

## Care Home Ministry

Care Home Ministry is a really important ministry and one that I feel strongly called to by the Lord. This is a huge part of my role as an Anna Chaplain. It is great to have here today people who lead Care Home Services in Maidstone, so we can share experiences and learn from one another. Elderly people live in Care Homes because they can no longer manage to live in their own homes. Some feel 'put away and forgotten', by their family and friends who may not often visit them. These people have been called 'the forgotten generation' and they need to know that the Church has not forgotten them and that Jesus loves them and is with them. They can no longer go to Church, so the Church needs to go to them to provide Services, give Holy Communion and give an opportunity for them to talk about their faith. When leading these Services I sometimes tell them that 'Church has come to you as you can no longer go to Church'.



The CQC Care Quality Commission Regulation 9 (3)(a) requires <sup>1</sup> 'carrying out, collaboratively with the relevant person, an assessment of the needs and preferences for care and treatment of the service user... Assessments of people's care and treatment needs should include all their needs, including health, personal care, emotional, social, cultural, **religious and spiritual needs.**'

The <sup>2</sup>CQC Care Quality Commission is The Independent regulator of health and social care in England. CQC inspects Care Homes and one of their requirements is about the provision of spiritual care. By having Church Services this enables the Home to meet its requirement for providing spiritual care for the Residents.

The definition of spiritual care used by NHS Education for Scotland states:<sup>3</sup> 'Spiritual Care is person centred care which seeks to help people (re)discover hope, resilience and inner strength in times of illness, injury, transition and loss.' By providing Church Services, talking and listening to Residents we are helping to meet their **religious and spiritual needs**, enabling them to receive the love of Jesus, know that the Lord is with them and in some cases they rediscover a Christian faith from their childhood. We help them to 'discover hope, resilience and inner strength in times of illness, injury, transition and loss.'

In July 2019 the General Synod heard that "Anna" is a work of the Holy Spirit. The <sup>4</sup>*Church Times* reports: 'Ministry to the residents of care homes, and, in particular, those with dementia, was the subject of a debate on Tuesday morning.' The contribution of speakers was reported. The motion was carried overwhelmingly. It

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-9-person-centred-care#guidance> 28<sup>th</sup> Aug 19

<sup>2</sup> <https://cqc.org.uk/> 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.faihtinolderpeople.org.uk/project/spiritual-care-for-people-with-dementia-in-care-homes/> 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019

<sup>4</sup> *The Church Times*, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019, p. 15

read: *That this Synod: (a) recognise and commend the important work of ‘Anna Chaplaincy’; (b) request all dioceses to raise the profile of work with those diagnosed with dementia and their carers; and (c) call on Her Majesty’s Government to report on progress on the achievement of the Prime Minister’s ‘Challenge on Dementia 2020’, and on what steps are being taken to join up the health and social care to ensure seamless transition from one to the other for people with dementia.*

In leading the Services we are doing what James Woodward recommends<sup>5</sup>. We enable the residents to ‘come together as a group’ as ‘a worshipping community’ in ‘the rhythm of the Christian year, re-telling the Christian story.’ It is wonderful that nothing can separate us from the love of God (*Romans 8: 38-39*) and through these Services people feel the love of Jesus. Joanna Collicutt refers to this verse<sup>6</sup>. I also realise and have experienced how powerful music is for those living with dementia. Singing hymns in the Services is therefore special and helpful for the residents and is encouraged by Louise Morse<sup>7</sup> in her book. I am glad that these Services are giving <sup>8</sup>meaningful moments to the residents, as encouraged by John Swinton. We go into Care Homes to offer spiritual care for the residents, their families and the staff.

