

The Pilgrims' MAGAZINE

WINTER 2022



In this issue:

Exclusive: THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Justin Welby on older
age reimagined



WORKING OVER CHRISTMAS

Our staff share their stories

GOOD NEWS FOR ALL PEOPLE

Evangelising over
the festive season

**PILGRIMS'
FRIEND
SOCIETY**

Pilgrims' Friend Society exists to provide excellent care and support for older people, inspiring and encouraging them to live fulfilled lives. Rooted in the Christian faith, Pilgrims' Friend Society is committed to creating Christian communities in residential care homes and independent living housing schemes in England and Scotland.

Got a great story?

Email our editor **Helen** on helen.mckayferguson@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

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“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord”

Luke 2:11



Looking to contact our homes and schemes?

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Stories from across our organisation



Marking Remembrance Day

At Pilgrims' Friend Society, it's our privilege to care for many older people who lived through the Second World War. To mark Remembrance Day, several of our families had the opportunity to share their stories with the local media.

At Bethany Christian Home in Plymouth, Barbara, Pat and Beryl spoke to ITV News West about their memories of living through the Plymouth Blitz. Barbara recalled how her school was bombed and her headmaster, Mr Cornish, was moved to tears. She said, "I can

see him now, standing in the playground crying when our school got bombed and the one behind burned. And I've never forgotten that." Pat spoke about the dances on the Hoe, "Every weekend they always had a band up there, I suppose to cheer us up and keep us going... the bombs were falling but we were there!" Beryl recalled how she had to walk more than five miles with her family on the day her house got bombed. "You never forget it," she told ITV News.



L-R: Barbara, Pat and Beryl – Photo credit ITV News Westcountry



Derek

Derek who lives at Finborough Court, Great Finborough was featured on BBC Look East, talking about his service with the Searchlight Regiment based at RAF Lydd in Kent. He described how he was called up just before Christmas in 1942 at the age of 18. He was due to go to Norway but following a road traffic accident he was put on searchlights instead, which included dazzling German bombers. As part of the interview he reflected, "There's still wars going on. I think it's up to us to try and do all we can to do away with it and bring peace and bring love to one another."

As one of the journalists commented, it is amazing to hear real living history from the people who were there. Our thanks go to all our family members and the staff behind-the-scenes whose hard work meant that these interviews were possible.

Intergenerational nativity plays

As this issue went to press, plans for our intergenerational nativity plays were taking shape across our care homes. Jane Trimarco, who manages our Activity and Community Engagement (ACE) Programme, said, "As we approach the busy Christmas season in our homes, we always put a special emphasis on Christmas as it means so much to our dear family members. With our ACE Facilitators, we decided to bring the true meaning of Christmas alive by putting on our very own nativity plays that bring together the generations. We are hoping for a real mix of ages from children to teenagers and older volunteers or staff to take part alongside the older people who live with us."

Do keep an eye on our Facebook page for all the latest updates.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY WIN!

A special happy birthday goes to Win at Milward House in Tunbridge Wells. Win recently turned 100 and is one of our first family members to receive a card from King Charles III. On her special day, Win received lots of flowers and cards and enjoyed some sweet treats.



In other news

At Koinonia Christian Care Home in Worthing, Kim Christofi joins us as Business Manager and Linda Sourris is the new Activities & Community Engagement (ACE) Facilitator. In Leicester, Andy Harrison joins us as Scheme Manager across Pilgrim Gardens and Carey Gardens. In the Support Office, Carol Jackson joins us as Operations Manager and Rhea Dehaney is our Social Media Content Creator.

For more great stories, follow us on social media:





Older age *reimagined*

In a piece written exclusively for The Pilgrims' Magazine, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby explores the blessings that come with age, the plans God has for older believers, and a radical reimagining of social care which places relationships at its heart

When I was at primary school, I remember our class learnt about Jesus' life, his crucifixion and his resurrection in our RE lessons. We were tested on Jesus' words as he approached his death. I never could remember them all.

But I do remember our teacher telling us how remarkable Jesus was. He cared for others, the class was told, even as he was tortured on the cross. Being only eight, and not a particularly nice boy (some people might say only one part of that has changed), I wasn't that impressed. I thought this was just a story, and Jesus said the 'right thing'.

It was only as I grew older that I could come to more of an understanding of what the Passion meant for Jesus – and for us. With age, I learnt



more about risk and sacrifice. Most of us, as we grow up and older, learn about the pains life brings. We become aware of our mortality, we understand more about love, disappointment, unfairness, and hope over the years. With time, we enter deeper into the depths of the human experience, as we live out the complex realities of suffering and joy that are part of our lives.

And so we can identify more clearly with the stories we are told. They acquire new meaning for us as we age. Jesus' physical agony, his spiritual torture, his sense of abandonment by God, as well as his love for his disciples, his care for his mother at the foot of the Cross and utter dependence on God; this sacrifice takes on new and richer meanings for me as I read the Gospels again in the light of my own life and the lives of those around me. We can better identify with the entirety of what Jesus bore for us.

“As we understand more about the frailties of being human, it becomes possible to enter into deeper and more truthful relationships with others and with the God who became human.”

This is, I think, God's great blessing as we grow older. As we understand more about the frailties of being human, it becomes possible to enter into deeper and more truthful relationships with others and with the God who became human. Increased physical decline reminds us not just of our dependence of God, and not just where our value truly lies, but also invites us to enter ever deeper in to the fragility and the hope of Christ, and live it out in an entirely new way. (This is not to say that young people can't or don't have a deep and profound faith. I merely mean that faith in Jesus is a relationship, and relationships tend to grow, deepen and strengthen with time.)

These gifts are often missed, or misunderstood, in a society that values visible power – whether physical, status, material – and is fearful of perceived 'weakness'. As we approach Christmas, and my family comes together across the generations, I often think of one of the most beautiful stories of the Christ-child – the presentation at the Temple at Candlemas.

In this story, recounted in Luke 2:22-40, Mary and Joseph take the baby Jesus to the Temple, as per Jewish custom. The Holy Family is met in the Temple by Simeon and Anna; elderly, faithful servants of God, who become the first people to recognise Christ as the Messiah. In this scene, two 'outsiders' become as intimate as family members.

The elderly couple are those who announce the future, those who see the promise of God and receive His promises in their lifetimes.

This tableau speaks to the truly radical role I think God gives older people in our society. He calls Simeon and Anna to be those who are the first to recognise and herald the Messiah, to be bold in prophecy, to bear witness to what they have seen, and to be faithful to God.

