Youth Work Update – South Cheltenham Team

As many of you will know, Abbie Marsh has begun her full-time ordination training with St Mellitus College in London, following a mixed-mode programme which enables her to continue living in Cheltenham.

It was initially hoped that Abbie might be able to continue supporting our youth work alongside her studies. However, following a period of discussion and reflection, this arrangement is not as sustainable as we had hoped. Abbie has therefore stepped back from her youth work leadership responsibilities so that she can focus fully on her training. She will, of course, continue to be part of the ENC community, supporting the church on Sundays as her home church.

I want to take this opportunity to say a huge **THANK YOU** to Abbie for everything she has given to our young people and to the wider team over the past 3+ years. Her commitment, energy and care have made a real difference, and we are enormously grateful for all she has contributed. We wish her every blessing as she continues her journey towards ordination.

This change has meant reviewing our youth work leadership arrangements and considering how best to provide both continuity in the short term and a sustainable approach for the future.

I am delighted that Rev Lauren Gate has agreed to take on the strategic oversight of youth work across the team from 1st Nov. Lauren is the Vicar of St Christopher's and brings valuable experience from her previous church, where she led youth work before her ordination. She will lead our Tuesday evening youth group and the Christian Union at Leckhampton High School on Wednesday lunchtimes, while also helping us develop our longer-term plans, including encouraging and equipping new leaders.

I am also grateful to Barrie Voyce, who leads on youth work for the Diocese of Gloucester, for his advice and support in shaping this new approach.

Although the change in arrangements has come sooner than anticipated, we now have a positive way forward. Our priority is to ensure a smooth transition, maintain continuity for our young people and build a strong and sustainable foundation for youth work across our churches.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for Abbie, Lauren, our young people and everyone involved in this important ministry.

Revd Canon Gary Grady
Team Rector

28.10.26