It is important that we develop best practice in Care Homes, as then our visits will be welcomed and appreciated by the Manager, Staff, Residents and their families. We need to receive training and preparation before going into Care Homes to lead Services. If we have more volunteers it would be great to start to lead Services at *Pilgrim’s Way* Care Home. The Manager and Activities Co-ordinator there are hoping this will happen soon. Chris Lavender, the Vicar of the Parish is happy for me to find people to lead Church Services at any of the Care Homes in his Parish that do not yet have Church Services. As the Anna Chaplain I will visit the Care Home and discuss with the Manager the best day and time for a monthly Service, describing what we intend to do – a Service of the Word and say if we will bring Holy Communion. There will be training available for anyone new to this Ministry. When I meet with the Manager I will make clear to the Manager that we expect members of Staff to be in the Service with the Residents; as we should not be left alone with a lounge full of Residents. If we would like to use their CD Player then that would be discussed at this Meeting.

Many of you here today already lead Care Home Services, but for those wondering about this Ministry, I will share some ‘best practice’.

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<sup>5</sup> *Between Remembering and Forgetting*: James Woodward, Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2010, p. 74-75

<sup>6</sup> *Thinking of You*: Joanna Collicutt, BRF, 2017, p. 58

<sup>7</sup> *Worshipping with Dementia*: Louise Morse (*Monarch Books* 2010)

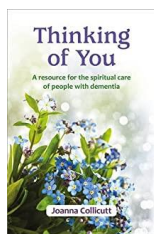
<sup>8</sup> *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (2012), by John Swinton, p. 235

- Have the hymn words in large font size for the Residents to be able to read.
- Take some visual aids that fit the theme of the Service.
- Arrive punctually and speak to the Manager or Activities Co-Ordinator.
- Check your list of names and ask about Residents who usually attend the Service so they can be collected or visited later.
- Involve Care Assistants in giving out hymn words, finding hymn tunes etc.
- Check with the staff about who can receive Holy Communion.
- Offer to visit in their rooms any residents who are too unwell to attend the Service today – sing and pray with them and do a shortened Holy Communion Service if they are communicants. Read a Bible verse, Pray a ‘Collect’ that ‘collects’ the theme of the day, the Confession, you pray a ‘ May Almighty God forgive us our sins .....’ absolution, The Lord’s Prayer, Lamb of God, give Communion, pray Post-Communion Prayer, pray for healing, The Grace. The Residents not able to attend the Service really appreciate these visits.
- After the Service give time to talk and listen to the Residents and the Staff.
- Before leaving always tell the Manager or another member of staff any ‘concerns’ about what residents have said. *e.g. .... ‘waiting for her parents..’.*
- Tell them who particularly enjoyed the Service and who received Communion.
- Before leaving tell a member of staff who you visited individually, so this can be added to their records.
- This has never happened to me, but if I observed a situation of a member of staff mis-treating a resident, then I would speak to the Manager about this incident before leaving the Care Home. I would say I am concerned about..... because ..... did / said ..... Then the Manager is aware of the situation from a ‘safeguarding’ concern. I would also write and date my observations.
- Keep your own records of names of those who received Communion, those in Services and those you visited and prayed with individually.
- Record the Care Home Services in the Church Vestry Book.
- In your own prayer time each week pray for the Care Homes - praying for Residents and Staff by name.

Statistics for Mission – I wrote an email to Church House Westminster, following a conversation with Archdeacon Stephen, asking that the Statistics for Mission, which all C of E Churches complete each year, should have space to record Care Home Ministry. There was no question about Care Home Ministry in 2018 so this important ministry was recorded as a ‘fresh expression’ in our Church. There was also no place to record Home Communion. I hope this will be amended as house-bound parishioners are still a valued part of the worshipping community of the Church.

I have had experience of praying with the dying and also those who have recently died and their families. If you are able to offer this ministry then tell the Care Homes. This means that we can give spiritual pastoral care at the end of life and give support to the bereaved families. I also offer to lead the Funeral of those who have died in the Care Homes – this can be very special for the families and friends. They are moved to hear that their friend / family member enjoyed hymns and prayers in the Care Home.

When I am away on holiday I give the name and contact number of a retired priest who will go in to pray with the dying and their families. I want to be a caring Anna Chaplain even when I am not around!