Simeon and Anna are a fundamental part of the Christian story. They announce the arrival of Jesus to the world even as they are reaching the end of their own lives.

Here, for me, is a wonderful example of older people in the community – welcomed, valued, wise, prophetic.

'Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout...'
Luke 2:25

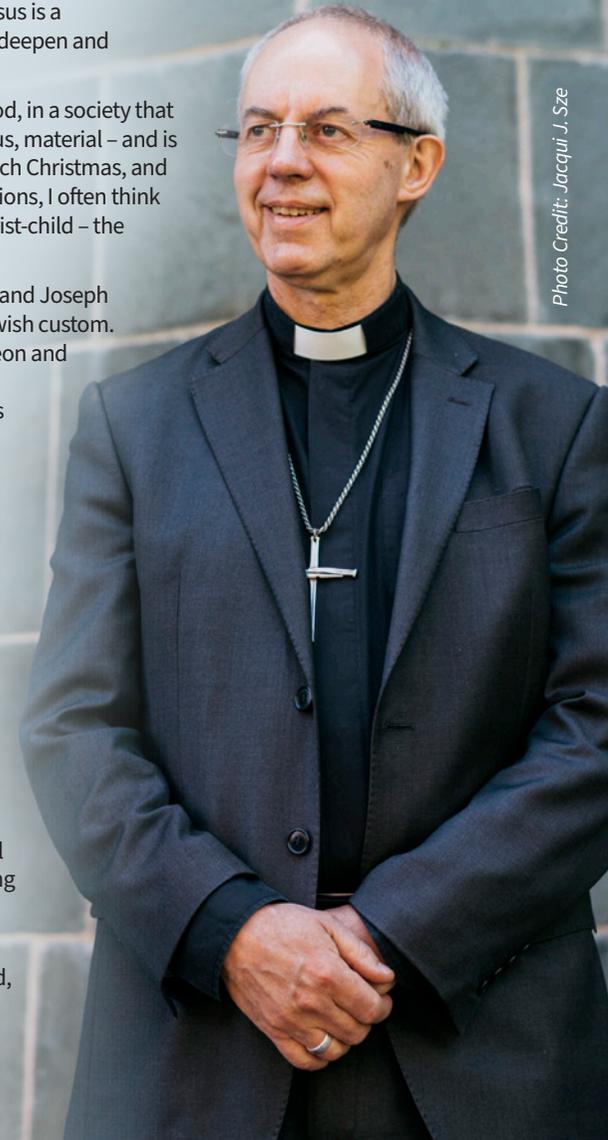


Photo Credit: Jacqui J. Sze

It is striking for me that Simeon and Anna are not related to the family; it's an example of the community relationships that are so important in our society. When it comes to social care, it too often has been a familial obligation. Members of a family have often had to struggle to provide care, battling with their own needs to give their loved one the care they deserve. Social care should be a community obligation, not just a family one; a core part of living in society together that we form the webs of care and support for those who need them – both those who provide care and those who depend on it.

“ Social care should be a community obligation... a core part of living in society together that we form the webs of care and support for those who need them.”

The fact is that almost all of us, at some point in our lives, or someone we love will be in need of care and support. As medical care and standards of living improve, an increasing number of people are living well into their 90s. They should be supported to live their best life possible well into older age, whether that be independently, in assisted living, or in homes such as those provided by Pilgrims' Friend Society. As far as possible this should be an individual's choice –

professionals should work with the person and their families, supporting them in making those choices about care, as opposed to the system deciding what is best for them, based on a narrow set of parameters which are mostly driven by cost.



The provision of social care is not just about pounds and pence (although a well-funded system is of course very important). There needs to be fairness and equity in properly funded social care. At the moment we have the meanest of means-testing – which leads to many falling between the cracks. The cost of living crisis is impacting the poorest the hardest this winter.

We will not be able to fix social care overnight, of course, but it is my hope that the Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care, which Archbishop Stephen Cottrell and I set up, and which is led by Professor Anna Dixon and Bishop James Newcome, might ask some of the important questions and offer a vision for the future when it publishes its report 'Care and Support Reimagined' (due out on 24th January 2023 at time of writing). My prayer is that it will be an encouragement to our society to reflect the image of God in every person. It will consider the need to rebalance our roles and our responsibilities, so that everyone plays their part in mutual, covenantal relationships. And we need to redesign the social care system so it is built around the needs and preferences of those who rely on it.

“ ...we need to redesign the social care system so it is built around the needs and preferences of those who rely on it.”

This is a shift in how we view relationships that is valuable for society as a whole – do we have contractual relationships that are driven by monetary value, or do we build covenantal relationships that leave room for grace and seeing the true value in which God holds every person?

We see, time and time again, in the Bible the value God gives to older people. From Abraham and Sarah, to Moses, to Joseph, God calls people afresh at surprising times in their lives to serve, lead, seek and proclaim His presence. Often, these characters are rather surprised – and I love the idea of the God who surprises us when we think He might be done with us, who draws out new lessons and gifts from our old experience and recommitments us again to our role in His family.

“ I love the idea of the God who surprises us when we think He might be done with us.”

During the pandemic, we learnt something about our interdependence on one another. We learnt that we do not exist as atomised individuals, but

as a society, a community, in which what I do affects you and what you do affects me. We realised that we are each responsible for each other's welfare. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' was the question – and the answer was unequivocal: yes, you are – yes, we are.

That attitude must extend to our approach to social care. People cannot be hidden away and forgotten, or ignored and treated as lesser. Each of us matters, says the Bible, and each of us is responsible for treating others as though they matter.

As I find myself growing older (and wiser, if not wiser), I think of some of the people who have had such an effect on my life – my parents, my grandmother and my parents-in-law, as well as many of the wonderful Christian teachers I've been privileged to know. Their example of ageing has taught me not to shy away from the difficulties, or forget the joys, of ageing but rather encouraged me to see growing older as a gift from the God who invites us to experience life in all its fullness, and who continues to surprise me with His faithfulness.



'Tis the season to be jolly!

Christmas is a special time for our homes and housing schemes. We spoke to some of our staff about what it's like working with us over the festive period

Wiki

Night Carer at Emmaus House, Harrogate

"As a member of the night team at Emmaus House, I have the very fun job of helping to put up all the decorations at the start of the Christmas season. We do it overnight because it involves lots of climbing on chairs and ladders and it's easier to do that when everyone is in bed. When our family members wake up and come down the next morning, they have the excitement of seeing the home transformed.

