

# YOUTH & CHILDREN NEWS



DIOCESE OF EDINBURGH

July 2019

## PLAYTIME NATIONAL CONFERENCE

28 September

A day conference in Wigan for toddler group leaders, including workshops on additional needs, working with dads, supporting volunteers and helping parents nurture faith. Organizers say you will come away with:

- Creative and fresh ideas for teaching and unpacking Bible stories in your group
- Renewed vision to empower you
- Insight on how you can share faith with families in your group
- Encouragement from meeting other toddler group leaders

Details and tickets [here](#).



*St Mary's Dalmahoy:  
for more details, see  
page 4*

## THIS EDITION

- PLAY CHURCH NEWS
- THY KINGDOM COME - at St Anne's Dunbar
- ACTIVE YOUTH REPS - at General Synod and the Palace
- A NEW LABYRINTH - at St Mary's Dalmahoy
- SCHOOL CLIMATE STRIKES
- RESOURCES AND TRAINING
- Upcoming summer events

**Playtime**

National Conference 2019

Gathering  
**Momentum**



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## NEW LABYRINTH

I was delighted to be invited to Canada Day celebrations at St Mary's Dalmahoy, where an exciting new project was unveiled in the Rectory garden: this beautiful labyrinth has been lovingly created, and much of the grounds cleared and landscaped to reveal beautiful trees. It is the vision of Rector Christine and her husband, Ben, and it is still unfolding. They hope it will have potential as a resource for youth retreats. If you would like to know more, please contact the church office: [admin@stmarysdalmahoy.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmarysdalmahoy.org.uk)



## BEATING RETREAT



Phoebe Pryce is one of our new under-18 diocesan representatives to the Provincial Youth Committee. Her official duties have so far included speaking at General Synod (see overleaf) and representing the Scottish Episcopal Church at the Beating Retreat and Reception at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Quite a start for a new youth rep!

*Above: pipers and dancers in front of the Palace; Phoebe and Claire ready to meet and greet.*



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# YOUTH REPS AT GENERAL SYNOD

"I want to talk about some of the things that I enjoy doing with church and how to create more opportunities for young people in your church so that they can play their role in the church community and develop their faith. I can speak for myself – but realise that teenagers are as diverse as any other group in our churches.

The first thing is ... we are not the church of the future ... we are the church of today! We enjoy having our voice heard as much as the long-standing church warden.

But you don't need lots of teenagers to involve us. Since we are part of the wider church, we can serve, and read on the *normal* rota, we can pray in the intercessions and be part of the welcoming team ... some may even wish to sit on vestry!

We don't need you to change the services completely – but modern teaching at school means that being told what someone else thinks and not being given a chance to respond can be a bit boring! Give us time to think about your ideas and give us questions to ponder.

Last year at our church, we ran a Glen-style service – it was still recognisable as our normal service, but we asked questions to the congregation, we put together a powerpoint on the readings, we used our own frames of reference for helping people pray – using Jenga

and Hula Hoops to explore our interpretation of Creationtide.

Interactive prayer is easy and gets us moving, gives us a voice, and forces us to interact, even something as simple as this weaving of prayers into the altar frontal during the intercessions.

We've got a small group of young people at our church – but by joining with our Catholic and Baptist neighbours we have a monthly youth group of nearly 20 – meaning we have good friends in all the local churches. On the back of that, we were missing our close-knit group and so we set up a monthly bible study during service – sort of café style with chai tea, treating us like mini-adults and moving away from colouring-in!

Finding ways to help teenagers stay connected to the church family and to their faith when it can be difficult to get to church on Sunday is important – just as you would develop ways to include the housebound, what about thinking of ways for that connection with us to be nurtured. The social side of church remains important if we



have friends – so that weekends away are good places for us to be accepted and loved.

Obviously Glen plays a huge role in our lives once we're at high school, developing our faith and giving us a group of people to share with during the year.

So .. in short ... we are part of the family, we enjoy our faith, we want to interact – whether in the sermon slot, or in prayers, or at home, we want some spaces for ourselves and some that we share with adults on an equal footing.

We are the church ... and we care deeply about living our faith in our generation."

PHOEBE PRYCE

*Above: Woven prayers at St Mark's Portobello*

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# PLAY CHURCH NEWS

ST COLUMBA'S BATHGATE



Rev Christine Barclay writes:

“This photograph was taken on Sunday at our Pentecost at St Columba’s - a family service when we used the Play Church altar. Bishop Callum’s grandad is Bishop Douglas Cameron and he was in the congregation! The second photo was taken at our Mothering Sunday family service when we used the Play Church altar. Someone asked me if we could have Play Church back again at some time in the future... I hope we can!”

The answer is yes! Play Church can certainly make return visits on request. For all up-to-date Play Church information, visit its website page [here](#).

## ST PETER'S LINLITHGOW



FUNDING  
AVAILABLE

Premier reports on an exciting new funding opportunity: “Thousands of pounds is available to help churches to connect better with young people.

The struggle for many churches to connect with young people has been revealed in a new survey.

