



CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE
AND MAPLEDURHAM
ST PETER | ST MARGARET | ST JOHN

Parish Youth Worker Job Description

1. Purpose of the Role

We are seeking an experienced and dynamic Youth Worker who will work with us to develop and implement a cohesive youthwork strategy across our parish that nurtures and inspires the faith of the young people currently within our church family and reaches out to those beyond our doors.

We are committed to investing in young people. Our children and families ministry at St John's, and a strong music tradition at St Peter's, has produced a growing cohort of young people now at secondary school, for whom our current youth provision is inadequate. Our aspiration is for our churches to become intergenerational worshipping communities, but we recognise we have work to do to make this happen. Could you help us on this journey?

We are also actively engaged in conversations across our wider community concerning ways to combat knife crime among young people, and the provision of safe spaces where they can have fun, grow friendships, and benefit from the presence of role models and mentors as they navigate the complexities of life. Does that sound exciting to you? Do you have the creativity and determination to help make a vision become a reality?

We expect our Youth Worker will be someone with a strong and mature Christian faith and a passion to see young people growing in theirs; someone who can work within and build teams; someone with vision, who can take the initiative, and who will relish the challenge of creating a youthwork strategy almost from scratch; someone who will enjoy working across a large and diverse parish, and be comfortable working among Christians from different church traditions and who express their faith in different ways. We don't know exactly what God has in mind, but we expect you will have a strong sense of vocation and sense a call to this ministry, in this place, at this time.



Blaze (Year 6+) in the Upper Room at St John's

2. Indicative terms

Subject to Contract

Title:	Parish Youth Worker
Employed by:	the PCC of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham
Accountable to:	The Rector on behalf of the PCC
Hours of work:	40 hours/week, including evenings and weekends (including Sundays and most major festivals). One day off/week, day to be agreed.
Annual Leave:	28 days/year
Salary Range:	£24 000- £29, 000 depending on experience and/or qualifications
Application Deadline:	12 noon Wednesday 6 th July 2022
Interviews:	Saturday 16 th July 2022
Start Date:	as soon as possible after references and DBS check and proof of eligibility to work in the UK, with some flexibility for the right candidate.

The post is for three years (with a probationary 6 months), with a possibility of renewal subject to funding.

3. Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Vision and Leadership

To pray and work with the Parish Ministry Team to develop and implement a cohesive parish youthwork strategy, and to help us move towards being a more intergenerational worshipping community.

Discipleship

To develop a youth ministry that will help our young people become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ.

To create a programme of events and activities, suitable for younger and older youth, that will be attractive to our young people and their friends, including Bible based discussion groups, courses, events and trips, that will inspire faith, nurture gifts and spirituality, and encourage service within the church and wider community.

To promote equal opportunities and ensure that young people with special needs are valued and included.

To be a role model and Christian witness to young people across our community.

Team Building and Communication

To recruit, train, encourage and support a team of adults to assist in youth ministry and to help deliver the strategy.

To communicate the vision for youth ministry across our three churches and to ensure the voices of young people are heard within our churches and leadership teams.

To liaise with all involved in children's ministry to ensure good transitions between children's and youth ministry.

To communicate effectively with parents/guardians about the vision for youth ministry and programme of events, and the specific needs of their children.

Outreach

To develop an outreach strategy that sees unchurched youth coming to faith in Christ.

To join the conversation around combatting knife crime and work with our partners to create safe spaces where young people can hang out, have fun and find support.

To engage with and work alongside other local church youth workers (e.g. through Reading and Oxford Diocese Christian Youth Workers Networks).

Safeguarding

To ensure compliance with the Diocesan and Parish Safeguarding Policies, making sure safeguarding procedures are understood and followed in all sessions and events, and team members are safely recruited and trained.

Administration

To prepare and manage a budget (circa £6000/annum) for youth ministry and mission, keep accurate records, and ensure compliance with GDPR.

Ongoing Professional Development

To participate in training appropriate to the role and personal development.

4. Parish Youth Worker – Person Profile

There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the post-holder has a clear and demonstrable Christian commitment. You will be committed to the vision and aims of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish.

An enhanced DBS check will be required.