"I often work the night shift on Christmas Day. I start my shift at 8.30pm and it's a lovely atmosphere to walk into. Everyone has so many stories. Lots of people will have had visits from their family and will wait until they have left before opening their gifts, so I'll sit and open their gifts with them.

"I'm from Poland where it's traditional to celebrate Christmas on 24th December. That works out well because I can celebrate at home with my mum the day before. I much prefer the British Christmas dinner to the Polish one where it's traditional to have fish – I'm not a fan! Something else that I enjoy which we don't have in Poland is mince pies. When I come in on the night shift, they keep a mince pie for me."



Senior Carer at Milward House, Tunbridge Wells

"At Milward House we always choose a member of staff to dress up as Father Christmas on Christmas Day. I haven't been asked yet, but I wouldn't say 'no'... Father Christmas comes to the lounge and our family members have fun guessing who it is. We have a trolley which we load up with presents. We take this round to the family members and staff dressed up as elves hand them out.

"One year, we had a lady living with us who had dementia who was used to doing a lot for Christmas. As Christmas approached, she kept saying that she needed to help with the preparations so we involved her in making the Christmas cake. She helped to measure out all the ingredients and stir the mixture before we put it in the oven.

"At Christmas, it's about making everything as fun as possible. We sing carols, dance and play party games. Pass the parcel always goes down well. Lots of people's relatives come to call, adding to the Christmas cheer."



Denise

Cook at Dorothea Court, Bedford

"My daughter Elizabeth and I always celebrate Christmas at Dorothea Court – it is our Christmas. We're there all day. I'll make the Christmas dinner, usually for about 18 people. Friends and family of those living here are welcome to join us.

"I always make flower arrangements for the tables. I go out into the garden at Dorothea Court and gather fresh flowers, holly and other greenery. One year we found some tiny pinecones near our house which we collected for the decorations. We also stuck wooden robins to the leaves.

"The thing I love most about Christmas Day at Dorothea Court is the togetherness. For those that live here, it's a special time when they remember Jesus coming into the world. In the morning we have a little Christmas service in the lounge. Evelyn, the manager, gets everyone a little gift which is put under the tree. We also receive gifts from the charity Home Instead and we give a gift from the staff team as well – chocolates and biscuits that everyone can enjoy.

"Those that live here help to decorate. Pauline has knitted some nativity figures and our maintenance officer set up a wooden box she could use to make a stable scene. For many years we had a retired vicar living with us who had a beautiful wooden nativity set from Kenya which we had in the lounge."

Elizabeth

Housekeeper at Dorothea Court, Bedford

"I'm arty and currently doing a course in textiles and design. I love making everything look Christmassy. We all come together to decorate the Christmas tree. Every year, I paint the Christmas cake using edible food colouring and brushes – it's a bit like painting a watercolour. The first year I did a stag, the next year I did the three wise men, the year after I did a snowman with a rabbit hanging off its nose. Last year, I asked those living here to vote and they voted for a robin sitting on a post-box.

"One year, in the run-up to Christmas, my mum and I ran a Christmas gift table. We had animals made from flannels, bowls made from vinyl records, earrings, clocks and potted plants. A top-seller was our knitted snowmen and Christmas puddings, each with a Ferrero Rocher inside. People also really liked some cross-shaped bookmarks decorated with decoupage.

"All the profits from the gift table went towards the activity fund."





Meet our team, Domiciliary Care Manager, **ABI JESSOP**

Abi Jessop is Manager of Pilgrim Care, our domiciliary care service based at Royd Court independent living housing scheme in Mirfield. Abi joined us as a carer aged 21. We found out what inspired her to work in care and the opportunities she has found to progress



Abi says:

"I'll always ask Alexa to play worship songs at home. It really lifts my mood. I think our Alexa must be saved!"

At Christmas we are very blessed by gifts from our local community. There is a lady who calls me up to ask how many ladies and how many men we have and makes sure that everyone gets a gift, labelled with a name tag. Our carers then hand these gifts out to everyone. It's lovely seeing the smiles on people's faces as they open them.

I often meet people who say they love older people but they could never be a carer because they couldn't do personal care. I say, "Give it a try." Personal care is just one part of it. When you have a love for the role, you see it's about making sure all a person's needs are met.

Caring wasn't the first career I considered.

For my work experience, I went to a neonatal unit at our local hospital. Then after I'd finished school, I went to work at a Christian school in Italy. I enjoyed the experience but I knew working with children full-time wasn't for me.

I then worked at the bookshop and coffee shop for my church, Dewsbury Gospel Church. I really enjoyed interacting with all the older customers.

When I was growing up, my mum did bank shifts in a care home and sometimes I'd go in. There was one lady called Lottie who had grey curly hair and a twinkle in her eye. She

always used to give me sweets and ask what I'd been up to. We also used to visit the care home as a school and sing.

I'd always enjoyed being around older people but hadn't considered working with them until a job came up as a carer with Pilgrim Care in May 2009. I thought "This is what the Lord has for me now". Little did I know I'd still be here all these years later!

My Christian faith has always been important to me. I grew up in a Christian family and attended a Christian school, The Branch School in Dewsbury, which was set up by local Christian parents. It's lovely that I do something I love in a Christian environment.

All my training has come from Pilgrims' Friend Society. I've gained my NVQs and diploma in health and social care. For many years I worked with Georgina Lansdell, who used to be Domiciliary Care Manager. I learnt a lot from her and I progressed from Carer to Senior Carer to Team Leader and now to Domiciliary Care Manager myself.

When I first started, I was nervous.

Supporting someone to have a shower can feel like a big thing. But the more I did it the more confident I became with things like moving and handling and personal care.

One thing I like most about my job is the way we can be a family.

Some of those who come to live with us don't have much family, or their family are very far away. For birthdays, for example, I'll help to organise a little party, with a cake.



I'll always keep an eye out for events we could put on.

We recently had a Macmillan coffee morning and coming up we have a Dancing for Dignity event, part of the campaign Dignity in Care.

At Pilgrim Care we have a small, close staff team.

Caring can be a challenging role and as a manager I always try to empathise with anything my team might be struggling with and support them.

In her spare time, Abi likes to:

Unwind with a massage: "I'll go to the local beauticians or for a real treat I'll go with friends to a local country manor where you can have a massage, swim and sauna."

Go for walks in the countryside: "I'm not the kind of person to just sit around at home. I like to be out in the fresh air."