**Bible verses** encourage this ministry. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus commends those who visit the sick. (*Matthew 25:36*)

**Joanna Collicutt**<sup>9</sup> refers us to Romans 8:26 that tells us the Holy Spirit helps us when we reach the limit of our intellectual capacities. 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.' (*Romans 8:26*) She also finds it helpful that God keeps us 'in mind': 'what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (*Pss 8:4*)

God gives grace as St Paul wrote: 'But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (*2 Corinthians 12:9*) God's strength is 'made perfect in weakness' so living with dementia is a time when people can feel especially close to Jesus and know his strength in a deep and special way.

**James Woodward**<sup>10</sup> refers to: 'Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.' (*2 Corinthians 4:16*) People living with dementia can shine spiritually while outwardly they are 'wasting away'.

The verses at the end of Romans 8 really helpful, assuring us that nothing can separate us from the love of God: 'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (*Romans 8: 38-39*) We could add 'dementia' to that list: 'For I am convinced that neither death nor life... *nor dementia*, ... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' When we visit people living with dementia, pray and sing with them and give them Holy Communion, we are

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<sup>9</sup> *Thinking of You*: Joanna Collicutt, BRF, 2017, p. 81 - 86

<sup>10</sup> *Between Remembering and Forgetting*: James Woodward, Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2010, p. 21

helping them to realise afresh the love of Jesus and know the Lord is with them, because nothing can separate them from his love.

How wonderful that God will always remember us. The Lord says: 'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!' (*Isaiah 49:15*) God has said 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence 'The Lord is my helper'. (*Hebrews 13: 5-6*)

Our Care Home visits and Services should bring peace. When recently re-reading the book of Job, the verse that stood out for me most was Job telling his friends they were 'miserable comforters' (*Job 16: 2*) as Job says in this situation 'my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.' (*Job 16:5*) In our visits to the elderly, the housebound and Care Homes let our words give encouragement and comfort to those people; to help them <sup>11</sup>'discover hope, resilience and inner strength in times of illness, injury, transition and loss.' Jesus said: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.' (*John 14:27*) Jesus said: 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' (*Matthew 28:20*)

We read in Proverbs: 'he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.' (*Proverbs 11:25*) When we visit a Care Home and the housebound at home we bring spiritual refreshment to them, reminding them of their faith and that Jesus loves them. The Lord is so gracious that we will be refreshed as we give refreshment to others. However there are times when this ministry is draining. The deterioration and death of someone we have known is sad and we all need to have people we can talk to about this ministry. Jesus encourages us to keep close to Him: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (*Matthew 11: 28-30*) We need to have time for spiritual refreshment and ensure that our active ministry is indeed part of the 'easy yoke' and the light burden that Jesus is calling us to do in his strength. God told Gideon "Go in the strength you have". (*Judges 6:14*) We go into Care Homes using the strength God is giving us. We can only operate out of the grace Jesus gives us; and so we need to keep in a close relationship with Jesus.

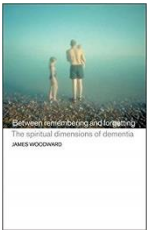
Proverbs tells us 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.' (*Proverbs 31: 8-9*) Residents in Care Homes cannot always 'speak for themselves'. We should help those who are former Church-goers to have their rights to spiritual care and Church Services; so those needy people are reminded that Jesus loves them.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/project/spiritual-care-for-people-with-dementia-in-care-homes/> 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019

I spoke about this verse in Canterbury Cathedral at my commissioning as an Anna Chaplain. I will now refer to three of the books that I mentioned earlier, to develop a theological understanding of our Ministry in Care Homes.

**James Woodward**<sup>12</sup> recognises the importance 'to **understand** and affirm that people with dementia may be seen primarily as people – people 'unconditionally held within the love of God', people who retain their personhood until death, though it may be difficult to access.' They 'live in the complex land between remembering and forgetting... Understanding these needs and aspirations can help the Church become inclusive, intelligent and wise.' Let us keep leading Care Home Services and visiting the housebound in their homes so these lovely people know that they are 'held within the love of God'.

