



*"where the river flows everything will live"*

## CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES REPORT

### (June 2024-June 2025)

Last year, like the previous 3 years have been very busy. So here goes:

YOUTH- In August '24, four of our young people and Emma joined St. James, Bream Youth for a 10-day volunteering trip to Denmark working at a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) camp for 500 people. Every day involved preparing meals for the campers and where possible, joining them for worship. It was a great experience, and the young people worked their socks off whilst spending time with Christians from another country. It was also good for our young people to spend time with other young Christians who were the same age (namely the youth from Bream).

Although we had made changes as a Youth team at St. Luke's to try and differentiate the Youth sessions, our older youth were struggling with the age gap in the group and decided that they would like to join the Bream Youth. I was more than happy to encourage them to do this in the hope that they would continue to explore their faith.

This saw a change in our Youth group, with the average age being 11-15yrs. At present we have 6-8 YP who regularly attend.

In November '24, five of our YP joined 25 others at Viney Hill Christian centre for a weekend of activity and teaching. Eve & Emma helped lead the weekend which proved to be great fun.

Eve Lewis Mcleod continued to attend and volunteer as a Youth assistant in 2024, preparing sessions and building relationship with the youth so it was a great relief and joy to see her officially made our Youth intern in Oct 2024. Emma had cut down to three days a week in Sept 2023 to specifically focus on the Children and Family work, with view of there being a new Youth worker, so to be able to share the load and work with Eve with the Youth over the last year has been a great help. Thank you, Eve.

At present the Youth meet every Sunday morning. We have 2 Youth breakfasts hosted by Non and Esther & John Woolcock that run from 10,30-12. We then have 1-2 joint sessions with Splash in the School Hall. Eve leads and prepares the Youth sessions (Youth Alpha) and benefits greatly from the support of Non, Esther, John & Caroline. THANK YOU ALL

(NOTE FROM EVE- "Doing the Youth Alpha sessions has been really good. The Young people have engaged well which has been really rewarding. Being the Youth intern has been challenging but overall enriching")

Unfortunately, due to a drop in numbers at the Bridge Church and the Forest Churches, we are no longer able to join them for Joint Socials and Worship. Partnering with other Church youth groups has been invaluable over the last 4 years, leading to weekends away and trips to Limitless Festival and Brazil and Denmark. More recently we have partnered with Chepstow Boys Brigade and

BRANCH (an inter-denominational Youth worship event in the Forest of Dean). My belief and hope is that these partnerships really benefit and help grow our young people's faith.

SPLASH & CRECHE- We continue to have 8-15 children, aged from 1-11yrs, attending regularly on a Sunday morning. We alternate between using St. Lukes Room and Tutshill Schol Hall depending on the material being used and if we are joined by the Youth. At present we are using the CofE animated Cheeky Pandas material in St. Luke's room.

In July '24 we had a Family Breakfast picnic at Wenchford with a nature trail and duck race. It was a great success and will hopefully be replicated in years to come. Huge thanks go to our volunteers, Non, Melanie, Caroline Ruth, Rosalind, Susan, Shleah, Linda & Charlotte.

Our creche team is still a work in progress due to changes in Safeguarding and being diligent in following the processes involved, (Thank you Rosalind). Emma & the Splash and Creche team will meet over the next two months to discuss what does and doesn't work and how the groups will look, moving forward.

FAMILY WORSHIP- Since 2024, due to other commitments, the Family Worship team disbanded. However, part of every church's mandate is discipleship and to grow and encourage leadership in others, so it has been a joy to have different speakers from amongst our own congregation (Laurina, Aaron & Alex). Hopefully others will follow suit.

The Family Nativity, Christingle, Easter and Mother's Day are particularly work intensive services with things to buy and prep. Thanks must go to the volunteers,( music team, Emrys, Bill & Jim) who do a sterling job in helping these services to run smoothly

## COMMUNITY & MISSION

TODDLER GROUPS- There are very few opportunities for the Church to be involved in the heart of communities and to build relationships with those that might never set foot in a church. The Toddler groups provide this AND work in partnership with the wellbeing ministry by providing links (relationship) that is built week in, week out during the sessions. The groups also see parents feeling comfortable in moving forward with baptisms and christenings.