Take off with the campervan:

"My husband, Gary, is doing up a campervan. We love visiting the Lake District or Wales."



Abi's favourite hymn: And Can It Be

"When we sing it as a church everyone gives it their all."



Could you come and join our team? For all the latest jobs, visit

www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/jobs

To find out more about Dignity in Care, see: www.dignityincare.org.uk



Impawtant visitors



Pets as Therapy (PAT) is a national charity that provides visits by dogs to care homes, bringing companionship and raising smiles. Among our care homes that receive these visits are Middlefields House, Chippenham and Shottermill House, Haslemere

Jasmine brings her dog Misty to Middlefields House, Chippenham

“Misty is our beautifully natured family dog who loves to be around people. We look forward to our weekly visit to Middlefields House, my three daughters too. The staff are always so welcoming and the Hummingbird who escorts us is always so kind and encouraging. This makes the time we spend with the family members relaxed and enjoyable. Misty loves all the extra attention and fuss she receives (and the special ‘dog biscuit’ tin kept in the cafe!).”

“It is the highlight of my week when I see Misty. I have always had dogs at home, and I love nothing more than seeing Misty’s wagging tail at my door on a Wednesday.” – **Jean A**



Shottermill House is visited by Murphy and his owner Phil.

Vicki Beere, Administrator at the home, says: “Murphy brightens up the room and brings a lot of joy to the home each time he comes in. Most people will respond to him and pat his head or take his paw! Our family members tell him what a good boy he is and recall their own dogs.”

“He helps me feel calm. I enjoy stroking him.” – **David**

“He’s a good dog, one of the best.” – **Roger**

“He’s absolutely wonderful, I know dogs and I love him, he’s the best.” – **Hilary**

“It’s like seeing my daughter’s dogs when I see Murphy.” – **Hazel**

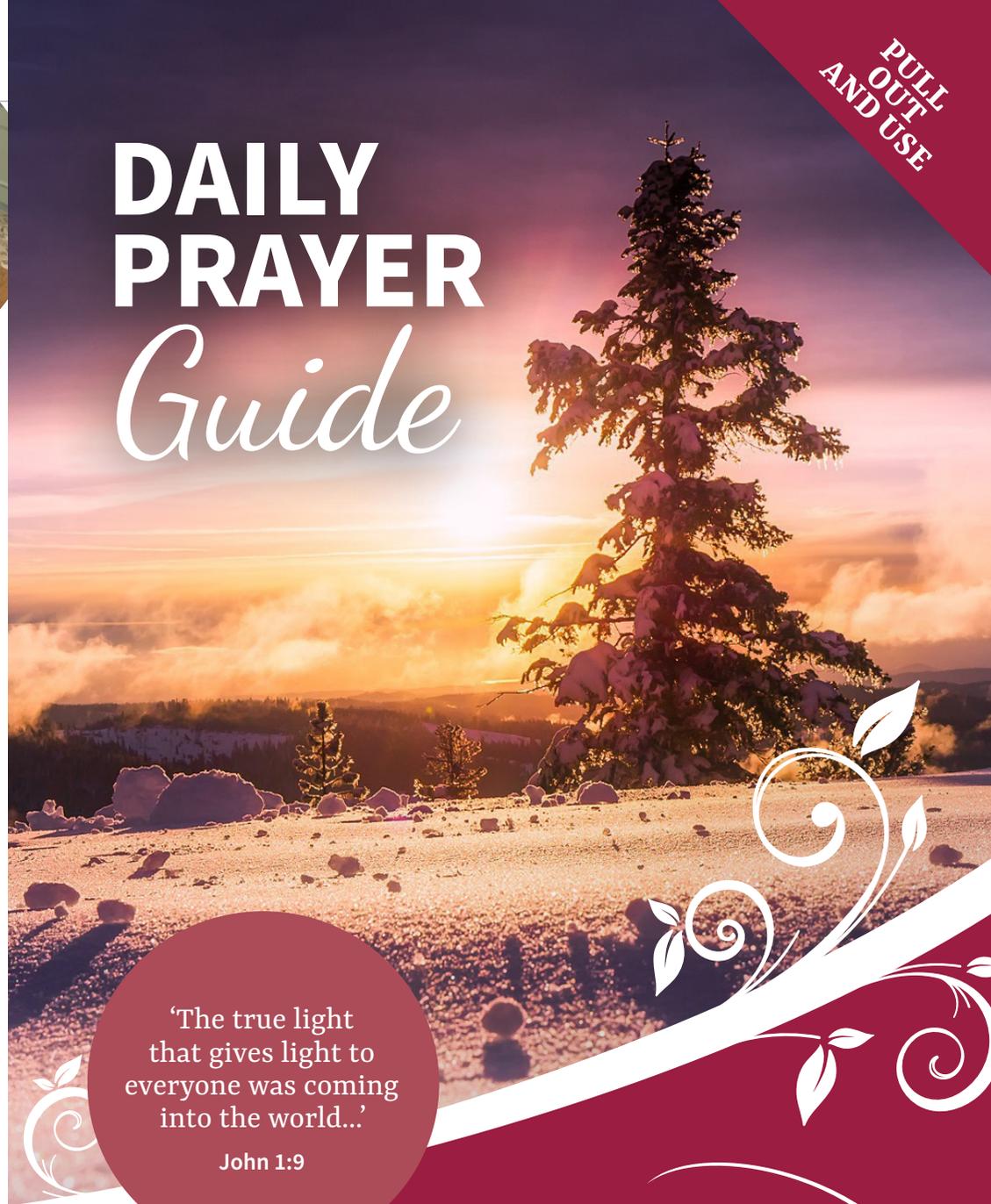
“He’s so friendly.” – **Martin**

“He has a face and eyes that tell me he wants to be friends with everybody.” – **Loesje**



DAILY PRAYER Guide

PULL OUT AND USE



‘The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world...’

John 1:9

Winter 2022
How you can pray for our work

PILGRIMS’
FRIEND
SOCIETY

Welcome

to the Winter 2022 edition of the Pilgrims' Friend Society Prayer Guide. As we celebrate another Christmas, we are once again so grateful for another year of your prayers. We cannot do what we do without your support in this most important way. Thank you!

In this guide you will find the usual things that we need prayer for. Many of those who work with us will be busy over the Christmas break so please do remember their commitment and diligence as you pray with us over the festive season and beyond.



'And Mary said:
"My soul glorifies
the Lord..."
Luke 1:46

Here's how you can be praying to support our work each day. We've listed our homes and housing schemes and their managers, as well as the other teams and projects that make up the work of Pilgrims' Friend Society...



