

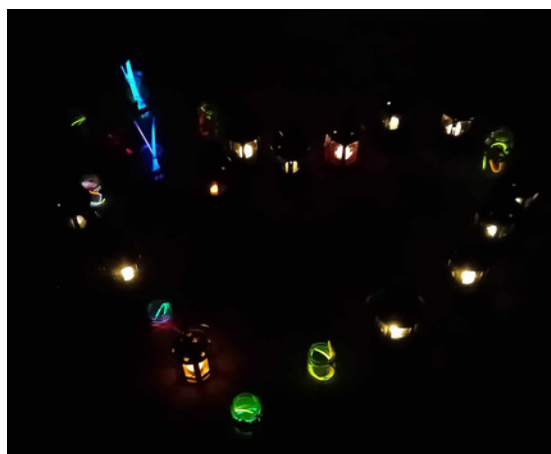


Edinburgh Diocese **YOUTH & CHILDREN**

Christmas 2023

Contact Fiona Reynolds: freynolds@dioceseofedinburgh.org

2023 in review



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Welcome to this special Youth & Children Newsletter!

Welcome to this extra-special **2023 in review** Youth and Children Newsletter for the Diocese of Edinburgh! It is our first newsletter since the summer of 2022, and the first since the Rev Fee Reynolds was appointed (see below). It marks the return of a more regular newsletter, starting with a celebration of everything that has happened across the Diocese in 2023. We hope you enjoy reading what we share here, but know it is but a small snapshot of what has been going on. Please do reflect on your ministry with children, young people and families in your own place, space and lives: give thanks for what has been and wonder about what might be to come!

Introducing Fee Reynolds

After the Diocese said a fond farewell to Claire Benton-Evans, there was an internal review of roles. It was decided to appoint a full-time Advisor for Christian Life who would support the whole Diocese to “Find Faith, Grow Faith, Share Faith”, including children and young people. In May 2023, the Rev Fiona (Fee) Reynolds stepped into the job.



Fee is ordained in the Church of Scotland, is a Godly Play storyteller and practitioner of OutoftheBox. She loves working with all ages, with a particular passion for the first 3 years of life. She now lives in Edinburgh with her husband and 2 dogs.

Keeping in Touch

There are various ways to keep in touch with what is happening around the Diocese and to receive information about events, training and resources. Please follow or sign-up if you have yet to do so.



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[Youth & Children Page](#)



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<http://eepurl.com/c81EPv>



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St John's, Princes Street



This September saw "The Ark" come to St John's. This Communion-centered service is especially for babies and toddlers alongside their parents/carers, where everyone is encouraged to participate as fully as they wish. It has become the congregation's best-attended mid-week service, being likened to 'Pixar' movies, where there is something for every age group.

When families arrive, there are toys out and some space for free play. When the bells ring, it is time to tidy things away ready for the service to start. This fully-authorised liturgy follows the Christian calendar and involves lots of singing, bells and shakers. A Bible story is told in an interactive way, with Godly Play materials in frequent use. There are holding crosses available and each child has their own wee chalice so they can fully copy everything the celebrant is doing. Afterwards, free play is again available as teas and coffees are shared amongst the adults.

For a number of families, The Ark really has grown from being a place to go midweek to a church family, where God is encountered and love is shared.



St John's THE ARK



A midweek service for babies/toddlers and their parents/carers

Centered around the Eucharist, join us in hearing God's word through godly play stories, songs, and toys!

**THURSDAYS, 10.30AM
CORNERSTONE CENTRE**

Coffee and biscuits served.

For more information, email the Associate Rector, David Bagnall at davidb@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk



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Holy Cross, Davidson's Mains

Every Friday morning during term-time, Holy Cross runs Toddler Church for children aged 0-5 with their grown-ups. There is a community of regular attenders, who have asked for more Christian content and teaching. As such, there is now a monthly theme, which is used to share Gospel stories and what the church does as a community. In June and November, Communion was shared using a short, interactive liturgy adapted by the priest and the Children's Minister (Izzy). Celebrating the Eucharistic has been important in affirming Toddler Church as a true expression of 'church'.

