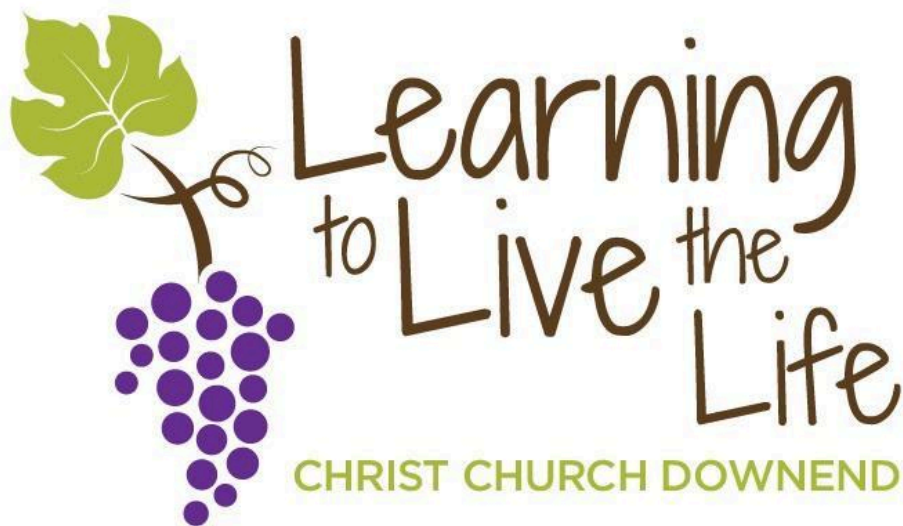


Growing Younger



Investing in the next Generation

Case for Support

Who are we?

Christ Church Downend is a growing Anglican Church in a Parish of 23,410 (according to 2021 census) in East Bristol. The Parish is almost entirely residential with many young families and a strong sense of community. Our church vision 'Learning to live the Jesus life' has three aspirations: to grow deeper - in our relationship with God, wider - in our engagement with the community, and younger - as we witness to the emerging generation.

We have a committed and visionary congregation of all ages with a typical Sunday attendance of 150 adults and 25 children/young people across our services. We are outwardly focused with Bubble Church, Messy events around major festivals, a parent and toddler group, chaplaincy to local care homes and a weekly Warm Space café. We have good links within the local community and with other churches in the area.

As part of our 'Growing Younger' aspiration we are seeking to employ a part time youth worker to enable us to expand our reach to young people across the community and to develop our existing youth work provision. Until this point we have relied heavily on volunteer capacity, but to enable us to realise our potential we firmly believe that a youth work appointment is a vital next step.

Background

In recent years we have employed a part time Children's worker whose main focus has been on our Sunday children's provision, parent and toddlers group and one off community events. Since June 2024 we have also employed a 'Growing Faith' chaplain to engage with local primary schools and enhance church and school links. They are already actively serving 6 of the schools in the parish. Meanwhile our work amongst young people is growing and links with the local secondary school are being strengthened. The appointment of a youth worker will increase our capacity to impact more young lives and serve the local community.



A clear need

There is very little Christian youth provision in the local area as many of the other churches immediately local to us do not have the capacity to meaningfully engage with young people due to their elderly congregations. Since Covid many young people have become more insular and lack confidence in engaging with their peers. Yet there is a real longing for community and a sense of belonging, which is something that the Church can offer. When the current volunteer youth team was established in Autumn 2024, we had a couple of youth sessions where only 2 or 3 young people turned up. Now we regularly get 10-12 young people and they are inviting their friends. We have contact with 20-25 young people on a regular basis and the demographic of the Parish means there is so much more scope to expand. Meanwhile the local secondary school is crying out for support with delivering RE lessons around contemporary issues and developing a stronger partnership. Approximately

17% of the population are between 5 and 19 years old. There are pockets of deprivation in the north of the parish, close to the Parish Church and Youth Hub.

Youth Provision – now and in the future

Christ Church currently has two regular weekly activities for young people. An open youth club on a Thursday evening, and a discipleship and teaching group on a Sunday morning during our main service of worship. Each group caters for young people age 10-17 and sessions take place in our purpose built 'Youth Hub' which was developed 10 years ago as a clear sign of our commitment to ministry amongst young people. Young people are also encouraged to serve as part of the wider church family and to participate in Christian residential holidays. They take a full role in supporting our Church Community Fun Days and attend The Mix, a multi-denominational youth event run by the Mullers Trust. All activities are currently run by volunteers including members of the clergy team.



As the group grows both numerically and in depth of faith, we plan to offer a youth home group where young people can go deeper in their understanding and engagement with Christian faith. We would like to develop outreach to engage more widely with young people in the local community, and to take up the invitations coming from the local secondary school to partner with them in creative ways. Through the provision of a youth worker our capacity will be increased and we will be able to offer youth work provision which has greater depth and reach.

We are in discussion with Waterbrook Church nearby about the possibility of partnering with them in this youth outreach.

'Being part of the youth group at Christ Church has really helped me grow in my faith. Now I'm starting to invite my friends.' Daniel age 13

The Youth Worker Role

The main goals of the project are threefold:

- 1) To develop the existing youth ministry - enabling young people to grow in faith, and equipping and supporting volunteer leaders.
- 2) To initiate outreach initiatives engaging with young people in the local community to enable them to explore the claims of Jesus for themselves
- 3) To develop meaningful links with the local secondary school and year 6 students in Primary Schools, to both serve the schools themselves and support young people in exploring faith and navigating life.

This role will be part time, 16-20 hours a week. A full role description can be found [here](#)

Within the staff team at Christ Church we have two clergy with a passion for effective youth ministry and vast experience as youth practitioners. This means that any youth worker will have good support and mentoring in their role.

How will this be funded?

Christ Church is committed to the 'Growing Younger' aspiration and has set up a fund which will support the ministry costs of our Children's Worker, Growing Faith Chaplain and a potential Youth Worker.

In terms of specific youth worker funding, the proposed costs can be broken down as follows:

Salary over 3 years including an inflationary increase: £39,250

Add on costs (NIC and Pension): £3,000

Monthly expenses: Average £50 per month - £1800

Training expenses: £200 per year - £600

Total 3 year budget: £44,650

Of the total funds raised to date, the following has been allocated specifically to the youth worker pot:

Mullers Youth Outreach Fund - £3,000

Co-op Community Grant - £3,000 in hand

Christ Church Legacy allocation - £5,000

Christ Church Gift Day 2025 - £16,000

Total allocated/received for youth worker post to date: £27,000

Leaving a shortfall of £17,650 which we hope to make up through grant funding applications.



Your support will enable us to expand our reach and help many more young people discover the fulness of life Jesus offers.