Sundays



Bethany Christian Home, Plymouth – Tracey Ikerd
Emmaus House, Harrogate – Chrissie Medway-Steel



Those living in our homes and schemes

Give thanks for those who live with us and for all they contribute to our homes and schemes. Pray for true fulfilment in their later lives.



Care teams

Thank God for our faithful and diligent care teams. Ask God to sustain them and inspire them as they care for our family members.

Mondays



Evington Home, Leicester – Jeanette Davis



Dorothea Court, Bedford – Evelyn Bissell
Our catering, maintenance, and administration teams

Praise God for His provision of wonderful support staff. Ask God to help them in their work and make their paths – and to do lists – smooth.



Our resources (see more on p.26)

Thank God that our resources are helping so many people support older people and prepare well for later life. Pray that others would find them useful.



Tuesdays



Finborough Court, Great Finborough – Rachel Fishburne and Karen Bleay



Pilgrim Gardens, Leicester and Carey Gardens, Kirby Muxloe – Andy Harrison

Activities and Community Engagement (ACE) Facilitators

Give thanks for our ACE Facilitators and the work they do with volunteers and the community. Pray for more opportunities to speak to churches and gather volunteers.



Renewal Programme

Please pray for guidance and leading for the Renewal Programme. Pray that He would provide the right place for our next home.

Wednesdays



Royd Court, Mirfield – Vicki Miller



Finborough Court Housing, Great Finborough
– Sylvia Humm

The Operations Team overseeing our homes and schemes

Praise God for our brilliant operations managers. Pray for their team as they recruit new members and cover important and varied work across the organisation.



Church and community engagement

Give thanks for the support of local churches. Pray for more opportunities and way to connect with the family of God's people in the community.



Thursdays



Framland, Wantage – PumDim Skinner (interim)
Pilgrim Care at Royd Court, Mirfield – Abi Jessop
Koinonia Christian Care Home, Worthing – John Manea and Kim Christofi



Our Support Office – Finance, HR, and Communications teams
Praise God for the careful and important work of our Support Team. Pray that they will continue to work diligently alongside our care teams and housing staff.



Our IT project
Thank God for the ways technology helps us do our work well. Pray for ongoing training and usage to make an even greater impact on our work.



Fridays



Middlefields House, Chippenham – Rali Ivanova and Chris Boyes
Strathclyde House, Skelmorlie – Jenny Long



Volunteers
Give thanks for the incredible people who give their time to support our homes and schemes. Pray for more people to bring their skills and gifts to our communities.



Giving
Praise God for the generosity of our supporters. Pray that He would continue to provide financially for the work that we do.



Saturdays



Luff House, Walton-on-the-Naze – Timothy Agbenike and Sharon Rowley
Milward House, Tunbridge Wells – Annabelle Purdie
Shottermill House, Haslemere – Babi Dixon and Mike Beere



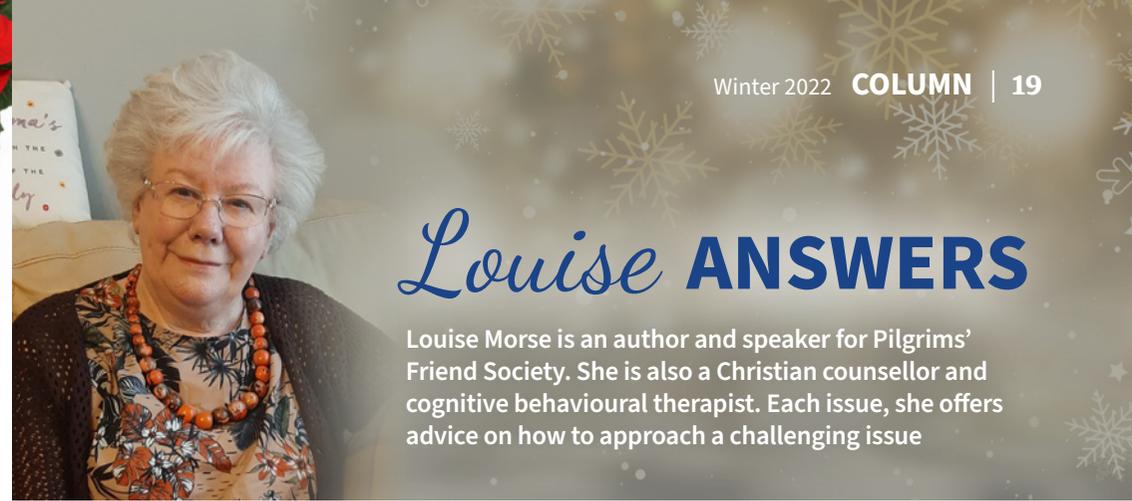
Directors and trustees
Give thanks for our directors and trustees and the work that they do to lead the charity. Pray for wisdom and guidance as they navigate some important issues.



Families and relatives
Thank God for the many wonderful families of those who live with us. Pray that they would be encouraged and comforted by the care and support we offer.



MORE WAYS TO PRAY: Our monthly Family News email contains all our latest prayer updates, plus details of happenings from across the organisation. Sign up online at: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/keepintouch



Louise ANSWERS

Louise Morse is an author and speaker for Pilgrims' Friend Society. She is also a Christian counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist. Each issue, she offers advice on how to approach a challenging issue

Q How can I be an encourager in older age?

A In his letters to the churches the apostle Paul wrote about encouraging one another. One of the best encouragers I know is David, a retired maths teacher now in his late 80s. Of all the Scriptural principles, encouragement was especially important to him. He taught A Level maths to sixth formers, and strongly believed that pupils did best when encouraged, not driven, and was as pleased as the parents when his pupils did well. "We can achieve much more than we imagine when we are encouraged to believe that we can," he would say.

In every area of his life he took pleasure in encouraging people; he would thank the music group at church and tell the pastor occasionally how his sermons were exactly what he needed to hear. Now and again in one of our philosophical chats he would say that on his gravestone he would like to have inscribed the words "He was an encourager."

For the last few years his health has deteriorated, and he is coping with a dodgy heart and arthritis that affects his legs, and needs to use a walking stick. But he's kept his sense of humour and his eyes still twinkle, so I was astonished when last time we met he

reminded me of his gravestone wish and asked sadly, "But how can I be an encourager to anybody as I am now?"