SEDBURY STAY & PLAY- has had a fluctuation in numbers but a rise in young Sedbury mums and those that have just moved into the area. At Christmas, in partnership with the Wellbeing project, families that needed to, were able to access support.

We were blessed to have John Ross Henderson run a mini first aid course in both groups during sessions in October and at Christmas we had a Christmas photo shoot and held a Christmas party with Ed & Santa (Lee & Tudor) in attendance who gave a Nativity storybook to all of the little ones. A prayer is said at the end of every session and many of our families from both groups attended the Christmas Eve service and Good Friday Children's service.

TUTSHILL BABY & TODDLERS has been very busy. At times we have wondered if we need to move to two sessions, but the numbers seem to auto correct which is good.

I cannot highlight enough how important these groups are in terms of the well being of the little ones and carers, and in terms of the outreach and mission of the church. Whilst the gospel is not being PREACHED every week, it is being poured out through our volunteers who PRAY, LOVE & CARE for those that attend. Relationship (& trust) are being built which leads to open hearts towards the church and more importantly, the Lord.

Thank you to our many longstanding volunteers ( Non, Leonie, Margaret, Susan, Elaine, Melanie, Lynda, Suzy, Molly) and our new volunteers.

The ST.MARTEN'S COMMUNITY LANTERN WALK in November continues to be hugely popular and grows in numbers every year with many families and teachers in attendance. It's been great for St. Luke's to show its support in this venture by offering the Church as meeting place for all at the end of the parade.

The CHRISTMAS EVE CRIBB SERVICE saw a packed-out church with there not being enough seats and folk having to stand. It's a wonderful quandary to be in but, do we need to have 2 services this year??

THE SCARECROW TRAIL 2025- has been a great success with approx. 420 sheets being sold. This year we had 33 Scarecrows made by members of the community in Tutshill who just love the trail. It takes time, money and a lot of effort to make the the Scarecrows so we must never take for granted the folk in the

community who give of these things, especially as this is the Church's main fundraiser.

The money this year will go to Tidenham Parish Churches, The Wye Valley Greenway and SARA. Also, special thanks go to Melanie & Ian Walton who got the online version running AND the team who make this possible every year (Melanie, Carol, Susan, Emma, Lara, Non, Robin & Paul)

SCHOOL WORK- TUTSHILL PRIMARY continue to attend St. Luke's every other Thursday. 200 bottoms really appreciate the warm floor (Thank you James). Nicki and Emma lead these sessions.

This year the School's PTA provided the oranges for the Christingle service (we provided the sweets; the Children's Society provided the candles and red tape) and the parents were in attendance which was great. The school continues to run their own special celebration services which we support them with

ST. JOHN'S, DEAN CLOSE continue to hold their end of term services at St. Luke's with Emma in attendance (thanks to David R who has stepped in). Christmas Christingle & Easter services were well received and enjoyed by all.

OFFA'S MEAD PRIMARY held their carol service at St. Luke's and with Nicki's encouragement will hopefully use the Church more often.

BAPTISMAL & BD CARDS- Heather and Kathryn Payne continue to collate and write cards and send them to all children who have a Birthday and have been baptised under the age of 18yrs. A huge Thank you goes to them for quietly going about this unseen work.

Thanks also go to the CYF Prayer team which of course is the fuel that keeps this ministry going. Also, special thanks go to Paul

Coombs & Iain Gardener who work tirelessly behind the scenes paying in money, sorting policies and insurance, etc, and prodding me when needed.

The Children, Youth & Families work cannot be done by one person alone. It has to be done by the whole church. Even if you are not a volunteer, you can welcome a family in church. Smile or encourage tired parents, accept and thank God for a noisy service and PRAY AND LOVE. As I leave the post, please do look to encourage those that volunteer in this ministry.