support, and to discover the difference Jesus can make to their life.

Through our youth work, we meet young people where they are – in schools, churches, communities and at events – building trusted relationships and creating opportunities for them to explore faith, ask questions, and uncover the difference Jesus makes.

Your gift can help make this possible.

Whether it's helping us run a youth event, supporting work in local schools, or enabling more opportunities to spend time with young people, every donation helps us continue investing in the young people of Gloucestershire.

Give today and make a difference.

Your generosity enables our team to keep showing up, building relationships, and sharing the hope of Jesus with young people in our local community.

£10 each month
**makes a monthly
collective worship
session possible**

£25 each month
**supports an
outreach youth club**

£50 each month
**can help a young
person receive
weekly mentoring**

HOW TO GIVE

HEAD TO OUR WEBSITE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.YFC.CO.UK/DONATE



Choose to donate on a monthly basis or as a one-off

If you are a UK tax payer, you can also add Gift Aid - which boosts your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate

DONATE BY TEXT

Text YOUTH followed by your donation to

704090

For example: YOUTH20 to donate £20

Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message

STANDING ORDER FORM

Email office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk

or call 0333 0419356

to contact us about receiving a standing order form

Thank you for partnering with us. Every gift makes a difference.

**Together, we can help more young people's lives
be changed by Jesus.**

THE TEAM

Sarah



Administrator

Matt



Interim Director

Geraldine



Finance Officer

Laura



Youth Work Intern

Bean



Youth Worker

Scan the QR code to find out more



Or visit: linktr.ee/YouthforChristGloucestershire

Thank you for all your support!



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

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