I told him that "You don't have to be perfect to inspire other people. The encouragement they receive from you is not about you, it's about them! They love the way you take time to listen, and empathise with them. Also, they're inspired by the way you deal with your struggles, your heartaches and your imperfections."

I told him about some of the frail residents in our housing and care homes who go out of their way to encourage our carers, thinking of one I'd heard about recently who encouraged a carer who'd had a miscarriage. And of 85-year-old Winifred who had been a nurse. That caring aspect was strong, so she wanted to stay and help in any way she could. One of the ways was sitting in the lounge with residents waiting to be taken to bed; before each one was collected by a carer she would say a little night-time prayer and quote a Scripture verse. It's also encouraging for staff when relatives say how well their loved ones are being looked after. Whether we are young or old, let's all encourage one another!

Find out more about Louise's work and her publications on our website: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/louise-morse



Caring from afar

These days, many of us live far away from ageing parents or relatives. Celal, our Finance Reporting Officer, tells us about his family's experience of supporting his mother Hayat, 92, and his now late father Bedii across two continents

Tell us a bit about your parents...

My parents emigrated from Turkey to the US in 1956. My father was a doctor specialising in anaesthesiology and went to the US on a student visa. They lived in New York and then New Jersey, before moving to Ottawa, Canada, for several years and then relocating again to Indiana. Wherever they went they were actively involved in the Turkish community.

As your parents grew older, what challenges did they encounter?

My mother developed mobility problems and my father developed dementia. My parents moved into a retirement community in Yuma, Arizona, close to where my sister lives, where my father could be cared for in the dementia wing. It was nice because my mom could visit every day. I used to Skype them regularly. Because my sister lived nearby, she could help with the technology.

Your father passed away in May 2020. How did you cope as a family?

Obviously, there were international travel restrictions due to COVID-19 so my wife Fatma and I couldn't attend the funeral. Even though my father's passing was expected, you really only grieve when the person is actually gone. It was difficult not being with my mom at this time. After he passed, my mom then flew to

Indianapolis to stay with my sister-in-law (my brother died a few years ago) and her children so at least she wasn't alone.

Your mom then travelled to Turkey. How did that come about?

She needed to return to Turkey to clear out the flat she and my father owned there, before selling it. She found the experience of air travel as an older person very easy as there was a lot of support. She was wheeled through security and onto the plane, and there was someone at the other end to get her luggage for her. While she was in Turkey sorting her affairs she stayed in a care home, where she was well looked after.

When did you next see your mom face-to-face?

Not until December 2021, when she came over to spend Christmas with me and my wife. It was so nice to finally see her – talking over a screen is not the same. After visiting us for Christmas, my mom returned to Indianapolis to spend time with my sister-in-law and her grandchildren there.

Where is your mom living now?

In August 2022, she moved back to a care home in Turkey for good. In September I was able to spend 12 days with her. It was just so nice to be able to do normal activities together, like sharing tea and biscuits and watching TV. My mom



is very up on current affairs and likes to talk through the big issues of the day. She's good company!

What advice would you give to anyone who is looking for a care home in a different country?

It's good if you have someone who can go and look around in person. My cousin visited several care homes and said this was the best. If there is someone who can visit

regularly, that can make a lot of difference. We're fortunate because my cousin can pop in regularly and help manage things like my mom's online banking. I think it's difficult for those who have no visitors. There is one lady at my mom's care home who has no visitors and she seems very lonely.

You are soon retiring from Pilgrims' Friend Society. Does that mean you'll be able to see your mom more regularly?

This is something I'm praying about a lot. As Christians, we have a duty to care for our parents. For all of us, that's going to look different. I appreciate that for people who are working full-time jobs and have children to look after, it may not be possible to see parents who are far away very often. However, for me things are winding down. My children are all grown-up. I'm wondering if maybe the Lord wants me to be near my mother, to spend time with her while I still can.



Celal's story highlights the importance of visitors, especially for those without family, or whose family are far away. We are so grateful for all the volunteers who visit our care homes and bless those who live with us with their company.



Could you come and volunteer with us? For details, see: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/volunteer

Share the faith

Rev'd Canon Ian Knox has some words of advice to help us share the gospel with older people this Christmas

There was this older lady who seemed able to share her faith with almost anyone. She would say things like this: "The carol, 'In the bleak midwinter', ends by asking a question of all of us who know the Christmas story, of how God gave himself to us in humble service: 'What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part'. The carol gives the answer, 'Yet what I can I give him – give him my heart!'"

The "older lady" was, of course, Queen Elizabeth, as she shared her faith openly in every Christmas broadcast. She was not a preacher, nor had she had any formal



theological training. She just spoke from her heart. This Christmas, it is not just the turn of our new King Charles, but it is our time to imitate our late Queen and do some sharing ourselves. This is especially so for those who remember most, if not all, of the Queen's reign and have family, friends and neighbours who have also lived quite a long time.

I am old myself, so old that I remember the cold, rainy day in 1952 when Princess Elizabeth became our young queen. So many of my contemporaries still need to hear the good news of Jesus and his love and his forgiveness. How can we help them?

Challenges. Let me not pretend that this is easy. It is hard to change as you get older. It is hard to see that a lifetime has not been lived as it should as far as God is

concerned. So, we say things like "I've done my best", or "I've never done anyone any harm", not realising that neither of these is really true! As we get older it is hard to face loneliness, bereavement and ageing. It is hard to face up to the fact that one day we will die, although we know we will and we think about it quite often.

There are some pitfalls to avoid as well. If someone is younger, they should not even say that they understand what it is like to be old and real humility is needed. How can you know what it is like to be 80 when you are 25? There needs to be a genuine respect. Never underestimate the knowledge and the intelligence of an older person – we have learnt quite a lot in our lifetime, often through our mistakes but also through quite a few little triumphs. To treat an older person like a child is extremely ungracious. My 99-year-old mother-in-law was as bright as a button, even though physically she could do very little. She died a couple of months ago with all her

faculties. At least we now have a chance of winning at Scrabble!

Potential. We have so much with which we can bless an older person. They can have peace with God, know His forgiveness and enjoy the certainty of heaven. I would share these things especially:

God's presence. "Even to your old age I am the Lord, and to grey hairs I will carry you. I have made and I will bear; I will carry and save". These beautiful words from Isaiah 46:4 show how it is not too late to become a Christian when you are old and also that God will be around for you. They are a constant consolation for me. Every Sunday my wife, Ruth, and I have a couple of widows round to our home for lunch. They value not only our friendship but the constant companionship of Jesus. It is great to share His love with them and with others we know who are lonely and bereaved.