During July, Toddler Church may have paused but there was still lots going on. Each week Toddler Yoga was offered as well as two parent and baby/toddler play sessions. There were also 'Quiet Space' sessions for those children who need a quieter, less stimulating environment.



Engagement with the community in big events has also been part of Holy Cross's ministry with children and young people. In June, for the Children's Gala at nearby Lauriston Castle, Izzy and Fr Stephen joined the candy floss and 'Splat the Santa' stall. This was an opportunity to meet many locals whilst demonstrating that Christians can be lighthearted, too! In November, the annual Christmas Fayre is run by the local Lights Committee and hosted by Holy Cross. Over 6000 visitors, including 400+ children, came through the doors. Members and friends of the congregation provided live music and sang carols, with toys and books being available in the children's area of the church. Many people used the church as a place of rest and there were a number of significant pastoral encounters throughout the afternoon.

The ongoing collaboration with charity Live Music Now Scotland saw four free concerts being staged for families with pre-schoolers. Average attendance almost doubled from 2022 and plans are already afoot for 2024.



36 Quality Street, Davidson's Mains, Edinburgh, EH4 5BS



holycrossedinburgh.org



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St Fillan's, Buckstone



St Fillan's is a family friendly congregation with a small but enthusiastic group of young people. While there are not enough regular children attending to make a Sunday School viable at the moment, there is a children's corner in the main space with craft activities for children during the service. These crafts are related to the liturgical calendar and have included making 'snacks for John the Baptist' and creating paper poppy wreaths on Remembrance Sunday. There are frequently interactive sermons for children to participate in, which include helping the rector at the front of the church. Children also eagerly get involved in the collection, which takes the form of a pink piggy bank being passed around the church by the young people.

In recent months, St Fillan's have organised a number of all age socials, which children have enjoyed, including a bring and share lunch to celebrate the coronation, quiz nights, board-game nights and a ceilidh. The Autumn Fair in October was the first held since before Covid, with a number of craft activities for children and some of the local Brownies helping out. 'Sunbeams', a new playgroup for baby's and toddler's, has been a huge success since its inception in June.

There are a number of family friendly Christmas services planned, including an all-age candlelit carol service on 17th December and a family Christingle service on Christmas Eve.



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stfillanpriest@outlook.com

P's and G's, York Place



The year has been full of joy and growth. P's and G's has seen increased numbers of children and families at their 10am service, as well as at Babies & Toddlers, Bounce, and Energise. They continue to welcome new families and friends of friends to events. Having worked regularly with midwives, health visitors, social workers and clients through their Baby Bank, they have been encouraged to see some of the clients coming along to the playgroup and church services. There are also many seasonal events which attract both regular service attendees and visitors: the 'Create for Christmas' workshop has grown from around fifteen mums in 2019 to over seventy this year! And this year, hundreds were welcomed to the Big Christmas Birthday Bash - Jesus' birthday celebration for families with cake, arts and crafts, a creative sharing of the Christmas story and other festive activities.



After the continued success of a P7 discipleship course over the past few years, P's and G's are introducing a similar course for P5/6s. The second 'Babies Matter' course begins in the new year, and at Easter, 'Rollin' Rollin' Rollin' will welcome families for a morning of egg decorating, arts and crafts, singing, a creative sharing of the Easter story, and other activities for all ages.

Bethany Nelson and the Messy Church team have helped young children enjoy the church garden, where there is a fire pit, a mud kitchen and other activities, as well as 'chunky-chalk prayers' for the world as part of their 'Caring for Creation' ministry.



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St Mary's, Dalmahoy

St. Mary's was delighted to successfully host the annual Choir Festival this year. As with so many things, the pandemic put a stop to it for a couple of years and schools struggled to get choirs up and running.