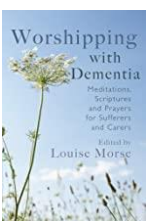


**John Swinton**<sup>13</sup> refers to the hymn *According to Thy Gracious Word* ending with: *And when these failing lips grow dumb And mind and memory flee, When thou shalt in thy kingdom come, Jesus remember me.* He writes: 'we need to recognise something very



powerful in the hymn that calls us to remember while we can, but to trust that God will remember for us when we cannot.... Our hope lies in the fact that we are living in the memories of God.' God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."'' (*Hebrews 13:5b*) Care Home Services help people living with dementia to know God's presence with them. John Swinton<sup>14</sup> writes: 'The church, then, is called to become an attentive community of memory and hope that understands what it means to remember people with dementia and act accordingly.'

**Louise Morse** encourages music and singing with people living with dementia. She explains: <sup>15</sup>'The Lord Jesus can shine into the darkness of memory loss, bringing His Light into our hearts.' I have often seen eyes 'light up' with a favourite hymn. Music is very powerful and the Holy Spirit breaks through the fog of dementia bringing peace



and light with the realisation of the love and closeness of Jesus. Louise Morse writes: <sup>16</sup>'Many people with dementia respond well to music, particularly the traditional old hymns they know so well.' This has been my experience of leading worship in Care Homes. So let us take the love of Jesus into Care Homes, by going there to lead Services. It would be wonderful if every Care Home in every Parish had Church Services. We are offering pastoral care and providing opportunities for former Church – goers to worship and receive Communion.

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<sup>12</sup> *Between Remembering and Forgetting*: James Woodward, Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2010, p. 131

<sup>13</sup> *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (2012), by John Swinton, p. 196-197

<sup>14</sup> *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (2012), by John Swinton, p. 223

<sup>15</sup> *Worshipping with Dementia*: Louise Morse (*Monarch Books* 2010), p. 135

<sup>16</sup> *Worshipping with Dementia*: Louise Morse (*Monarch Books* 2010), p.29

This is also a missional opportunity. People living in Care Homes are all parishioners in a Parish. I would love Care Home Ministry in Maidstone to include all the 22 Care Homes in the Maidstone. Indeed it would be wonderful if all the Care Homes in Kent had Church Services, giving pastoral care and missional opportunities.

I hope to see Care Home Ministry develop like the *Street Pastors*, where people from all the Churches who feel called to this ministry receive training by becoming Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends. Anna Chaplaincy is an ecumenical, parish-based chaplaincy to older people. So then together let us arrange that all the 22 Care Homes in Maidstone are receiving Church Services.

I am happy to I am share the Services I have planned for monthly Services through the Church Year. It is important to connect people in Care Homes to the rhythm of the Church Year and tell them what is happening in the wider Church, such as the Walk of Witness on Good Friday in Maidstone.

It is important that we pray for the residents and staff in the Care Homes we visit. It is also good to pray before going into the Care Homes, committing the visit to the Lord. I often sing *Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me* to pray as I drive to the Care Homes.

When I was commissioned as an Anna Chaplain at Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, I was filled afresh with Holy Spirit. I was glad to speak in the Cathedral about the importance of Care Home Ministry. During the Service at Canterbury Cathedral the Lord brought these verses to my mind:

‘The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD 's favour and.... to comfort all who mourn.’ (*Isaiah 61: 1-2a*)

People in Care Homes have to stay there, like a ‘prison’, so they need to hear the good news of the love of Jesus, receiving the light and comfort of the Lord. Some people in Care Homes are put away and forgotten by their family and friends, who find visiting them distressing. Jesus does not forget them and Jesus is calling us to go into these Care Homes as lights of his love, reassuring those dear people that Jesus is with them, Jesus loves them and will never leave them. This enables the Care Home to meet its requirement for providing spiritual care for the Residents in CQC Regulation 9 (3)(a) that ‘people's care and treatment needs should include all their needs, including... **religious and spiritual needs**’, while we ‘*raise the profile of work with those diagnosed with dementia and their carers*’ as encouraged by the July General Synod.

Elizabeth Bryson, Anna Chaplain, November 2019