God's peace. When I went to see my friend and neighbour, Basil, as he lay dying in hospital, I asked him if he had the assurance that all was well. He wept as he told me that all his churchgoing was only in his head and that he did not know Jesus in his heart. I was able to share with him the words from John 14 about Jesus having a place for us. We held hands as he prayed to trust his heart to our Lord. He died a couple of days later – and all was well.



For you, me, and all with whom we share our faith this Christmas time, may the words of Psalm 71:18 be true: "Even to old-age and grey hairs, oh God, do not forsake me". We have good news to share – let's do it!





"It's good exercise and good fun."
Shirley

"I enjoy the bowling very much."
Annie

Bowling along together



Family members at our home Emmaus House in Harrogate have put their own spin on a traditional indoor game as Pat Jones explains



"I've played short mat bowls myself for years. I love it and I wondered if our family members would enjoy it too. Our Maintenance Officer Adam attached some green felted material to a plywood board to create a mat we can use our lounge. We play every Friday morning and the family members really look forward to it. They compete as partners and are very encouraging of each other saying things like 'well bowled' and 'good wood' when their competitor does well. Each week, the person with the highest score is presented with a small trophy. At the end of the competition, the overall winner will be presented with a large trophy. It has been lovely to see the bonds between the partners develop and everyone has been given the opportunity to try something completely new."



"This is good fun."
Keith

"We enjoy bowling as it is something new that we haven't done before."
Christine



"It makes a change to do something different."
Olive



Resources

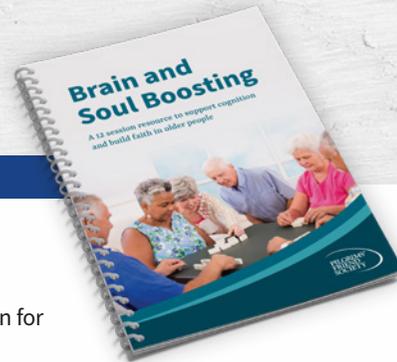
A selection of the resources we offer...

NEW EDITION: Brain and Soul Boosting, £20 by Louise Morse

Our updated and refreshed small-group resource is designed to deliver cognitive and spiritual stimulation for older people, including those with dementia.

Devised by Louise Morse, cognitive behavioural therapist and author, speaker and writer with Pilgrims' Friend Society, and Janet Jacob, psychogeriatric nurse and former care home manager, Brain and Soul Boosting is a series of sessions which support older people to build relationships and retain healthy cognition.

Themes include everything from celebrations to gardens, birds and holidays. Each session follows a carefully planned sequence that works well, leading participants into discussions and ending with a story from the Bible that illustrates the theme.



Brain and Soul Boosting at *Christmas Time* – updated for 2022

For Christmas, we've created a special edition of our Brain and Soul Boosting resource.

As our gift to you, we're offering this as a FREE download.

Louise says, "Brain and Soul Boosting at Christmas Time is an activity that exercises our brains, warms our hearts and brings us into the Spirit of Christmas. Questions prompt thoughts and discussions about Christmas, and there are activities that everyone will enjoy. Although BSB was developed for older people, younger people are enjoying it too, which makes it ideal for Christmas

and family get-togethers. It can even be done over Zoom at Christmas time!

This version follows the arc of the Christmas story, from the Old Testament to the New. It is brought out in three separate sessions, each drawing out a different aspect of Christmas and what it means in our lives. The first session looks at how Jesus' birth was planned and prophesied, the second the angel's announcement to Mary and the journey to Bethlehem, and the third the birth of Jesus that we celebrate on Christmas Day.

Each session is in five parts:

- A short Scripture reading
- Exploring what this day means to us, with points for discussion
- An aspect of the biblical story of Christmas
- A small activity to do together
- Reflections and a closing prayer

Brain and Soul Boosting at Christmas Time

A special Christmas edition of Brain and Soul Boosting with three sessions exploring the Christmas story



Download your **FREE** Brain and Soul Boosting at Christmas Time session here: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/bsb-christmas



You can own all three for the special price of **£24.99**

Dementia resources – bundle

This bundle brings together our dementia information pack Putting the Pieces Together, the book Could it be Dementia? and the devotional resource Worshipping with Dementia.

Created by Louise Morse, author and speaker for Pilgrims' Friend Society, these resources have been designed to equip those facing dementia with both practical advice and spiritual encouragement.

Christmas gift idea...

God's Word in God's World – bundle

This bundle includes a book and two jigsaws. Our glossy colour photo book God's Word In God's World pairs Bible verses with beautiful images from creation while two 48-piece God's Word in God's World jigsaws feature images and verses from the book. Our God's Word In God's Word resources were devised by Ruth Ranger, whose father Jack lives at our home Middlefields House in Chippenham. Ruth says, "I wanted something to bring both God's beautiful world and His

wonderful words to Dad in a relaxed and accessible way."

Please send us your orders by Wednesday 14th December. We'll do our very best to get them to you in time for Christmas!

Purchase all three for **£29.99**



For our full list of resources and to order online, visit:
www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/resources

Alternatively, ☎ 0300 303 1403

King Charles III: *a later life calling*

The appointment of our new septuagenarian monarch has prompted Alexandra Davis, Director of Marketing and Communications, to reflect on how we might all prepare for new challenges in our later years

What feels like several years ago, way back in the summer, I wrote a piece for this magazine reflecting on the life and faith of Elizabeth II as we celebrated her Platinum Jubilee. Of course, since then we have said goodbye to our Queen and welcomed our new King, Charles III. And I suspect many of us have pondered what it must be like to step into your life-long calling at the ripe old age of 73...

Charles III is the oldest monarch to accede to the throne. Lots of people take up new hobbies or step into new roles in later life, often supporting their communities practically, emotionally, and spiritually, but very, very few of us will ever have to step into a job quite as big as King in our seventies.

I guess the big difference between the King and the rest of us (other than all the other things that are definitely different between us and him!) is that he's spent his life working up to this moment. He always knew that it was unlikely that his later life would be organic gardening and watercolours; he's been preparing, training, getting ready for this moment since he became heir to the throne at three years old. While the rest of us spend our middle life working, doing, achieving, in the anticipation of a quieter season as we get older,

Charles III has known always that this stage of his life would carry more responsibility than his life leading up to it.