They welcomed three West Lothian schools, Williamston, Kirknewton and Ratho Primary. Each choir sang two Christmas songs and the church was blown away with the talent shown by each choir.

After very difficult deliberations, it was decided that Ratho Primary were the deserving winners. Jane Helliwell did the honours of presenting all the schools with their participation certificates.

A special thanks to John Platt who as usual, shared so generously of his time and enthusiasm for youth choirs! A big thank you must also go to all those people behind the scenes at St Mary's, especially Ella Henderson and Margaret King, who made this event possible.



The Parish Centre, Kirknewton,
Dalmahoy, EH27 8EB



www.stmarysdalmahoy.org.uk



rector@stmarysdalmahoy.org.uk

Christ Church, Holy Corner

On 26th November, a large number of children and young people were confirmed by the Bishop at Christ Church.



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EH10 4DD



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matthew@6a.org.uk



St Anne's, Dunbar

This year the youth of St Anne's ran a 'takeover' of the main church in the Easter and October break to run two holiday sessions. They invited children from across the town to come and see what they do, to wonder about Bible stories, and experience Godly Play. Adult volunteers from other churches were also involved, and they enjoyed seeing Godly Play in action for the first time.



The October theme was "Journeys in the Desert"; they told the stories of "The Great Family" and "Exile and Return", as well as talking about journeying with God. Most of the children responded to the stories with arts and crafts and Lego, but a few of the children chose to build a labyrinth in the garden. They then invited small groups of the other children and volunteers on a labyrinth walk, and led prayers along the way, some for the first time.



1 Westgate, Dunbar EH42 1JL



stannesdunbar.org.uk



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Mustard Seed, Easter Road



Mustard Seed have around 11-14 regular children with an age range of 6-14. In the past year, championed by Christine Van Tiem, their Godly Play ministry has grown from one person trained in offering it to four. This has allowed Godly Play to be offered three times a month, with the children really looking forward to it every week. It has been great ministry for this small church community as it appeals to a wide range of ages and learning styles, helping children learn about scripture and Christian traditions in a way that honours their innate creativity and spirituality. It also allows them to explore faith in a way that does not threaten or force upon them easy or simplistic answers on them. They have just finished sharing sacred stories from the Hebrew Scriptures and are currently focusing on Advent and the story of Jesus.

In the past year, Mustard Seed has assumed oversight of a Babies and Toddlers playgroup which had been run very faithfully for many years by Lynda Anderson of St. Margaret's. Kali Strutzenberg is now leading the programme and the church has loved welcoming children, parents, grandparents and caregivers into their space every Monday and Wednesday. There are currently 20-25 children and their adults attending each morning session, which feature healthy snacks, a variety of developmentally appropriate play areas and song time. The playgroup is a real lifeline for parents and caregivers, and the team does its best to offer support and encouragement as well as plenty of coffee, tea and home baking! As the new team settles in, they are exploring more ways to care for these families.

In 2024 Mustard Seed is looking to establish some form of youth programme for the adolescents and teens who are graduating out of children's ministry. We have a small group of young teenagers and a few key adults who are exploring what this might look like.



170 Easter Rd, Edinburgh
EH7 5QE



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office@mustardseededinburgh.org

Holy Trinity, Haddington

Holy Trinity have joined with St Mary's Parish Church this year to offer 'Wild Worship' for children and all ages. Once a term, everyone is invited outside into Creation to be with and reflect upon God. On the hottest day of the summer, matchboxes were filled with whatever could be found ~ berries, leaves, moss, etc ~ and thanks were given for the wonder all around. This winter, as it got dark, lanterns were made out of glow sticks and candle-holders out of jam jars decorated outside in the snow with natural materials. Back inside, these were used to make shapes and pray for different things, including this heart which represents God coming into our world.



