

PARACHURCH NETWORK

REPORTING BACK

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

It's a year since we first gathered!

Back then we were dreaming together about a space where we might gather with the following aims:

- **Knowledge** - develop a secure understanding of Growing Faith
- **Research** - opportunities to engage in research together
- **Sharing** - opportunities to connect and share between parachurch organisations
- **Diocesan links** - access to dioceses and key stakeholders in the Church of England
- **Critical reflection and challenge** - opportunities to work together, to collaborate and to shape each other's work

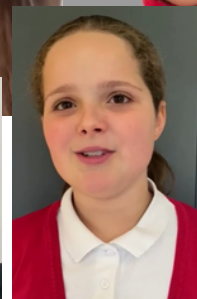
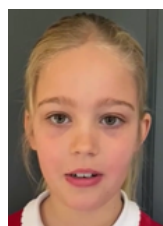
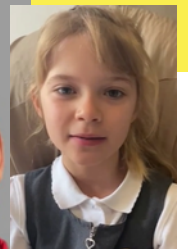
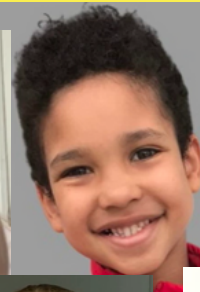
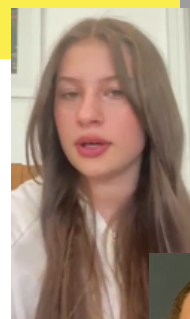
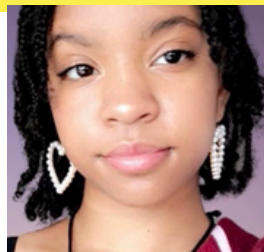
One year on, we reflected that all of those things have started to happen, and on how much is now blossoming in the wider work of the Foundation. In January we will be able to hear directly from researchers and hub pioneers on the early results of their findings, and from network and programme leads on the impact that the work is having on the ground in parishes and dioceses across the country. Much of this work involves people in this network – so as well as being encouraged at all that is happening, we gave thanks that so many parachurch organisations have shaped and joined the vision over the last year, and have generously collaborated, shared and invited others into their work. Here's to another amazing year ahead!

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,

*We ask that first and foremost this network would be a place of **love, patience, support, encouragement and hope**. Thank you that we are joined as colleagues and friends **because you loved us first**, and because **we share a passion and bold hope for your children and young people**. We ask that our time together today would be **encouraging, interesting and fun**. Help us to bear with one another. Help us to go the extra mile. Help us to see this tapestry of organisations, individuals, skills, gifts and experience as you must surely see it – a beautiful outpouring of your heart for the young. Knowing that we can never fully understand your ways, but sure in certain hope that **we are part of something bigger than we can see**. Lord, help us to listen to and love one another well. Thank you for this time we have together. Amen.*

HEARING FROM CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

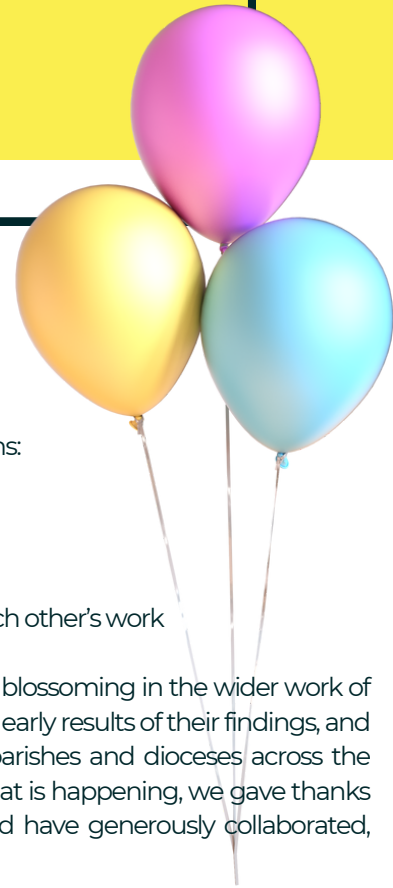


RECRUITING AND SUSTAINING VOLUNTEERS

5 videos to help churches and other organisations embrace the tricky landscape of volunteer recruitment and retention. Insightful tips, stories, theological underpinning and encouragement from friends of the Growing Faith Foundation, including several brilliant colleagues from this network!