A poll of more than 800 churches by Allchurches Trust has shown that more than two thirds have five or fewer young people in their worshipping community; but 96% would love to provide more support and activities for them if they had the right skills and resources in place. In light of these findings, the Christian charity has launched a new grants programme, Growing Lives.

It launched this week and makes grants of up to £25,000 to help churches and Christian organisations to connect with children and young people and forge lasting links with families in their area.”

For more information, visit the [Allchurches Growing Lives](#) website.

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## BACK TO SCHOOL WITH GOD

It seems like a long way off, but here's something from Scripture Union: "Back to School with God Sunday marks the start of a new school year. We want to help churches mark this milestone in the lives of children and young people, school staff, parents, grandparents and the whole community through providing resources for an all-age Sunday service which aims to:

- make children, young people, teachers and other staff aware that they are going back to school with God;
- demonstrate that the church family values them, prays for them and cares about their daily life at school;
- challenge Christian pupils and staff to live out their faith in the school context, supporting any Christian witness in the school (such as an SU Group or similar).
- raise awareness of an ongoing need for prayer for local schools.

There is no set date for Back to School with God Sunday – pick a date at the end of August or early September (or whenever your new term starts) that suits you."

Lots of resources are available [here](#).

## YOUTH REPS AT GENERAL SYNOD CONT.D

"Being on the vestry at my church has given me insight as to what type of decision making goes into running a church. I've been involved with discussions on maintenance; planning events; among other things and it's given me a new understanding of what issues require focus. However, I've noticed that the issues that fail to get addressed are the ones that play a larger role in the community and in society as a whole. Is our church doing enough to help those in need? If not, what more can we do? Do people know that they can come to us for help?"

One of the main purposes of the church, in my opinion, is to be a place that people can go to for help. To be a source of charity and support. What we need to look at and spend hours discussing is how we can better fulfill that purpose. I'm not saying that nothing is being done. As I mentioned before: on vestry I've been present in discussions about local organizations and how we can help them that have taken a long time... but not as long as we've spent discussing the colour of radiators.

What I would ask of you is to look at current issues in your own community and in society as a whole and how you can address them. Climate change – are you taking enough green initiatives? Poverty – do you know about local shelters and groups that can give advice to

people who have hit a tough time? Refugees – can you do more to provide a welcoming environment to newcomers? Look at the people – not just in your congregation or your area – that need help. If you cannot find any, look harder. If you're unsure about how you can do more than you currently are then get in touch with non-profit organisations and ask them what needs to be done.

I'm aware that this may sound like a teenager grumbling about boring meetings. And I'm also aware that issues like the colour of radiators do also have a place in being part of a church. But if we only focus on issues like that then we're sticking our heads in the sand and becoming wrapped up in our own little world, while completely ignoring the bigger picture. And if we want to remain relevant in a modern society then that is something we cannot afford to do. So we must set aside time to think about the important issues facing our world today and what God wants us to do about them."

OLIVIA SMITH

It's great to see new children enjoying Play Church with its latest host, St Anne's Dunbar. Visit the church Facebook page for a great video of three youngsters conducting a play church wedding!

"For the next few months we are hosting Play Church! Here are some photos of this morning's launch party, where the young people had several marriages, baptisms and all sorts of other fun! Play Church will be at St Anne's for the next few months - the church is open every day, so do pop in to visit and let your young folk explore!"

# PLAY CHURCH AT ST ANNE'S DUNBAR



*Text and photos from the St Anne's Dunbar Facebook page).*



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# ALPHA SCOTLAND

A message from Alpha Scotland Director, Dez Johnston:

*Here is all the most up to date information on the Alpha Course and our other materials.*

*Here is a link to our Alpha Builder, where you can create new Alpha Courses and preview our newest material: <https://run.alpha.org.uk>*

*We also have Parenting courses! We have material on both parenting children and teenagers. Here is the link to where you will find all the information regarding these courses. <https://themarriagecourses.org/run/the-parenting-courses>*

*If you need any other information you can find it on our website at [alpha.org.uk](http://alpha.org.uk)*

*If you would like more information on youth alpha please contact our Youth Coordinator, Kirsty on [kirsty.lee@alpha.org](mailto:kirsty.lee@alpha.org)*

*If you need any other information on anything else please contact, myself on [dez@alpha.org](mailto:dez@alpha.org)*



Eilidh Proudfoot is the Scotland Lead for the charity Home for Good, which works to inspire, equip and resource people and churches to play their part in caring for vulnerable children.

We discussed the training which she can offer churches in how better to support and nurture fostered and adopted children and their families. I can thoroughly recommend this training, which inspired and challenged me; it also left me feeling much better equipped to respond to the needs of the fostered child in my Sunday school, or the adopted teen in my youth group.

Home for Good can offer free training for churches. Let me know if

you are interested, and I can organize a diocesan training event. Alternatively, fill in a [request form](#) and the bookings team can try and find a time and location to suit your church.

The Home for Good Conference is being held in Stirling on 21 September 2019. Keynote speakers are Krish Kandiah and Kay Cathcart and there will be a range of seminars which are designed to inspire and equip those who currently foster or adopt, those who are considering fostering or adoption, those who are keen to support families, Christian social workers and teachers and Church leaders. There is a free kids and youth programme so book up fast! Follow [this link](#) for details and booking.”