Church Street, Haddington,
EH41 3EX



holyltrinityhaddington.co.uk

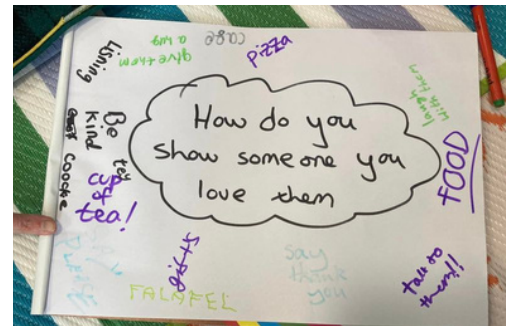


revliz@talktalk.net



Burnfoot Estate, Hawick

Tim Hatton is a Church Army Pioneer Evangelist, who lives and ministers in the Burnfoot Estate area of the Borders town, Hawick. He works alongside different denominations and groups to bring the Gospel message to life. For example, Messy Church and Holiday Clubs are held 4-5 times a year and attract a growing number of children and families. Alongside another ecumenical partner, Tim arranged to distribute thousands of pounds worth of school uniforms from Asda Galashiels to schools in Hawick. Tim also combines his love of running as Honorary Chaplain to Teviotdale Harriers and Coaching Assistant with the junior runners.



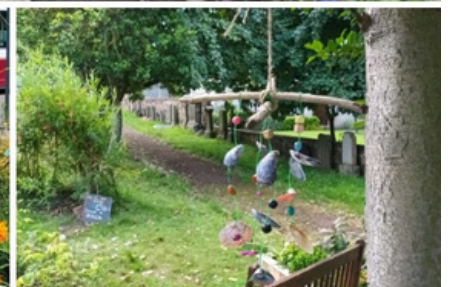
[Tim Hatton on Facebook](#)

St Mark's, Portobello

This year, the Portobello Holiday Club returned after the pandemic break. Once again, a collaboration between the SEC, Church of Scotland, Roman Catholics and Baptist Churches of Portobello, the week included two sites, 90 children, 50 helpers, 15 youth leaders ... lots of music, games, story, craft and fun. We used the Scripture Union material based on Science and Scientific experiments. It encourages the children to discover, to wonder, to praise, to enjoy the wonders of God's creation and to choose how to follow Jesus.

It has become a tradition in Portobello for the children to design and plant the front section of St Mark's garden. This part of the garden is right up against the High Street and is the most obvious part of the garden for the many people who walk through.

This year, the garden celebrated Creation, and included art of bugs and bees made of cans on the railings, a wee mobile solar system, an amazing bug hotel (based in old organ pipes), and lots of shells as mobiles around the garden.



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St Ninian's, Comely Bank



Two of St Ninian's teenagers were selected to make the Provincial Youth Pilgrimage to Iona in October. As they are brother and sister, it meant having to find twice the costs in one family. It was in answer to this need that the enterprising idea of 'Soulful Sounds' arose. In relatively short order, a family-friendly concert was organised.

Musicians and singers of all ages and abilities entertained a full church. The siblings shared why they applied to go to Iona and Dean Frances reflected a little on what it means to undertake a pilgrimage. It was such a successful evening that money was donated to the Province to fund an additional pilgrim, as well as the St Ninian's pair.



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Diocesan Play Church

Our Play Church has been making its own pilgrimage around the Diocese this year. Moving to Christ Church in Falkirk for Lent until Pentecost, it then joined everyone in St Mary's Cathedral for the BIG Day. Thereafter, it headed south to St Mungo's in West Linton for most of Ordinary Time, before an All Saints handover took it to St Columba's by the Castle. It will remain there until the end of February 2024.

This photograph is from St Mungo's, where the children enjoyed dressing up during the sermon, then copying the priest during the Eucharistic prayer before coming up to receive communion dressed as anything from a server to a bishop! They particularly relished sharing Play Church with children visiting from overseas.



[Read more about Play Church on the Diocese website](#)

Diocese Events 2023

This year's BIG Day in St Mary's Cathedral welcomed all ages to celebrate the power of stories. Our Play Church was in residence and people of all ages were invited to experience story-telling in a range of styles, from Godly Play to rapping!