Character and Faith

- A committed Christian, with a firm and infectious faith that draws others to Christ, seeking to grow into the likeness of Jesus, and patterning your life after his.
- Able to organise your time to include space for private prayer and corporate worship.
- A passion to see young people encountering God, growing in their faith and becoming strong disciples of Christ.
- A heart for mission and outreach to those currently outside the church family.
- The ability to engage with young people from a variety of backgrounds and affirm and nurture them as they explore faith and discipleship.
- Good biblical knowledge and theological understanding, and the ability to foster in others a desire to learn and grow as disciples.
- A good listener, with pastoral sensitivity, genuinely interested in young people and able to understand where they are coming from; kind-hearted, sensitive to needs, and able to maintain confidentiality.
- The ability to maintain order amongst groups of young people from diverse backgrounds and cultures and earn their trust.
- A dynamic and approachable leader, able to recruit, inspire, motivate and nurture others on your team, bringing out their gifts and enabling them to flourish.
- An imaginative and effective communicator, able to relate to young people at the right level and to see the world through their eyes.
- A good team player, able to work collaboratively, and with people who hold a variety of theological views, and able to work alongside those in the community with other faiths or none.
- The ability to reflect on practice, receive constructive feedback, and offer feedback to others.

- A sense of humour, enthusiasm, and a desire to have fun.
- The ability to lead change, in a changing environment, open to God and willing to follow wherever he leads.
- A willingness to become a fully participating member of the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham worshipping community.

Experience and Skills

Essential:

- At least three years' experience working with diverse groups of young people including those with special needs, and a clear understanding of the society in which they are growing up and the challenges it brings.
- Strategic thinker, ability to envision, inspire and lead creatively, responding to needs that arise over time.
- Proven communication skills relating to both young people and adults, in 1:1s, small groups, and larger gatherings.
- Proven leadership skills and evidence of the ability to work well in a team.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and able to relate well to people from a wide variety of backgrounds both within and outside a church setting – young people and their parents/guardians and representatives of local community groups.
- Willingness to work flexibly, including weekends and evenings.
- Willingness to engage with regular supervision.
- Evidence of being well-organised, able to manage a budget, and having reasonable administration and IT skills.
- Good understanding of social media and other internet tools and the opportunities and challenges they present.
- Experience of working with and clear understanding of safe-guarding procedures, and willingness to ensure they are followed.

Desirable:

- A relevant youth work qualification or training.
- Experience of recruiting and maintaining volunteer teams.
- Experience of working with non-church groups and organisations e.g. schools, uniformed organisations, youth or sports clubs and community groups.
- Experience of different church contexts, and different styles of service and worship (traditional and contemporary, formal and informal, all age worship and fresh expressions).
- Current and clean driving licence.

5. About Us

Our Parish - Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham is a parish of three churches in North Reading, with one PCC. Our parish is large, a population of around 18 000, and very diverse. Caversham Heights to the west, is the most affluent part of Reading, with a high proportion of people employed in professional occupations and house values are high. Lower Caversham to the east is more mixed, though still a sort-after place to live, but there are pockets of huge deprivation, particularly on the Amersham Road estate to the east of the parish, where the Weller Centre is the community hub. Mapledurham is a beautiful rural village in the northwest of the parish.

Governance - Our parish has one PCC with representatives from all our churches. Each church has its own Church Leadership Team, which makes decisions and oversees the ministry mission of their church. Our churches have different styles of worship, different theological traditions, and different characters, which we see as a strength. Our Vision Statement is 'Becoming a Christlike Community' – we want to be more like Jesus, and we want our community, within and beyond the church walls, to be more like him, too.

St Peter's is a church with a strong musical tradition, and many young people join the church choir. During Sunday morning services (9.30-10.30am) young people of all ages meet twice a month in a side chapel for Sunday Club which is led by a small team of volunteers. Twice a month we worship together as a whole church. Before Covid we had 21 people in the choir of whom 10 were of secondary school age. After taking a hit on numbers, we now have 11 young people in the choir, with 5 of secondary school age, but the numbers are rising again. St Peter's also has large numbers of baptisms of young children and contact with families, which we are seeking to develop links with. The Church Leadership Team are clear of the need to prioritise children's work alongside youth work. When those of secondary school age were asked what they hoped for in a youth worker they said: *"Smiley, someone who makes people feel safe, easy-going, funny, not grumpy, clever, good at keeping people under control, creative, happy, helping people who have any problems."*



St John's is a church in transition. In 2018 a small graft team joined from a town centre church and a part time Children and Families Outreach Worker was appointed. The children's ministry has grown numerically from 4 to 41 on the register, and a dozen of these young people are now at secondary school. The Year 6+ group ('Blaze') meet as on Sundays during the service (9.30-10.30am), and enjoy occasional midweek socials, usually 6-8 attend. Those at secondary school enjoy a half termly 'Milkshake Mentors', an informal get together in a local Costa. They are hoping for a youth worker who is: *"interesting, kind, understanding, has a good knowledge of the Bible, funny, loving, quirky, cool, energetic, listens."*



Some of St John's Family on a Church Cleaning Morning!

