

growing faith



January Newsletter

Happy 2024! May it be a humdinger of a year for everyone involved in changing the culture to put children and young people at the heart of things.

Catch up with the aspects of the Growing Faith Foundation that grab you in the newsletter. Can we tempt you with any of the following?

- Big Lunch
- 2024 Research Conference
- Research
- Networks
- Hubs
- Programmes
- Christianity as a global world faith resource
- New team member: Tobi Martins-Ojo

Growing Faith Big Lunch!



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Big Lunch

ST MICHAEL'S PARISH HALL,
ALNWICK,
NE66 1NB

7TH MARCH 2024, 10:30 - 14:00

COMPLETE THE FORM TO REGISTER

We are excited to offer some opportunities to gather as a Growing Faith community throughout this year.

The Ignite Hub, in the Diocese of Newcastle and the Growing Faith team are delighted to invite you and anyone interested in developing a Growing Faith approach to our first ever Big Lunch!

It will be held at St Michael's Parish Hall, Alnwick on Thursday 7th March 2024, from 10:30-14:00.

You can sign up [here](#)!

Please do share with your networks and encourage people to join us. If you would like access to pre-made promotional materials to help us publicise the Lunch, just email growingfaith@churchofengland.org and we will happily share these with you!

If Alnwick is geographically miles from you, we will also be gathering in Nottingham on 19th June and in Somerset in November.

Growing Faith Research Conference at Cuddesdon: 29th-30th May

A TIME TO PLANT AND A TIME TO UPROOT



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The Growing Faith Foundation
Research Conference 2024, co-hosted
by Ripon College, Cuddesdon



29th-30th May 2024



Ripon College, OX44 9EX



We're delighted to launch bookings for the 2024 research conference at Ripon College, Cuddesdon (just outside Oxford). This conference is for everyone involved in Christian ministry and mission among children, young people and families. [Click here](#) for further details and to book your place.

Research Update: Paired Theological Reflection

Quentin Roper has been leading one of the Growing Faith research projects and shares the headlines:

I have been researching the use of paired theological reflection between priests and headteachers, to promote mutuality in mission in the

partnership between church and school. From a range of participants, three particularly helpful and enlightening outcomes have emerged as a consequence of their engagement in the process:

- It enabled them to share a vision about the wider community, including how together they might grow faith*
- Using Lectio Divina to reflect on Luke 8:4-15, one pair began to identify opportunities for providing 'good soil' to families, including offering a place to belong. This was inspired by a desire to 'gather up the loose seed', working collaboratively to tackle a locally identified issue of family isolation*
- It helped to formalise thinking about developing the school as a worshipping community, particularly how to secure parental engagement in opportunities for discipleship*

Research findings from this project will be published in a written report, accompanied by a booklet/guide for participants and facilitators.

A Quick Networks Update



Our new Network, Mental Health & Trauma Awareness launches on the 23rd January. It will be run in collaboration with a number of amazing parachurch organisations, and will be a great opportunity to engage in discussion, raise awareness and identify areas for development and gaps in knowledge. One of the key benefits of this network is connecting colleagues with organisations who have expertise in this field and can offer their own programmes, resources and materials which schools can access to deepen their knowledge of these topics in much greater depth.

To find out more, [click here](#).

To sign up, [click here](#).

Resource from the Gather Movement

We also wanted to share a helpful resource from our friends at the Gather Movement, which might be useful in reframing the thinking around parent and toddler groups, and to help toddler group leaders celebrate the enormous part they play in supporting school readiness. Find out more [here](#).

An Update from our Sheffield Growing Faith Hub



In September, Elise Deput started in her role as Church in School Growing Faith Learning Hub Leader with the aims of supporting existing church in schools in developing their ministry, encouraging new church in schools to form, and gathering learning and insight from both adults and children. Elise began visiting some of the existing church in schools and found that there were both similarities and differences across the diocese, as well as a range of great ideas and resources to share. In November, the first hub gathering took place and was attended by both adults and children. The next hub gathering is set to be in February and will focus on discipleship.

You can read their full January 2024 report [here](#).

18 Growing Faith Hubs now in progress!

Four further Growing Faith Learning Hubs launched on 1 January 2024, taking us to 18 Hubs around the country. The additional Hubs have been made

possible due to the generous funding from the Laing Family Trust. These Hubs were some of the original applicants, which together with the Laing Family Trust we have chosen to fund. Our new Hubs are in:

- Backwell in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, where they will be focusing on developing Pupil Chaplaincy.
- Whipton in the Diocese of Exeter who will be seeking to grow youth provision across church, household and school.
- Forest South Deanery in the Diocese of Gloucester where they will look at alleviating poverty, be that material, spiritual or emotional through connecting church, household and school.
- Sharnbrook Deanery in the Diocese of St Albans where their work will look at collaborative working between rural churches.

Early warning of new Hubs

We are excited to announce that later this year we will be launching another application process for further Hubs to launch in 2025. Look out for more information coming soon.

The Growing Faith Strategic Leaders' Programme



Cohort 1's year culminated on 8th December with a wonderful celebration at Lambeth palace led by +Jonathan Frost, the young people of St Mary

and St John's CE School and the participants themselves. It was joyous to hear of the journey (excuse the cliché) that this first cohort has been on and the incredible impact they are having across church, home and school.

We are looking forward to launching cohort 3 at Church House, Westminster this month on Friday 19th January. Once again, this cohort has brought together an incredible range of leaders representing many diverse settings across the country. We can't wait to get started!

Christianity as a Global World Faith Resource

The 'Christianity as a Global World Faith' resources provide a unique and comprehensive exploration of global Christian perspectives to ensure that schools using the Understanding Christianity resource, and those who do not, can better engage with Christianity as a global world faith using a range of 'ways of knowing' as part of the RE curriculum. These resources aim to broaden pupils' understanding of Christianity within and beyond a localised perspective and embrace its diverse manifestations within the UK and worldwide.

The resources emphasise the importance of cultural humility and sensitivity, encouraging pupils to approach Christian worldviews with an open and respectful mindset. Through various activities, discussions and multimedia elements, pupils actively engage with the narratives, practices, and beliefs of Christians from diverse backgrounds. The resources will be available for all schools in May/June 2024.

Listen to a podcast discussing the resources [here](#).

New Team Member: Tobi Martins-Ojo!



We're hugely looking forward to Tobi joining the team in late January. Tobi has a particular remit to listen to the voice of children and young people and bring their insights into the work of the Foundation. She'll introduce herself in her own words next month.

Every blessing in your valuable ministry alongside children and young people this year

Stephen, Cheryl, Hannah, Elysia, Lucy
The Growing Faith Foundation

Other ways to connect:

Sign up to our [prayer support email](#).

Subscribe to our [newsletter](#).