Young people 12-18 came together twice during the autumnal months. September's PizzaBowl was a lot of fun, although the requirement to head to a world buffet for dinner rather than a pizza establishment meant there was much less pizza consumed than originally planned! This was made up for in November when we stayed centrally in Edinburgh, in Old St Paul's Hall to be exact. We reflected on the story of "The Invitation" using OutoftheBox, and thought about what we would want to bring to our youth gatherings. We then headed onto the Bridges in search of delicious pizza!



Planning for 2024...

All Ages

We have a number of events in the year which are aimed specifically at our young people, aged 12-18, from across the Diocese. However, there are opportunities for younger friends and families to come together, too.

On the afternoon of Easter Monday, which is 1st April, we will be holding a Family Fun Day. The hope is that the weather will be OK-enough for us to be out on Portobello beach, with a range of activities for different ages.

On Saturday 11th May, we are holding our annual BIG Day in St Mary's Cathedral. The theme this year is *Prayer* and there will be a range of ways to engage across the generations.

Youth

Our next youth event is being held on the evening of Epiphany in Old St Paul's Hall. We will have time for games and activities, followed by food, and finishing with a Taize service.

Everyone is, of course, welcome at the Family Fun Day on Easter Monday.

Thereafter, we will hold an End of Exam picnic on Saturday 1st June. All our youth cohort are invited, whether they have been sitting exams or not. More details to follow, but it is likely to be held in/around The Meadows.

Keep reading to find out the Provincial Youth events that are happening across Scotland in 2024.



6th January *Epiphany Youth Event*

1st April *Family Fun Afternoon*

11th May *Diocese BIG Day*

1st June *End of Exam Picnic*

Provincial Youth Committee



The Provincial Youth Committee has planned a number of events for 2024, to which all SEC young people aged 12-18 are invited.

The weekend dates are sleepovers in the various host Dioceses. On the Saturday there are games, food, and worship planning, possibly followed by some sleep. On the Sunday morning, there is more food before everyone joins with the host congregation in worship.

The week-long camp (**Yeek**) is held in the summer, with the chance to experience lots of different activities and explore the Christian faith in a bit more depth. Keep an eye on the dedicated website: yeek.scot.

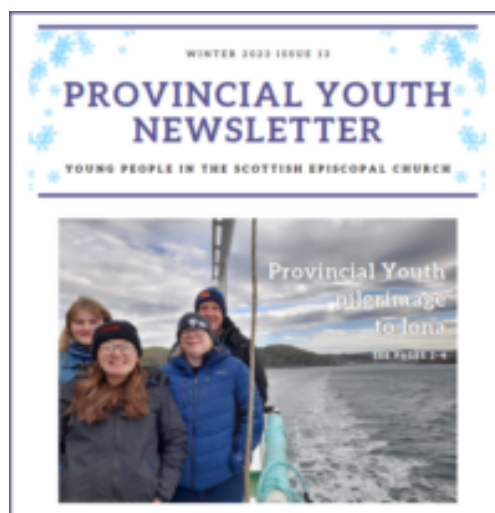
New Chair!


We are delighted to announce that Edinburgh's very own Phoebe Pryce is now the Chair of the Provincial Youth Committee (PYC). Her nomination received the Primus's approval in November and we look forward to her leadership in the coming year. Many congratulations, Phoebe, and every blessing!




Latest Newsletter

The Winter 2023 Provincial Newsletter is now available via the SEC website. Click image to access it directly.





A very BIG thank you to everyone who shared their stories with us for this Newsletter. If you have something you want to share with us in the next Newsletter, please do get in touch.



In the meantime, everyone in the Diocese Office wishes you a joy-filled and blessed Christmas, and best wishes for 2024.



Edinburgh Diocese
YOUTH & CHILDREN

The Diocese of Edinburgh (Scottish Episcopal Church)
is a Registered Charity SC001214