I wonder what our communities would be like if we all saw our calling a bit like this: that later life isn't a time to take it easy, but a time to prepare for and commit to. Obviously, there are likely to be changes to our lives as we get older, especially when it comes to physical ability and health, but could our mindsets be shaped to help us think of later life as a rich source of achievement? A time of influencing, supporting, encouraging others; a time of connection and engagement with the world around us. Those given the gift of later life are given something very special, something to be trained for and embraced.

So, let's be praying for our new King, that he will adjust to his new role and find all the energy and inspiration that he needs as our head of state. Let's also pray that, in the same way that his mother found a new source of hope and guidance in her faith in her later years, that he too would grow in his knowledge and understanding of Jesus. And let's pray that we would each be inspired and encouraged to train for our later lives, to prepare ourselves to use them well for God's glory.



My story: **RALPH**

After leaving theological college, Ralph was called to India, during which time he met the Queen. Back in the UK, he took up ministry roles in local communities around England. Now 95 and living at Finborough Court, Great Finborough, Ralph, together with daughter Clare, shares his life story

WORDS: Helen McKay-Ferguson

"Will you let me be your servant, Let me be as Christ to you, Pray that I may have the grace, To let you be my servant too."

In his room at Finborough Court, Ralph reads these words aloud from a well-loved hymn book. A man with a strong musical sense – he was once the lead baritone in a male voice choir – it is hymns that he often turns to to find and share encouragement and comfort.

The pictures on the walls provide snapshots of a long and fascinating life. One shows a Fairey Swordfish aeroplane, a reminder of his National Service as an engineer with the Navy where he installed radar in aircraft. On the opposite wall a painting shows the lush Indian countryside. Above the armchair is a black and white photo of a handsome young

man on a motorbike – his father in France during World War I.

Ralph was born in Ottawa, Canada in 1927. Following the Wall Street Crash in 1929 Ralph's father lost his job and the family moved back to Alcombe in Somerset where his father took up the role of local postmaster. Ralph used to help with running errands on his bicycle. After school and completing his National Service, Ralph felt called into ministry, and in 1948 he went to Wesley Theology College in Bristol.

In 1954 the Methodist Missionary Society sent him to work in India, serving the Anglican Church of South India. First, he had to study Tamil. "I wasn't top of the class but I got there in the end," says Ralph. He then started working with the City Mission in Chennai and its surrounding areas, often cycling around the



villages to provide pastoral care to the poor and the sick.

It was back in secondary school that Ralph met his future wife Rosalind, but it wasn't until 11 years later that they married. After school, Rosalind completed teacher training before going out to work at St Hilda's School in Ooty, Tamil Nadu. As this was on the other side of the country from Ralph, he had a long journey every three months to see her. "It was very romantic," says Clare. "They used to go for picnics in the countryside and walk up a hill close to the school, named Snowdon."

Because the accommodation for students and junior clergy was single sex, they were told they couldn't marry until after Ralph's ordination. However, the Bishop eventually felt sorry for them and they were allowed to marry in December 1955, three months before Ralph was ordained in the Church of India.

Ralph played a key role in the building of a new church in the suburb of Kodambakkam. Under Ralph's influence, the church was named the

Church of the Risen Redeemer. Ralph also worked with a team of architects and engineers to create a housing estate for the Dalit community, many of whom had moved from the countryside in search of work. This resulted in a road being named after him – Taylor Road.

In 1961 Ralph and Rosalind had the honour of meeting the Queen and Prince Philip. They had come to visit Fort St George in Chennai and the Queen wanted to see some records in St Mary's Church. Ralph was given the important job of showing her around. "Dad says the Queen was very lovely and gracious to them, he remembers her beautiful blue eyes. My mum went to some trouble to look the part, getting gloves and a hat especially. I still have the gloves Mum wore to shake hands with the Queen," says Clare.

Ralph and Rosalind had three sons in India. However, when Ralph fell sick with malaria, he was put on furlough and the family were sent to Luton to recuperate. Ralph was then asked to take on an industrial chaplaincy role in Grimsby, working among the seamen on the

docks. Ralph felt a real affinity with the local people and loved his work. It was in Grimsby that Clare and her younger brother were born.

The family were then sent to Swindon in 1971 to serve in Queen's Drive Methodist Church. In his spare time, Ralph built his own boat in the church rooms. "It was a labour of love. I remember when it was finally finished our whole family helped him to lift it out through the big French windows," says Clare.

In 1979 Ralph went to superintend a group of churches in Norfolk. His role took him around rural villages and on one occasion even as far as Italy. Following an earthquake in Salerno in 1980, the local churches helped with the relief effort. Ralph and two others had the job of driving caravans of aid across from France to Italy. The trip should only have lasted a week. However, when the other vicar had a heart attack in the middle of Rome, Ralph ended up staying longer than anticipated, helping with the relief effort.

Ralph's final ministerial role was in Bideford, Devon. With retirement came the blessing of a house left to Ralph and Rosalind by her cousin. Called Greenhollow and located in the village of Woodcombe, it was a house Ros had known all her life. The house had beautiful gardens where Ralph could pursue his passion for gardening.

When Rosalind developed dementia, Clare and the family grew concerned that they were remote from everyone else. And so 12 years ago she and her husband took the step of

building an annexe for Ralph and Rosalind at their home in Suffolk. Clare took on the role as carer. For a time, Ralph continued to preach, visiting local churches and managing Clare's garden and his greenhouse.

However, as Rosalind's dementia progressed and Ralph developed health problems too, things came to a crisis point. "In early 2022 my father went to hospital. He came out with COVID and Mum and I caught it too," says Clare. "We had to isolate from the rest of the family, with me sleeping in a chair. It was all too much. It wasn't an easy decision, but I knew I couldn't cope any longer and that they needed more than we could give them at home."

Clare was searching for a faith-based home when she discovered Finborough Court. Ralph and Rosalind moved in in Spring 2022 and have rooms opposite each other.

Clare says, "I'm a nurse, working as a national officer for social care, for the Royal College of Nursing. I have to say, I've been blown away by how lovely Finborough Court is. The rooms are beautiful and very comfortable, and the staff are wonderful. My mum is always very contented when I visit."

Ralph enjoys chatting to the staff and other family members and joining in with the activities. Outside his window he has his own flowerbed. When Clare comes to visit, they enjoy tending it together. "He loves watching things grow, it brings him hope. He couldn't be happier," she says. "It is wonderful my parents can still be together and I know that they are in the right place."



Watch our video to find out more about how we care for those who live with us: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/thewaywecare

Gift FORM

...CONTINUED



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