

growing faith

Newsletter June 2023



A positive cornucopia

What lurks within this month's newsletter? Some great stories about what Growing Faith looks like in real life, including a couple of Hubs, (feel free to use these in your own talks for inspiration) ... an insight into the Strategic Leaders' Programme from a participant... updates on research, FLOURISH, Networks... and a few Save the Dates for good measure. Top photo is from the first GF Strategic Leaders' Programme Residential.



Growing Faith Stories

A gladsome glimpse of school, church and a national movement working together with young people at the centre, from school chaplain Megane Ranger at the Magnus Academy, Newark:

A student had never really gotten involved with any Christian activity in school until the week of Thy Kingdom Come.

As I was preparing, they were reading the prayer station slides and asking questions about what they meant. There was one that simply told the gospel and their response was 'I think I need more of God in my life.' I told them they should think about coming to the BIG event in the marquee the following day.

The next day, they didn't show up. We were praying to thank God for all he had done and then they showed up. Someone from a local church prayed for them and then they left.

A few minutes later they came back and asked if I had a Bible they could have. I said of course and they took it and started reading it there and then!

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[Tea and Toast Dinting Church](#) Derby Diocese: check out this video story of how one church (actually, one of the Growing Faith Hubs, but that came later) meets 70 young people weekly

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Jenny Irvine from Coventry Diocese writes:

Highlights are the Coventry DBE Alive events at Stoneleigh in June bringing together schools across the Diocese for a worship event, and then I look forward to working with some excellent leaders across the Diocese as we develop New Worshipping Communities with children and young people central. I am delighted to be working with Rev. Sarah Ashelby (currently on the Growing Faith Leadership Course) and have valued meeting with Lou Peet (Chaplain at the C of E Secondary school). Following a currently underway restructure, we will be looking to appoint a full time Growing Faith Enabler to Coventry DBF in the near future.

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Revd Stephen Dove from the Northstowe Growing Faith Hub in Ely Diocese writes: During half term, in partnership with the school PTA, we finally finished painting the early years fence, brightening up their play area in colourful stripes of the school colours. We've also set up a brand new 'Rooted Station' in the year 5/6 corridor. A peaceful space away from the busyness of the classroom for reflection, for grounding yourself and for those who are praying people, for prayer. We're looking forward to seeing how it's used and getting lots of pupil feedback to enhance it!

Strategic Leaders' Programme – a participant's reflection



Julia Hill is Head of Deanery and Parish Support / Acting Head of Mission Support and Ministry Development for Bath and Wells Diocese. She's one of the participants on Cohort 1 of the Growing Faith Strategic Leaders' Programme and reflects on her experience so far:

I think the Growing Faith Strategic Leaders Programme is particularly impactful for me in two ways: it is giving me the safe space and resources to help me reflect on my leadership style (something all too often lacking in a busy diary) and it is continually challenging me to ask what my work means in terms of children and young people. As a member of a diocesan staff team, the second of these is shockingly necessary as I really have very little to do with anyone who might be described as young, never mind a child. So I'm being challenged and supported in asking myself some fairly deep questions about my leadership and work and what needs to shift if we are to authentically enable children and young people to be right at the heart of our churches. Alongside that existential stuff, I'm loving the simple transformative power of a good coaching session, the range of materials that have been intelligently selected, and learning alongside others from a range of contexts. No quick fixes here but some deep learning that I hope will transform me, others, and ultimately our church, which is still learning to be God's church.

If you'd like to find out about joining the next cohort starting in January 2024, please [email Stephen](#).

Networks



Do you know a Young Adult (aged 18-30)? Show them you're thinking of them! Tell them about this one-off event on June 20th. It's designed to encourage and inform them in opportunities which are especially for them:

- Ministry Experience Scheme
- Young Vocations
- Growing Faith Young Adults' Network
- Mentor Directory

More info and sign-up details here: [YA event.pdf](#) [Email Hannah](#) with any queries

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Videos on volunteering

Growing Faith networks friends have kindly contributed to this short set of videos about volunteering for your delectation:

- [Why is volunteering important?](#)
- [How do we recruit volunteers?](#)
- [How can we value and recognise volunteers?](#)
- [How do we ensure volunteering is life-giving, faith-deepening and sustainable?](#)
- [Words of wisdom at a time when recruiting volunteers is tricky](#)

Research

The Cranmer Hall / Growing Faith Foundation research conference in July is fully booked and we look forward to hearing from academics in the field of children / youthwork, the leaders of several of our research projects and the Archbishop of York. The idea is to deepen our theology, build a bolder vision for our communities of faith and strengthen our confidence in enabling schools, churches and households to enable faith to grow in children and young people. If you're connected to a theological education institute and would be interested in talking about a Growing Faith conference there in 2024, please do [get in touch](#).

FLOURISH

Plans are being made to co-create the most helpful approach to the amazing opportunity to grow new Christian communities in schools and colleges, known as FLOURISH. 10-12 dioceses have expressed an interest in being involved in the early stages of the work. With so much experience in dioceses already, we look forward to developing this exciting way forward. If you'd like to know more, we'll share through this newsletter as things start to happen, or contact [Andy Wolfe](#) if you just can't wait!

Dates for the diary

Our next online gathering for Diocesan **Growing Faith Champions** is on Sept 13th 2023 and in 2024 they are Jan 17th, May 16th, Sept 18th, all at 11.00-12.30

The **2024 National Education Conference** is Feb 2nd 2024 in London and has a Growing Faith theme – brilliant for those in a strategic role.
Bless you!

Lucy, Stephen, Hannah, Cheryl

The Growing Faith Foundation