St Margaret's is a beautiful village church set on the banks of the River Thames in rural Mapledurham. Few young people attend Sunday worship (11.15am-12.15pm) at present, but some members of the congregation have teenage children who would join in with parish youth activities.



Our recent Youth Work journey

Over the past year the Parish Ministry Team and the PCC have sensed a growing need for better provision for our young people. The growing children's ministry at St John's and the choir at St Peter's have created a growing cohort of secondary aged young people who are not currently being as well-disciplined as they deserve. We are aware that young people often leave church around the time they transition to secondary school, and that we should be intentional about nurturing their faith at this key time.

In November 2021 a survey was carried out across the parish to ascertain the level of support both for the idea of a Parish Youth Worker, and to ascertain how much practical support might be offered. All

those who responded were strongly in favour of us employing a full-time youth worker to spearhead a ministry for young people, and there were some offers of practical support and prayer support.



In February 2022 we held a Youth Event to gather the views of the young people in our, and other, Caversham churches. Our young people were all strongly in favour of us employing a youth worker, and their top priorities for that person would be creating a youth club and running Bible based discussion groups where they could talk about how to live out their faith.

Our Wider Community

Caversham as a whole is perceived to be the more affluent part of Reading, and consequently gets little investment in youth work from statutory agencies. In January 2021 the whole community was rocked by the murder of a local teenager, Olly Stevens, by two other teenagers, who have since been convicted of his murder. Churches Together in Caversham has been at the forefront of the response to this tragedy and our parish has played a significant role in bringing together stakeholders from different organisations to work for the good of young people in Caversham. Number 5, a local counselling service for young people in Reading, recently produced a report "Restart Youth" which listens to the voice of young people in Reading and their strong desire for places of safety, open access hubs and youth clubs where they can connect with trusted adults/mentors and perhaps have 1:1 conversations about their mental health without having to have a label or an official appointment. (See full report here: ['Restart Youth!' report](#)). As a parish



we want to play our part in meeting the needs of young people in our wider community, and are committed to working alongside others who share that aim.



We have good relations with most of our local primary schools and uniformed groups, some of whom come into our churches for school carol concerts and other activities.

There is no secondary school within our parish, and children from our churches attend a diversity of secondary schools – at a recent youth gathering in our parish, held to gather our young people’s thoughts on youthwork provision, the fifteen who came were from eleven different secondary

schools across Reading and the surrounding area.



St John’s has good links with the Weller Centre (the community centre on the Amersham Road estate), and Churches Together in Caversham have just launched a Messy Church at the Weller Centre, under our Children and Family Worker’s leadership.

Our Parish Ministry Team

The Parish Youth Worker would join the Parish Ministry Team, which currently consists of:



Rev Mike Smith, Rector. Mike has oversight of all three churches but most often leads at St Peter’s. His wife Rachel is also ordained and works as Chaplain to Queen Anne’s School.

Rev Penny Cuthbert, Associate Vicar, based at St John’s.



Rev Andy Storch, Curate (third year), currently overseeing St Margaret’s. Andy is a Self-Supporting Minister, working three days in the parish.



Anna Clarke, Children and Families Outreach Worker based at St John’s and line managed by Penny. Anna is also a Project Leader for RE Inspired an ecumenical group that delivers sessions on Christianity into our local primary schools.

Anthony Wisdom and Phil Blackburn are Licenced Lay Ministers and are based at St John’s.

Caroline Smith is our part-time Parish Administrator and works from the Parish Rooms adjacent to Caversham Rectory.

Christine Bradbury is the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Could God be calling you to this role?

For an informal chat and to find out more,

ring Penny Cuthbert on 0782 5331810

Come and visit us!

Fill in an application form!

