

St Mary's Youth Development Worker & Chaplaincy Lead

Either a full-time role, or two part-time roles.

Background Information

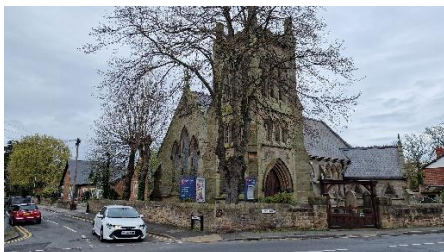
We're delighted to have the opportunity to appoint a new member (or members) to our team working with children, young people, and families at St Mary's. We are seeking an enthusiastic Christian leader (or leaders) to join our experienced 0–18s team. You will lead our secondary-age youth work as well as our well-established chaplaincy partnership with Woodchurch Church of England High School, working alongside two colleagues (who lead our pre-school and primary-aged work), and a team of enthusiastic volunteers. This is an opportunity to build on strong foundations whilst helping to shape a new chapter for children, young people, and families.

This is a significant season as we develop a new vision and strategy for our work with children, young people, and families, and we look forward to welcoming the right person(s) to help this ministry grow.

Who we are:

St Mary's is a large and active evangelical Anglican church on the Wirral Peninsular that has a long history of thriving work with children and young people. The church community of around 400 friendly, welcoming and caring people meets throughout the week for services, groups and activities across 3 buildings in the Parish: St Mary's (the main church building), The Centre (a church plant at the other end of the parish), and The Bank (our youth centre on the high street). Our community is made up of people from a wide range of age groups, backgrounds & Christian experience, all wanting to grow in knowing Jesus, and sharing his love.

We have an excellent and well-established relationship with several local schools, including 3 local primary schools, and Woodchurch Church of England High School (around 1400 pupils), where St Mary's provides the school's Chaplaincy Team (for 20 hours a week shared within the team, funded by the school under a Service Level Agreement). We also have strong links with a wide range of people throughout the local community at all ages and stages of life.



What we do:

Our 0–18s team works with large numbers of children and young people every week through: community-focussed activities; discipleship groups (midweek and on Sundays); and our schools work.

Each week we see around 70 pre-school children and their carers through our midweek activities, and a wide range of children and their families through our primary schools work and after-school club. Our youth ministry currently sees over 70 secondary-aged young people each week through theatre, music, a young leaders programme, Bible study, residentials and drop-in activities.

You can find out more about our work here: <https://stm-upton.org.uk/children-and-youth/>

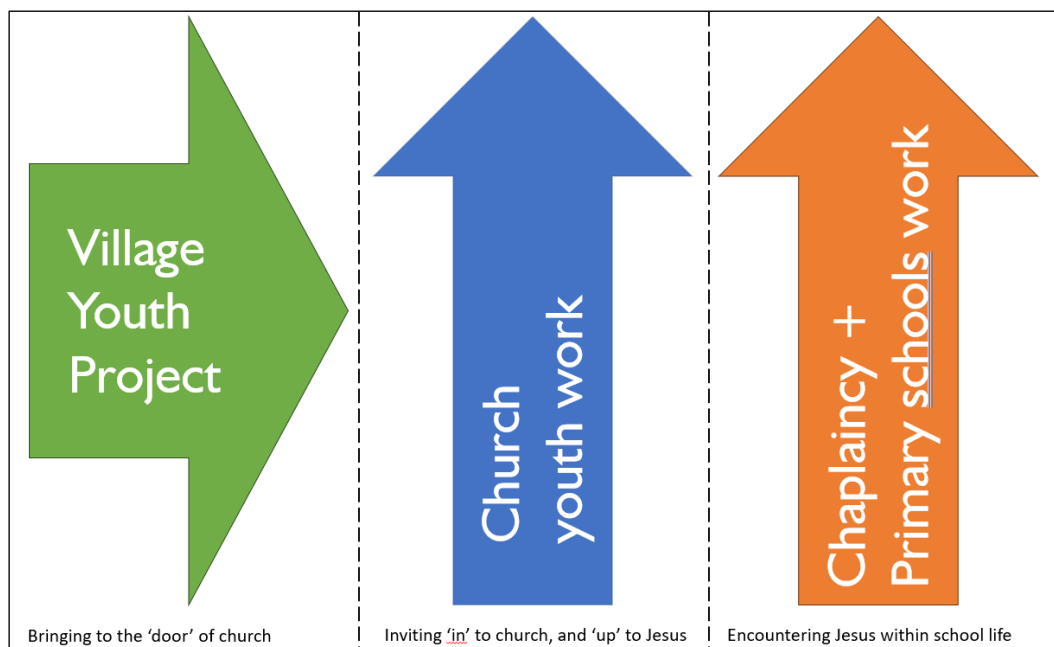
And you can find out more about Woodchurch High School here: <https://woodchurchhigh.com/>