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# THY KINGDOM COME...

PRAYER FOR ALL AT ST ANNE'S DUNBAR



Rev Diana Hall writes: "During the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative this year, at St Anne's Dunbar we held 24 hours of continuous prayer. A team including mixed-mode ordinand Beki Cansdale and volunteers from other churches as well as St Anne's transformed the church nave into an immersive interactive prayer space, filled with creative resources for all ages.

Resources for 24 hour prayer spaces often encourage us to pray with all of our senses, as well as our bodies and our imagination. They very often lend themselves to participation by people of varied ages and abilities, as well as by those with little or no experience of church. What better environment to invite young and old to encounter God's presence together?

"THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN AT THE HEART OF OUR PRAYER LIFE IS A REMINDER THAT WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN."

With this in mind, we allocated three hours in the 24 specifically for young people to come and explore the space on their own terms. Some of what happened... typically children's activities were well-used: building Lego prayer towers; having quiet time with God reading a book of prayers for children in a cosy prayer tent; playing "thank you, God" three-in-a-row with a friend; but so too were resources not designed specifically with children in mind: youngsters walking the Labyrinth and being still at its centre; watching a "burning bush" installation, and asking God important questions ("Can you demolish sin from the world?"; "Are other religions real?"; "Can we help you?").



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# THY KINGDOM COME

The invitation for people to pray in new and different ways broke down generational divides... as well as children choosing to use "adult" resources (such as picking a place on a world map and praying for its people) it wasn't long before adults were colouring in cut-out people as they reflected on someone in need of God's loving gaze; or sticking coloured dots on cardboard "prayer-spinners" that they could gleefully spin as they presented their petitions to God. Our youngest participant was a not-quite 1-year old, who crawled his way across the labyrinth on Saturday evening, and the oldest was well into their 80's.



Parents said their children were captivated; older people said they experienced God in ways they had not anticipated... the space was truly sacred. The presence of children at the heart of our prayer life is a reminder that we are *all* God's children."

## SCHOOL CLIMATE STRIKES

Many young people in the diocese have been involved in recent school strikes to protest about climate change. Inspired by Greta Thunberg, these protests are growing and spreading across Scotland. Some young people in this diocese recently approached me to help them find adult stewards for one of their marches, at the request of the police. Thank you to all those of you who volunteered.

The organisers of Scottish Youth Climate Strike are mostly in S2 and S3: they are young but learning fast about organizing themselves, liaising with the police, co-ordinating their communications and social media, and more. Please continue to support them in prayer and practical ways: follow their protests after the summer break on the [SYCS Facebook page](#).



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PLEASE PRAY...

For all the organisers and leaders of this summer's events for children and young people: may they be given all the wisdom, inspiration and energy they need!

For all the children and young people attending the Provincial Youth Week at Glenalmond, Soul Survivor and Holiday Clubs across the Diocese: may the fun and friendships, playing and praying, wondering and worship strengthen their faith. May they learn to love God and each other more truly.

For your own church, and all the ways in which it is seeking to engage with children, young people and families.

Amen.

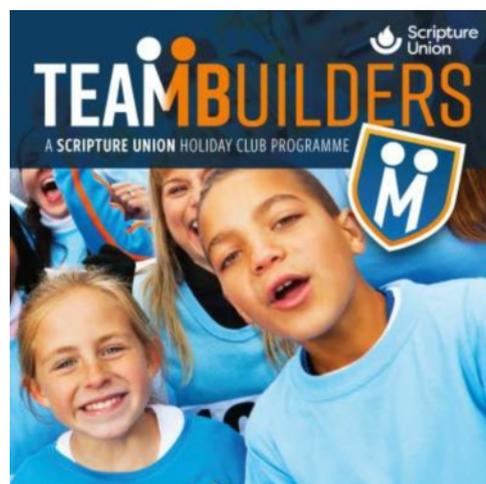
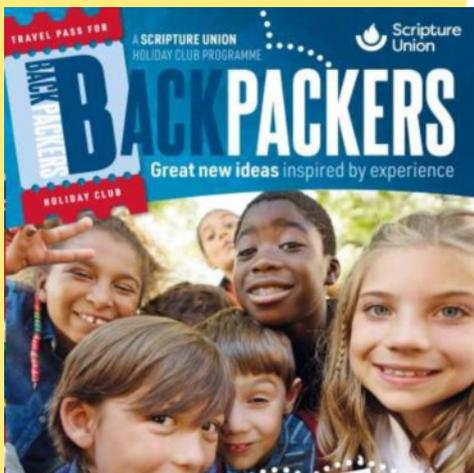
# GLEN '19

at Glenalmond College, Perthshire

## Stories and Songs



*Clockwise from top: Provincial Youth Week at Glenalmond 21-27 July; Soul Survivor Scotland 20-14 July; the garden at St Mark's Portobello, annually transformed by the Portobello Holiday Club; two of this year's popular Scripture Union resources for Holiday Clubs.*



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