



*“God’s kingdom is like an acorn that a farmer plants. It is quite small as seeds go, but in the course of years it grows into a huge oak tree, and eagles build nests in it.”*

*Matthew 13:31-32, Message.*

<https://ashburtonandmoor.org.uk/acorn-appeal>

### **Aim of the Acorn Appeal**

This is a fundraising campaign to raise at least **£20,000** to fund a Children, Young People and Families Worker for the Ashburton and Moorland Mission Community, working three days per week for one year, with a view to developing a five-year sustainable funding model.

This is an ecumenical project – Ashburton Methodist Community has already pledged £5000 per annum for the next few years. The hope is for the Anglican community of churches to raise enough to bring the salary to £20,000.

We are looking for a paid employee to build and develop our small team of volunteers. We believe our current limited number of volunteers do not have the capacity to adequately co-ordinate, maintain and grow our work with children, young people and families.

### **Why do we need a Children and Families Worker?**

1. To disciple the children who are already part of our church family and enable them to grow in faith. To support church parents in bringing-up their children in faith. This video is powerful in explaining this: [bit.ly/4eDSBRj](https://bit.ly/4eDSBRj)



2. To connect with families in our communities, build relationships with them, go to where they are, welcome them, share our Christian faith with them and invite them to explore it for themselves.
3. To help meet needs in our community as part of our Christian mission to love our neighbour – for example by running an after-school club with hot meal, sports on the rec, Kintsugi Hope mental health group in school, Kids Matter parenting course.
4. To make sure our churches are places where children are welcomed, seen and heard - because we can learn from them, and without their presence our spiritual lives are poorer.

### **Background & Current Picture**

64% of Christians say they became Christian between the ages of 0-4, 13% from 5-10 years old, 8% 11-18, and just 5% thereafter (*Comres poll, 2017*). Who will tell children and young people in this area about God if we don't?

Nearly three-quarters of young Britons now identify as having no religion. The number of under 16s in the Church of England has fallen by 20 per cent in five years. Three-quarters of Anglican churches have less than five under 16s in their congregation and just over a third have none. (*Figures from 2021*). There are now not one, but two, missing generations in church.

In addition, there is a mental health crisis amongst young people and increasing numbers of children living in poverty, with many families experiencing difficulties and challenges in a society which seems to be becoming more fragmented, polarised and isolated. How can we best show God's love to these children, young people and families? How are we being a Christian presence in their communities?

### **Children and Families work across the Ashburton and Moorland Mission Community**

In September 2019 Heidi Lewis was appointed as Children and Families Mission Development Worker on a five-year contract to develop children and families' ministry across the Ashburton and Moorland mission community. Her role and the funding/housing provision for it, finished in July 2024.

### **Numbers of children, families and young people engaging with Mission Community services and activities**

We have a contact list of over 75 families we have regular contact with.



20-30 families attend the Hedgehogs baby and toddler group.

37 children attended the 2024 Holiday Club, plus 6 youth helping.

Ashburton currently has four 'core' families who regularly attend services and activities.

*The number of families attending outreach activities and regular services is sporadic and fragile – attendance seems to rely on good advertising, the right weather conditions, engaging service content, friendly welcome and good relationship building by a consistent team.*

Ilington has around 15-20 children attending monthly family services. We do not yet have figures for Widecombe.

**Current regular children, young people and families provision includes:**

**Ashburton, Buckland and Bickington**

Twice monthly all-age Anglican services

Monthly Breakfast Church (Methodist)

Monthly Moor & Messy (Ecumenical)

Weekly baby group

Weekly Hedgehogs toddler group

Fortnightly youth group

Annual summer holiday club

Annual church weekend away (hopefully)

Annual families camping weekend at Family Fest SW

Seasonal events like pancake day and Halloween.

Baptisms

Confirmations

First Communion



## **Illington**

Monthly family service

Weekly toddler group

Alternating weekly school assemblies and Open the Book at Blackpool Primary School and Illington Primary School.

Christian story reading sessions at Blackpool school.

Outreach events like Teddy Tower Day

## **Widecombe**

Awaiting info.

## **Fundraising campaign info**

### **Giving so far:**

**Ashburton Methodist Church:** already pledged **£5000 per year for the next 5 years.**

**Individual Anglican donors:** already pledged **£8000 for 2025.**

### **Further proposed giving ideas:**

**1. Ashburton and Moorland Team of Churches to be asked to contribute: £3000+**

(eg Ashburton: £1000; Illington £1000; Widecombe £500; Bickington: **£240 already pledged**; Buckland £100; Holne: £100; Huccaby £100; Leusdon £50; Postbridge £50)

**2. Ask 25 individuals to give £10 per month: £3000**

**3. Acorn Appeal donations button on church contactless giving devices.**

**4. Approach local businesses and organisations** such as Glendinning, Rendells, Teignbridge District Council, The Benefact Trust, Mayor and Town Council, The Portreeve

**5. Fundraising event ideas:**

Bingo evening at Town Hall (Abi offering to organise); Sponsored 'Just Dance-a-Thon'; Coffee Morning Concert, Auction of Promises and dinner in the new year; sponsored Table Tennis competition, churches recipe book. Other ideas and help very welcome!

**6. Identify someone who would be willing to write some funding applications to grant-making bodies.**



## Acorn Appeal Theology

The Acorn Appeal is based on the notion that from little acorns, mighty oaks grow. Children (little acorns) are at the heart Jesus' mission to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth:

***"Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; <sup>14</sup> but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'" Matthew 19:13-14***

Can we give what we can (our little acorns) to help the children and young people of our communities grow into mighty oaks of faith? They are the future generations we are called to share the Gospel with. Giving is an act of faith - just as planting an acorn is an act of faith that an oak tree will grow, even though it seems impossible that something so mighty can come from something so small. We believe in the God of the impossible.

Acorn Appeal Promo Video: [https://youtu.be/ DX0QzgdFCc](https://youtu.be/DX0QzgdFCc)

## Giving details:

To donate to the Acorn appeal by BACS:

Account Name: St Andrews Church PCC

Sort Code: 51-61-18

Account Number: 72020954

Reference: Family Worker