Some background and history:

Much of our existing youth ministry has grown from the Village Youth Project, which was established in the early 2000s to support young people in the local community and help them flourish emotionally, socially, morally and spiritually. It has become a highly successful community-facing ministry, running alongside the wider life of St Mary's. During this time the church benefited from a strong base of active families, with their children naturally becoming involved in church life and discipleship.

This means that, over the years, our ministry with children and young people has developed through three parallel strands:

- The Village Youth Project – community-focused activities where faith in Jesus is modelled and can begin to be explored.
- Church-based children's and youth groups – where faith, discipleship and belonging can be nurtured more intentionally.
- Chaplaincy at Woodchurch High School – creating opportunities for young people to encounter Jesus through collective worship, pastoral care and the Christian ethos of the school, alongside our work in local primary schools.



In recent years the number of active church families with school-aged children has reduced. While the community-focussed activities and schools work have continued to thrive, fewer children and young people have been making the transition into the life of the wider church.

Our new strategy and vision:

Over the last year, since the arrival of our new vicar, we have been developing a renewed vision for our ministry with children, young people and families, partly in preparation for the retirement of the current 0-18's lead. Through this process, we have, as a church, adopted a new vision statement for our work with 0-18's and their families:

"To make disciples of Jesus among children, young people and families.

Enabling everyone to find their active place in the life of the church, where they can discover their true identity in Christ, becoming the people Jesus is calling them to be."

We will seek to achieve this by:

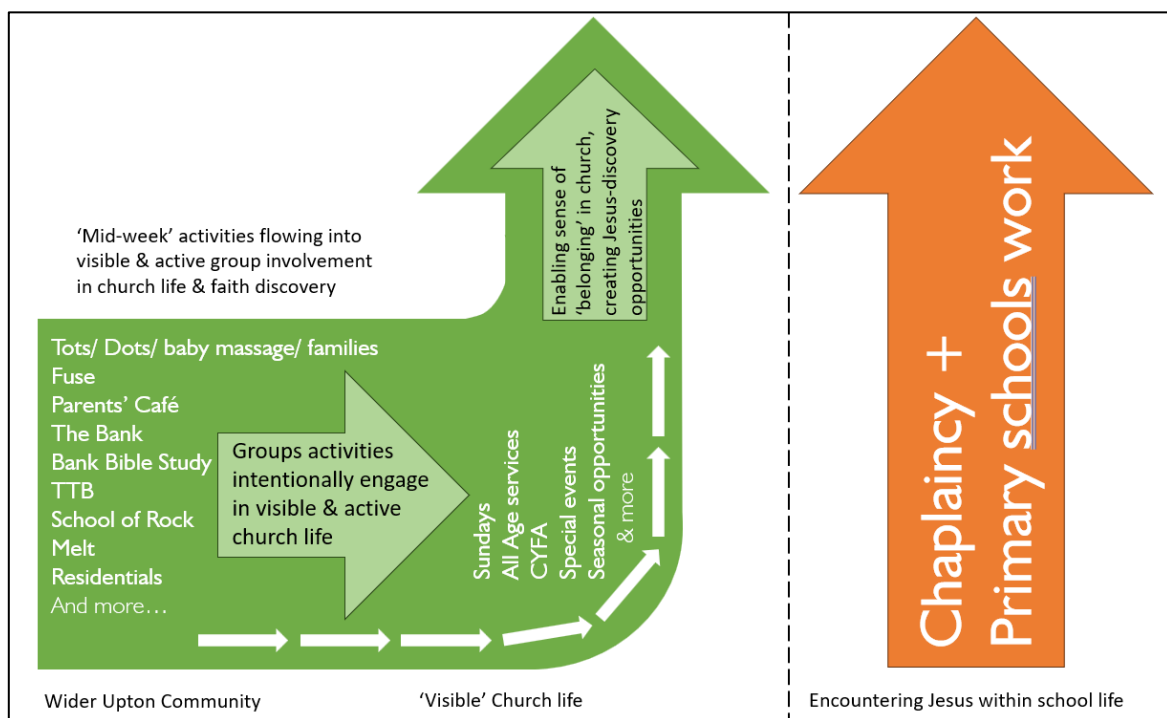
- Creating welcoming and engaging environments where children, young people, and families feel safe, valued, and excited to explore faith.