All freely available for you to download and share from Blackboard; help yourself!

Children aged 5-17 shared with us their responses to the question: **"Who helps you learn about God?"** It was moving to hear how naturally they spoke about adults and peers in church, school and home as equally important and influential in their faith journeys. You can watch the video [here](#).



THE GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION IN CONTEXT



- Developing leaders
- Shaping policy
- Growing faith

The Growing Faith Foundation is part of the Church of England Education Office. This is a diverse, passionate team of brilliant individuals, with three main aims:

-Developing leaders - Shaping policy - Growing Faith

We learned about some of the areas of work of the EO, and considered together the opportunities for collaboration by being connected with the work of this national team.

Colleagues are warmly welcomed to the **National Conference on Feb 1st 2024.**

Check out the 'Paired Leaders' discount and come in a school/church/charity pair! Click [here](#) for full details.



We heard from Lorraine Prince (Head of Networks, Education Office). Lorraine runs the National Secondary Leaders' Network for school leaders. The Growing Faith Foundation is working with Lorraine to ensure that chaplains and other key 'Growing Faith type' roles are highlighted and included in the work. Lorraine's full presentation is available on Blackboard. To connect with Lorraine, please contact her directly: lorraine.prince@churchofengland.org

NEWS FROM THE GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION...

The Growing Faith Foundation

Growing Faith is the movement that exists to put **children, young people and families instinctively** at the heart of all the mission and ministry of the Church by **changing the culture** of the Church of England.

It involves **churches, schools and households** working together to help children, young people and families have life in all its fullness.



Networks
(13 running, 53 subgroups, c.600 participants)



Strategic Leaders' Programme
(2023: 2 cohorts running, 46 participants; 2024 2 cohorts planned for 60-70 in total). Cohort 3 starting Jan 24 – SIGN UP SOON!



Hubs
(8 running, 10 in 2023-24; 12-15 in 2025)

Research Projects
(12 running, 1 (SLDP) complete)



Prayer support
(149 weekly)



We had a whistle-stop tour of the headline news from Growing Faith Foundation under the headings of Networks, Hubs, Programmes and Research. There is so much going on! At our next network meeting on January 15th, we will be hearing directly from people leading and participating in these projects, as well as the sharing of our latest research findings. For more information on any of this, please contact Hannah Persaud in the first instance : hannah.persaud@churchofengland.org

BLACKBOARD

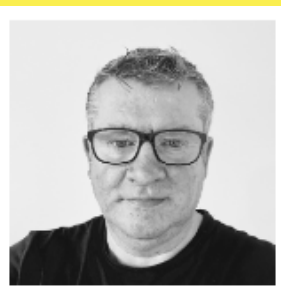
Everyone should now have a Blackboard login. Enjoy using our lovely new collaborative space. (All suggestions, queries, problems etc to Hannah Persaud)

GFF NEWS!

Sign up for our [weekly prayer update](#) and our monthly [newsletter](#) - and if you have stories to share or requests for prayer, we'd love to hear from you!

SPOTLIGHT ON... FREELANCERS' GROUP

We heard from Ali Campbell (www.theresource.org.uk). Ali is a member of our network, and heads up a sub-group for people who are Freelancers (or who have a freelancing aspect to their role). Ali spoke to us about Freelancing, why peer support is needed, and what freelancers in the network can offer to other individuals and organisations. Check out Ali's discussion space on Blackboard, or connect with him directly here : ali@paraklesis.org.uk



GET IN TOUCH!

Hannah is the Networks Lead at the Growing Faith Foundation. She would love to hear from you!

Is there something you'd like to collaborate on? Did someone or something resonate with you in the breakout room? **Please email hannah.persaud@churchofengland.org to be connected with colleagues** who share an interest in these, or other ideas.



'FLOURISH' (CHURCH IN SCHOOLS)

Thanks to the many colleagues who engaged with the Flourish meeting last week - for your time, enthusiasm, challenge, support and many generous offers of help. Questions and comments have now been taken back to the wider team, and we will be in touch in due course.