

Offering a new perspective

Alfie Rendell from Martock, is a young leader in his church community. He has several roles among them is a pastoral role in a care home and he is a server in his church. Alfie shares what it means to be a young leader.



What do you see as the role of young leaders in the church?

Meeting people where they are. I think it's that living out the incarnated life of Jesus, but in just day-to-day life.

How do you see young leaders fitting into the church's structure?

I think it's a blessing that we can do it. I feel like the Church has really recognised—especially with what they're doing at General Synod at the moment—that young people do need to be listened to.

Why is listening to young people important?

Because we can offer a new and interesting perspective. For example, I'm from a working-class background. Personally, I've found it easy to connect with people on a literal level because we've lived the experiences, rather than just read about them.

Is the church open to hearing younger voices?

I can't speak for the whole church. But in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, definitely yes. They've been incredible with me. I was welcomed and I have been offered a placement year with Wells Cathedral.

What would welcome more young people into leadership?

Staying rich in the Church's teaching. The Church shouldn't need to change its beliefs to encourage more people in. In a world where there's no stability, when we're always worried about what others think, we don't want a Church that changes its morality. We want something strong, firm, concrete.

What made you feel welcome?

They didn't treat me like I was different, they showed me respect. The biggest support I've had is my vicar. One time I wrote a sermon, and he said, "Do you want to preach on Sunday?" And I did. But if he'd said, "Just wait until you're older," I might not have done it.

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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩

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Encouraged to lead

There have been some wonderful, and most welcome, headlines recently about a growing number of people attending church at least once a month, prompted by the publication of the Bible Society and YouGov report 'The Quiet Revival'. In particular, it notes a significant rise amongst young people.

Across Bath and Wells, we seek to encourage and support Christian young people in their faith journeys in many different ways, from Messy Church to Movement Worship Nights. Last year we went even further and created and launched our Young Leaders Learning Hub.

Elizabeth Alden, who leads the Young Leaders Learning Hub, says, "Movement has been so good at not only enabling young people to worship together, but also in getting them involved as part of the Movement team in all sorts of different capacities. As a result, we thought 'How can we encourage and strengthen them as they lead?' This led to the creation of the Young Leaders learning Hub and one year on the results have been beautiful to see."



"The youngest person involved is 15, going up to young leaders in their 20s. This is a generation that learns really well in conversation, and it is great to offer them a God-centred space to learn leadership skills and to discuss and pray together." The young leaders are in this way supported as they lead in their communities and churches.

After a trial in Weston-super-Mare last June, the first Young Leaders Hub took place in Bath in July 2024 and one has since been launched just outside Taunton.

Elizabeth says, "If you've got a young person in your church who asks to try something, do give them a chance, as if you turn them down they are unlikely to offer again. We must remember that the older generation is still the dominant one and we really need to welcome younger people getting involved."

News in brief

Art inspires faith

An art project at St James Church in Taunton encouraged a group of students from Taunton and Bridgwater College to consider their faith more deeply. The group were tasked with painting the entrance arch. The project, part of their coursework, also sparked reflections on faith. One student asked for a Bible and began reading it for herself. Another shared how she had distanced herself from faith but felt reconnected through this experience.



Bubble Church

Bubble Church, a lively Sunday service for babies, toddlers and young families, has launched in Trendlewood. Described as a 'puppet-packed, Jesus-centred coffee and croissant fuelled adventure', it offers families with small children the opportunity to encounter faith in a

Gifts of kindness

A dedicated Baby Bank at Holy Trinity Church, Yeovil is supporting families by providing essentials like nappies and baby clothes. It was originally started to help families with new-born babies, but as word spread and the need in the community grew, the team at Holy Trinity began getting requests from families with older children too. They have also received referrals from the local Health Visiting team, asking for specific items for families in need.



relaxed way together. Trendlewood Bubble Church Champion Sharon Brown says the services reach both children and parents, some new to church, others returning after a number of years. And she added how surprised she has been by how much joy it brings.

Find out more on these and other stories at bathandwells.org.uk/news

Listening to young people

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

Later this month I shall be joining young people from around our diocese on a visit to the Taizé community in France. Taizé offers the opportunity to take a step back from daily life, meet people from around the world, join in a week of prayer, worship and Bible teaching, and reflect on our life of faith. In churches we often speak about God. To visit Taizé is to have a big encounter with God.

This will be the third time I have helped lead a Bath and Wells group on this pilgrimage. Some of our young people will be making a return visit, others attending for the first time. I am looking forward to seeing all they gain from the experience and to simply spending time listening to them and all they have to say.

The opportunity to spend an extended time listening to young people is an utter privilege. While more young people are showing an interest in faith, the Church of England is undeniably still dominated by the older generations. Whenever I can, I value immensely the chance to listen to young people – of their hopes and dreams, their fears and perspectives, their insights and understanding.

Such listening is essential if young people are to be fully part of the life of our Church. It's vital if we are to continue to see the shoots of growth that are happening across our diocese and the wider church.

We're pursuing this challenge of listening to young people in lots of different ways. It doesn't just happen at Taizé! Our Young Leaders Hub is one arena. Elsewhere we are looking at how young people can play their full part within the life of our diocesan decision-making bodies and in the national church too. I urge you to do the same where you are.

'Nothing about us without us' is a challenge that's sometimes extended when discussing how young people can participate fully wherever they find themselves. What an aim and a prize this would be for us all to pursue.

Michael Beasley
Bishop of Bath and Wells