- Building strong, supportive relationships and community, where people feel they belong and can grow together.
- Teaching and modelling the message of Jesus in relevant and compelling ways, helping each age group understand and apply it in their everyday lives.
- Helping children and young people discover their identity and value in Christ, and provide opportunities to develop their gifts, skills, and interests.
- Encouraging and supporting spiritual growth and discipleship, helping individuals to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Encouraging active participation in church life, helping everyone discover their gifts and how they can serve.
- Building, equipping and supporting a strong team of volunteers to share in this ministry.

The appointment of our new Youth Development & Chaplaincy Lead(s) is a key part of this new vision. We want to build on the strong relationships we already have with children, young people and families by intentionally connecting our midweek activities with the wider life of St Mary's. Rather than seeing these ministries as separate from church life, we want them to become an integral part of it, creating multiple bridges and stepping stones that encourage children, young people and families to grow from initial engagement into deeper belonging, discipleship and active participation in the church community.

Achieving this will require creativity, a review of how our existing activities support the vision, and a church-wide commitment to welcoming and involving those who connect with us during the week. Our prayer is that, through experiencing genuine Christian community, more children, young people and families will come to know Jesus and grow as his disciples, recognising that faith most often develops through belonging before believing.

Alongside this, we are committed to continuing our valued chaplaincy partnership with Woodchurch High School. We believe that excellent collective worship, a strong Christian ethos, and pastoral presence remain an important part of the school's life. At the same time, we recognise that the role of chaplaincy is to serve the school community rather than to promote St Mary's or its activities directly.



Our current pattern of ministry:

The programme below reflects the youth ministry as it currently operates. While these activities provide a strong foundation, we expect the successful candidate to bring fresh ideas and help shape the future of this ministry in line with our vision, building on what already exists rather than simply maintaining it.

(Please note this table shows the whole team's work with secondary aged young people, not an expected personal timetable for the successful candidate).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
Morning	Woodchurch Staff Briefing, Assembly and Pastoral Presence	Woodchurch Assembly St Mary's Staff Meeting	Woodchurch Assembly and Pastoral Presence	Woodchurch Assembly and Pastoral Presence	Woodchurch Assembly and Pastoral Presence	St Mary's Church Youth Group
After School	Bank Drop In		Bank Drop In Bank Bible Study		Bank Drop In including music lessons	
Evening	Young Leader course (Nov-March)	Treading the Boards Theatre Group				

We currently run several residential holidays and weekends away throughout the year for different sectors of our young people. Across the academic year these would usually be:

- Treading the Boards Weekend Away (late Sept) – rehearsals for our musical theatre production
- Young Leaders Weekend 1 (November) – training and equipping our Year 12s
- Young Leaders Weekend 2 followed by Quinta Holiday Camp (Friday to Friday in Feb half term) – an outreach residential; a chance for our young people to be introduced to faith, and for our Year 12s to use their leadership skills
- Keswick Holiday Camp (Saturday to Friday at the start of the summer holidays, usually Keswick Convention Week 1) – a discipleship residential in which staff and young people join in with the Keswick Convention programme.

Alongside these regular activities, the role also includes planning, preparation, volunteer support, pastoral conversations, meetings, safeguarding responsibilities and time in school, as well as personal development. As a team, we support the safe staffing of groups in other age-groups as necessary.

Exciting times:

We believe that this will be an exciting time to join the 0-18s team at St Mary's. Our children, young people and families are also looking forward to welcoming the successful candidate(s). Some of our young people have thought about their wish list – they're hoping for someone who is:

