

The Pilgrims' MAGAZINE

WINTER 2024

How to...
**Brighten dark days
for older people**
this winter

All about...

**Messy
Vintage**

Could your church try it?

**Carols for granny &
goodies in stockings**

Our folks recount their
festive memories

**PILGRIMS'
FRIEND
SOCIETY**

CHRISTMAS APPEAL
Support our work!

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.nathan@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

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Or contact us via the details below:

Pilgrims' Friend Society
175 Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 2AL

www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

☎ 0300 303 1403

✉ info@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

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Isaiah 9:6

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📍 See back cover for details



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News and events from across our charity and beyond

Homesdale care home closure & renewal

The decision has been made to close our care home in Wanstead, London, by 31st March 2025. The care home buildings have known deficiencies that mean we cannot care for people living with dementia and those who are very frail.

We plan to build a new home on the site which will provide for more than 40 older people in a property built specifically to enable people in later life to flourish. As with the household model developed at Middlefields House Chippenham, the community at Homesdale will be organised into smaller groups of around 12, enabling a close-knit and family-like atmosphere in the home.

This announcement does not affect the housing accommodation which sits on the same site at Homesdale.



Please pray

For all those involved in this important decision, especially those who will need to find a new place to live and for staff needing to find jobs elsewhere

For the right steps to be taken to ensure the long-term future of Christian care in Wanstead



Faith & Spirituality Network

On 1st November, we welcomed members from the National Care Forum (NCF) to Middlefields House in Chippenham for an in-person meeting of the organisation's Faith & Spirituality Network. Friederike Hamilton, Operations Manager for Pilgrims' Friend Society, said, "This was a lovely opportunity to show colleagues from across the sector how we support spiritual life and those living with dementia in our care homes."

The day also included a presentation by Alive Activities showcasing their Empathy Suit – a suit made up of 13 components which work to inhibit mobility, motor skills, vision and hearing, giving the wearer a sense of how it may feel to be a person living with dementia.

A tribute to Lynn Hall



Lynn, an operations manager with Pilgrims' Friend Society for many years, passed away after a short illness on 1st September. While we mourn the loss of a dear friend and colleague, we rejoice in the knowledge that she is now with her Saviour.

Maureen Sim, our Director of Operations, says, "Lynn worked tirelessly with our homes, our family members and our staff and developed a bespoke Christian approach to care which underpins all that we do, we call it The Way We Care. We will miss Lynn with great affection, but she has left behind a very real legacy, which will affect the way we do things at Pilgrims' Friend Society for a very long time to come."

Christmas postcards

Faith in Later Life are offering Christmas postcards to help support ministry and outreach to older people.

There is no charge for these postcards but a donation to cover postage would be appreciated. For further information, visit:

faithinlaterlife.org/christmas-versecard



In other news

Many of our homes will host Christmas fairs over the festive period. These include: 7th December at Luff House, Walton-on-the-Naze, 12th December at Emmaus House, Harrogate, 14th December at Milward House, Tunbridge Wells, 14th December at Framland, Wantage.

For further details, take a look at the homes' Facebook pages – search by 'home/housing scheme name' plus '– Pilgrims' Friend Society'.

Louise Morse's next Zoom is on 21st January at 2.30pm exploring 'What is God's plan for our later years?' She will be joined by Revd Roger Hitchings, a retired pastor known for presenting a Bible-based understanding of later years.

To sign up, see: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/events

Elizabeth Goodsmen joins us as Business Manager at Bridgemoor, Bath. In our Support Office team, Stephen Stripp is our new Property Service Manager and Tyler Sewell-Nicholas joins us as Communications and Social Media Officer. Akhil Mohan is also our HR & Payroll Assistant (maternity cover).

For more great stories, follow us on social media:





“The most rewarding job I’ve ever had”

After calling time on a high-flying career in advertising, Peter has taken on a brand-new role as a Hummingbird, supporting those living with dementia at Milward House, our home in Tunbridge Wells



Not so long ago Peter, 69, found himself out on the common with David, 77, attempting to fly a toy drone. The difficulty? The instructions were in Hungarian. “Thanks to Google Translate we managed to get a rough idea of what we were supposed to do, then we went for a cup of tea,” says Peter, “It was a lovely little adventure.”

Peter’s ability to think outside the box is one reason the team at Milward House named him The Way We Care Champion for July. The award

recognises those staff members who are embracing our approach to care, The Way We Care, getting to know each person really well and ensuring they have opportunities to do the things they love.

As well as jaunts out with David, Peter could just as easily be found swapping painting tips with Maureen, a prolific watercolourist who sometimes manages to knock out two or three paintings per week to Peter’s modest two or three per year, or settling down for a game with arch Scrabble player Anthea. “She always beats me,” says Peter.

It was at the end of 2021 Peter came to join the team. “I’d retired at the end of 2019. For me, lockdown wasn’t such a terrible time – I’d take our two dogs out for a walk and spent lots of time painting and doing DIY. However, I got to the stage where I



knew I had to get out there and do something else. Retirement can feel like stepping off a precipice, you do the same thing for years and years and then what?”

“Retirement can feel like stepping off a precipice, you do the same thing for years and years and then what?”

Peter saw the part-time role of Hummingbird advertised and decided to apply. As a Hummingbird, he supports those in our care home who are living with dementia, ensuring nobody goes long without an interaction. Having someone like Peter around to provide companionship and initiate contact – something those living with dementia can struggle to do – can make a big difference.

“It’s all about understanding each individual and relating to them on their terms. We all have good days and bad days. If someone is sad then it’s my goal to leave them in a better place than before I came,” he says.

During the afternoon, he tends to visit people in their rooms, while others are occupied in the lounge with activities. In the early evening, he’ll head to the lounge himself, chatting to people while the carers are busy with bedtime.

“It’s lovely when I arrive and people say ‘oh Peter’s here!’ They are genuinely excited to see me and I’m delighted to see them, too. It’s incredibly rewarding, in fact it’s the most rewarding job I’ve ever had. You see the impact of what you do immediately and your presence means so much to people.”

“...your presence means so much to people.”

Peter finds that being older himself is an advantage. “Many staff who work in the home are two or three generations younger than those who live there, whereas I’m only one generation younger. I remember things



like Winston Churchill's funeral and the era of The Beatles. We have a lot of common ground and people appreciate that."

In many ways, Peter's old job as the creative director for an advertising agency, working with big financial services clients like Legal & General and Prudential, feels a world away. "I enjoyed my job, although it did change a lot over the years. At the start it was quite exciting, we'd draw the artwork by hand and motorcycle messengers would race proofs across town. We'd get wine and dined by clients. By the end, it was basically sitting around looking at computers – which made life easier, but also less dynamic."

One thing Peter always enjoyed about the role was connecting with people. Now he finds the connections he makes with those he meets are on a deeply spiritual level.

"There's one lady who lives here, Evelyn, who is over 100. She



was a missionary in South America and she has such a deep understanding of the Bible. To sit down and go through a devotional with her is an absolute joy and privilege. I'm growing and deepening in my own faith. It is a blessing to spend time with her."

When Peter tells his contemporaries about his new part-time job they are often surprised. "They can't quite get their heads round it," he says. "I feel a bit sorry for them, actually. They spend their days on the golf course and going on nice holidays, all those clichéd things you do when you're retired and live in a place like Tunbridge Wells. There's so much they could be doing that's infinitely more rewarding."

Peter's desire to make the most of his time is driven in part by a recent health scare. "Shortly after I retired, I was diagnosed with a serious illness which I've now fully recovered from," he says. "It shook me up a bit and made me consider my own mortality. While I still have the ability, I want to get out and do something that's of real benefit to others. If you have reached retirement age and are fortunate enough to have your health, then why not?"



Please pray:

Thank God for all our wonderful members of staff who care for older people as they would their own family.



To find out more about The Way We Care visit www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/thewaywecare



The Way We Care Champion Award goes to...

Each month across our homes a member of staff is named The Way We Care Champion. A round of applause goes to these recent winners...



Alice

Kitchen Assistant at Framland, Wantage

Alice says, "When I'm here, it's like I'm with another family. I had a really close bond with my grandparents and I treat those who live here as I would have wanted my grandparents to be treated."

"Alice is very hard-working but will always make time to come out of the kitchen and interact with our family members. She promotes The Way We Care by reminding other staff to give our family members choice at mealtimes using visual show. She ensures family members have time to respond. She always wants what is best for our family members, will go above and beyond and is always happy to learn more."

Nicole, The Way We Care Lead at Framland

Lynn

Carer at Shottermill House, Haslemere

Lynn says, "I love doing the little things that make life special for our family members. Recently, I bought bath bombs for a family member to enhance her bathing experience. It's these small gestures that mean a lot – I believe they truly improve their quality of life."

"Lynn always goes the extra mile, making sure our family members are well cared for on a person-centred level. She ensures they have the right nutrition and encourages them to socialise and interact to avoid isolation and boredom. Lynn has a responsible and active approach, supporting family members to have showers or baths. She is an excellent communicator which reflects in her being a good team member."

Lux, The Way We Care Lead at Shottermill House





Hope in a dark place

Alex Drew from our partner charity Faith in Later Life explores how to share the gospel with older people in winter

Winter can be a challenging time for many, but especially for older people. As the days grow shorter, colder, and darker, opportunities for social connection diminish. It becomes harder for them to attend their usual lifegiving activities or even leave their homes, making older people vulnerable to isolation and loneliness.

This is an opportunity for us all to consider how we can show love and care for those who are staying home more during the winter, and of course, at Faith in Later Life we believe that a relationship with Jesus is the ultimate lifelong and eternal response to loneliness.

But sharing the gospel with older people comes with challenges, especially during the winter months. Overcoming these requires creativity, understanding, and authenticity.

Challenges

For many older people, winter brings additional hurdles. Mobility and health issues can be worse during the colder weather, moods often dip and worries over the cost of heating and rising living expenses leave many financially strained and even stressed in this season.

These challenges can make it physically and emotionally difficult to get out and about and remind us that connecting with older people during winter is much needed but requires a little more thought.

Overcoming

Winter brings one particular opportunity — Christmas! The festive season can soften hearts and open doors, as the familiar message of Christ's birth brings great comfort to older people.

Churches can host Christmas events that include older people, such as accessible carol services at care homes or Christmas dinners for those who live alone. Small gestures like a home visit, phone call, or thoughtful gift or card can spark meaningful conversations about the hope Jesus brings.

Beyond Christmas, invitations that come with the offer of a lift are wonderful ways to brighten dark winter days. Whether it's an invitation to your church's seniors' event, Warmbank, or coffee morning, or an outing to a garden centre or your home for lunch, these are likely to be appreciated.

We also encourage people to share our free DailyHOPE phonenumber with older people – **0800 804 8044**. This is a lovely way of listening to hymns, prayers and Bible reflections, giving hope from the comfort of home, without the need to interact with others, for those days when that's difficult.

Good news

When sharing the gospel with older people, it's important to approach with empathy. Many

carry years of life experience, including grief, loss, disappointments, and even misgivings about God and the church. Winter, with its darkness and cold, can magnify some of these feelings.

Start by building genuine relationships. Older people, like anyone, respond best to conversations about God when they feel genuinely loved and valued – nobody wants to be a project. Ask about their life, fears, and hopes, really get to know them, and honestly share your own experiences of life and of God's goodness. You don't need to be a theologian!

Some older people, especially those nearing the end of their lives, may be grappling with fears about dependence and death. The assurance of God's promises and eternal life through Jesus can bring real peace in the here and now.



Margaret

Margaret, 82, had lived alone for several years after her husband died. Winter was always a bad time for her. "It felt like I was waiting for the end," Margaret said. "I didn't have much hope left, and the dark days made it even worse."

One winter, her neighbour reached out with an invitation to pop over for a cup of tea. Over time, the neighbour shared the gospel and invited Margaret to a carol concert at her church. It was there Margaret heard the message of Jesus' birth in a new way – the promise that God had come to be with every one of us, even in our darkest moments, even to those who had never been to church before.

Margaret found new hope that winter. "I realised I wasn't alone, that God had been with me all along, even when I felt abandoned. That Christmas was the start of my relationship with Jesus." Margaret is now a church member and volunteer, and draws comfort from her faith in every season.

Winter does bring some challenges when it comes to connecting with older people, but it also provides fabulous opportunities to share the life-giving message of Jesus. Through thoughtful and meaningful outreach, we can bring the light of the gospel into some of the darkest seasons of life. It could change someone's winter – and their eternity.

Love My Neighbour

This simple campaign encourages us all to connect with older neighbours this winter.

To find out more, visit:
faithinlaterlife.org/love-my-neighbour



What's next for social care reform?

Nathan Jones from the National Care Forum considers how well the government is upholding promised reform to adult social care



Labour's start to government has been a little bit bumpy to say the least. Many in the sector were nervous when one of their first actions was to scrap the planned cap on lifetime care costs and workforce training fund inherited from the last government: are we about to see social care kicked into the long grass or will Labour prove to be serious about its manifesto pledges to reform adult social care?

We've had mixed messages since the party conferences. On the one hand we've seen a shift in tone from the government which would suggest the government intends to take concrete action on reform, but on the other, we've seen the total obliviousness shown to social care providers by the Treasury following its decision to increase employer National Insurance Contributions and lower the earnings threshold at which employers start paying NIC. Below we outline the current policy landscape and direction of travel.

Manifesto pledges

Labour's manifesto included a pledge to reform adult social care as part of its mission to 'Build an NHS fit for the future'. To do this, they pledged two interconnected things. First, to establish a fair pay agreement for care workers, via collective bargaining between trade unions and employers to reach a set of fair pay, terms and conditions alongside training standards. Second, to create a National Care Service 'underpinned by national standards, delivering

consistency across the country. Services will be locally delivered, with a principle of "home first" that supports people to live independently for as long as possible. We've seen some movement on the first but still lack fundamental details for the latter. More on this below.

A changing tone

After a period of silence on their plans, the government has begun to recommit to its manifesto pledges and talk more freely about adult social care reform, albeit minus the funding required. A shift in tone was evident at the Labour Party Conference. In several fringes and speeches, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting and Minister for Care, Stephen Kinnock talked about how important adult social care is to fixing the NHS but also as an essential service in its own right which enables people to live good lives and boost economic growth. Streeting even went out of his way to describe himself as the Secretary of State for Social Care. There also appeared to be an acknowledgment that any long-term reform must be accompanied by short-term stabilisation measures, particularly for the workforce, but there was very little detail on what that would entail.

“Streeting even went out of his way to describe himself as the Secretary of State for Social Care.”

Much of the conversation around adult social care reform was in the context of what the government has described as 'three shifts' in health care:

1. Shifting from hospitals to communities
2. Shifting from sickness to prevention
3. Shifting from analogue to digital

Clearly, the government's health and social care team is viewing social care in the wider context of their 10-year health plan and the findings of Lord Darzi's report in the NHS. The shift in tone and an apparent willingness to work with others to find a way forward is welcome, but we still need to understand the full details of what might be proposed.

A fair pay agreement

In October, the government introduced its Employment Rights Bill. Alongside a series of strengthened workers' rights, the proposed legislation creates a framework for a legally binding fair pay agreement which may be negotiated by an 'Adult Social Care Negotiating Body' made up of relevant employer and worker representatives. The Bill implies that this body would have a broad remit to negotiate on remuneration for social care workers as well as terms and conditions of employment and any other specified matters relating to the employment of care workers.

However, in the absence of detail, the Bill empowers to Secretary of State to lay further

regulations at a later date through secondary legislation. It is likely we will see a lengthy consultation and implementation period so we're probably a few years away from any fair pay agreement.

Any implementation of an agreement must be backed by state funding as the matter can't simply be passed to local authorities and employers in an unfunded manner, or it will fail.

With social care providers having to find millions of pounds to fund the employer NICs requirements, it makes it much harder to see how we move to a fair pay agreement any time soon – and in fact it undermines the ability to keep paying the Real Living Wage where providers have committed to that.

National Care Service

The National Care Service remains a vague outline, and we suspect the government is still figuring out what it might do as part of their 10-year health and social care plans.

At the very least, the government's vision of a National Care Service is not one which would see providers nationalised or forced into a top-down command and control structure, mirroring the NHS. Rather the intention seems to provide social care a 'brand identity' while also ensuring funding streams are rationalised and standards and quality are improved; the ambition seems to be national consistency while ensuring local control, that public money is used effectively and transparently, and more people are able to access care and support at an earlier point to promote independence.

The lack of shape of the National Care Service policy might be why there has been speculation





about a potential 'Royal Commission' or 'cross-government' taskforce on wider reform of social care. Nothing has been officially confirmed, but if this is the government's plan it must not be used to kick reform into the long grass; there are a series of reforms that can be introduced alongside the running of such a commission. The key will be ensuring that any commission has a very focused remit, alongside actions now, such as interim funded measures to improve the pay, terms and conditions of care workers ahead of a fair pay agreement and the formal adoption of 'the Adult Social Care workforce strategy' which has been developed by a wide range of organisations and people working in and drawing upon social care.

There are multiple reports that the government can use to inform the shape and development of a National Care Service such as, the Fabian Society's 'Support Guaranteed' ADASS's Time to

Act or the Archbishops' Commission's 'Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England'. The latter report will have resonance with readers as it seeks to inject more humanity into the social care reform debate. It uses, as its starting point, one of the most fundamental aspects of Christian theology – we are all made in God's image and as such we all have significant dignity and worth. The report develops this theme and calls for a 'national care covenant' to underpin the National Care Service which sets out the role and contribution of people, communities and government and clear expectations of what support should be available. It seeks to go beyond a mere government taskforce or commission, to fully engage people across our society.

WHAT NEXT?

With services in every part of the country, it is crucial that we continuously remind the government that adult social care is a key part of our nation's infrastructure, with the potential to unlock economic prosperity and combat socio-economic and health inequalities. The Chancellor's decision to increase employer National Insurance on social care providers shows that there is a lot more work to do to educate the government about the vital public services we all deliver. DHSC may have got the message, but the Treasury clearly is not yet on board. Investment in social care is essential for the government to meet not only its health mission, but also its missions to kickstart economic growth, break down barriers to opportunity and move towards net-zero and environmental sustainability.

All those with a stake in care need to reach out to the many new MPs who have backgrounds in

local government, as paid and unpaid carers and as people accessing care and support services. It is going to be much harder for this government to ignore adult social care reform due the numbers who have direct experience of care and we need to harness that. The Liberal Democrats in particular have made social care reform a central plank of their policy agenda. This is strengthened by the fact Layla Moran, Lib Dem MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, is the chair of the Health and Social Care Committee. It seems to us there are many routes to pushing social care reform and holding the government to account over its pledges and actions it may take which undermine those pledges.

At the National Care Forum, we'd be interested in hearing from readers about what your hopes are for social care reform from this new government. Please do send your thoughts to my colleague Victoria Garratt on victoria.garratt@nationalcareforum.org.uk

PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY

Welcome to the WINTER 2024 DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

Welcome to the Pilgrims' Friend Society Winter Prayer Guide. Thank you for praying with us for our communities – those who live, work, and volunteer with us. We are so grateful for your support in this way.

'The Lord your God is with you....He will rejoice over you with singing'
Zephaniah 3:17

PULL OUT AND USE

Here's how you can be praying for 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



Homesdale, Wanstead, London – Sarah Walsh

Emmaus House, Harrogate – Chrissie Medway-Steel

Carey Gardens, Kirby Muxloe – Andy Harrison



Those living in our homes and schemes

Lord, we are so thankful for our family members, as we call those who choose to live in one of our care homes. We pray everyone who lives with us would sense Your Spirit with them, to comfort and inspire them this winter season.



Care teams

Dear Lord, please bless our care teams, please help, guide, encourage and strengthen them in the important work they do to care and bless each day.



Chrissie Medway-Steel



Mondays



Evington Home, Leicester
– Jeanette Davis and
Indy Modare
Dorothea Court, Bedford –
Ruth Broomhall



Our catering, maintenance, and administration teams

Lord, you know how our support teams do so much to provide and facilitate the important work being done in our communities. Bless them deeply and give them wisdom in all they do.



Our resources (see more on p.25)

God our loving Father, we pray for people who are struggling with dementia and ask that those who could be helped by our resources would access them easily and benefit from them.



Indy Modare

Wednesdays



Royd Court, Mirfield –
Vicki Miller
**Finborough Court Housing,
Great Finborough** –
Keziah Vince



The Operations Team overseeing our homes and schemes

Lord, we pray for our wonderful operations managers who travel around the country to support our homes and schemes managers. Please protect them as they do this, keep them from getting ill and give them the resilience, strength and inspiration they need this season.



Recruitment

We pray for God to bring the right people to apply to work at Pilgrims' Friend Society. Lord, please guide our recruitment team in all the work that they do to fill vacancies. Give them wisdom and discernment.



Barbara Margetts,
Assistant Director
of Operations

Tuesdays



**Finborough Court, Great
Finborough** – Rachel Fishburne
and Karen Bleay
Emmaus House, Whitehaven
– Julie Crawford (Acting Manager)
Pilgrim Gardens, Leicester
– Andy Harrison



Activities and Community Engagement (ACE) Facilitators

We lift our ACE Facilitators up to the Lord. God, please bless them as they provide creative and enriching activities within our homes. Strengthen the connections they have made with local churches and bring new opportunities to develop.



Growth and Renewal Programme

Join us in praying for God to open up opportunities for new homes and schemes to be built and existing ones to join Pilgrims' Friend Society. Lord, we pray for wisdom and discernment for team members working in this area.



Barbara
Mackenzie, ACE
Facilitator

Thursdays



Framland, Wantage
– PumDim Skinner
**Koinonia Christian Care
Home, Worthing** – John Manea
and Nathan Page



Our Support Team – Finance, HR, Communications and Property teams

Dear Lord, we pray for your blessing on the work of our Support Office based in London Bridge. Help them in their work as they support our homes and schemes. Please give them the attention to detail and wisdom they need and help them work effectively as a team to serve their colleagues around the organisation.



Church and community engagement

We give thanks for all pastors, clergy and church members who give their time and talents to further enhance the spiritual life of our communities. We thank You Lord for each church, school and group that has a connection to one of our homes and schemes.



Hugh Lambourne,
Director of Property
Services

Fraturdays



Middlefields House, Chippenham – Rali Ivanova, Friederike Hamilton, Sarah Stockinger, Ana Jesus
Strathclyde House, Skelmorlie – Tina McKeown



Volunteers

We ask You God to bless our many volunteers who kindly give their time and bring their skills to our communities.

We thank You for the wonderful gifts they bring and ask You to increase their number so that more people will come and share their talents with our family members.



Giving

We praise You Father God for every gift that we receive from faithful supporters of our work. May You continue to provide financially, Lord, particularly through our Christmas Appeal.



Directors and trustees

Dear Father God, we pray Your blessing on the Executive Team and Board who lead Pilgrims' Friend Society. Please guide them as they oversee the work and direction of the charity and give them wisdom and clarity in all their decision making.



Families and relatives

We lift to You Lord all those who have entrusted their loved ones to our care. We ask You to help those who may be walking through difficult seasons, that they may know Your peace that surpasses all understanding.

Saturdays



Luff House, Walton-on-the-Naze – Timothy Agbenike and Sharon Rowley
Milward House, Tunbridge Wells – Sarah Bayliss, Sid Martin
Shottermill House, Haslemere – Anne Pegler and Mike Beere



MORE WAYS TO PRAY : Sign up to our Prayer News email which goes out regularly with news and updates to guide your prayers:
Sign up here: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/pray



Our monthly Family News email contains all our latest prayer updates, plus details of happenings from across the organisation. Visit: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/keepintouch



Louise ANSWERS

Louise Morse works for Pilgrims' Friend Society as Speaker, Trainer and Author. She is also a Christian counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist. In each edition, she offers advice on a different issue

Q My grandfather, a former pastor, has vascular dementia and is in hospital after a fall. He is the quietest, most gentle man, but nurses tell us he swears and hits out at them. What is going on?

A Being a hospital patient is confusing and unsettling, and for someone whose brain is damaged and can't make sense of much of everyday life, it can be terrifying. Take, for example, when your grandfather is woken in the morning by strangers who are trying to take his clothes off and wash him. He doesn't remember that he's in a hospital ward: he doesn't know who they are, and he feels that he is being attacked. So he defends himself by shouting and trying to push them away.

A better way for someone with dementia is for a nurse to sit quietly next to him for a few minutes, holding his hand and saying gently, 'Hello David. Good morning. Time to wake up and have some breakfast? My name is Jennifer and I'm a nurse in <NAME>-hospital. Your wife, Jane, told us to look after you...' His wife's name will be reassuring. Just 'bubbling' soothingly until he wakes up without feeling threatened. And smiling at him, with friendly body language. Taking time, being gentle, and adjusting to David's morning rhythm. Some people wake up instantly, like a startled cat, but others are like a machine turning over slowly.

And when it's never been part of the person's vocabulary where does the bad language

come from? People are shocked when they hear a godly older person using language that would make a docker blush.

It's because the part of the brain that normally controls unacceptable behaviour has been damaged by the dementia, usually the frontal temporal lobes. Our brains record everything that we ever see, hear or do, and memories with the strongest recall are those laid down with intense emotion. We even remember where we were at the time. (Do you remember where you were when you heard of Queen Elizabeth's death? Or of an accident involving a loved one?)

Pastors' work can take them into insalubrious places, and they hear shocking language from damaged people. These memories are laid down and suppressed because they are unpleasant and unacceptable, but they can emerge when the 'control' has been damaged or, alternatively, when the situation appears to be the same as the disturbing event(s) years earlier.

The answer is to reduce the person's stress and fear, by reassuring them as described earlier.

Get in touch with Louise: ✉ louise.morse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

Find out more about her work and publications: 🌐 www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/louise-morse



Christmas memories

Those living in our care homes and housing schemes reminisce about Christmas past

“Christmas to me was always special. Something I looked forward to and always loved. Even during the restrictions in the Second World War, somehow my parents always managed to make Christmas special. There seemed to be plenty around this time of year and we didn't seem to want for anything.

“One memory that I have is getting fruit in my stocking. The Jaffa orange. It seemed huge to me with a thick skin and juicy flesh. The Cox's orange pippin apple. Oh, and it was good, so good, with an orangy flesh that tasted like no other apple ever tasted.

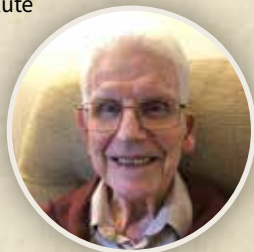
“And then there was the empty sock that we hung up at the end of our beds. You closed your eyes, tried to stay awake to see who would fill the stocking. Was Father Christmas real? The next we knew it was morning and we awoke to see the socks were full of goodies. My youngest sister would come and sit on my bed and explore the contents, fruit, toffees and other 'munchies', and lots of little stocking fillers.

“It was always a magical time of year. Families got together, ate together, had fun and laughter together. Our mother did the ceremony of the Christmas pudding baking, and my favourite bit was licking the bowl after

the cake had been made. There was much advance preparation made as Mother baked early for the great day and Dad coming home saying he'd 'managed to get a bird'. Never a turkey or goose, always just referred to as 'the bird', big enough to feed the whole family.

“But the best thing about Christmas was that 'God became flesh and dwelt among us'. The Creator of the universe became one of us and enable us to live with Him forever. It was at Christmastime that I finally realised this truth and gave my life to the Lord Jesus. That would change my life for ever. I was a member of the YMCA and I had become a full member because I wanted to help people, but I hadn't really let Christ into my life and allow him to take over. Finally, in my own bedroom at two o'clock in the morning on the 29th December 1955 I surrendered my heart and life to the Lord Jesus and allowed Him to take the reins of my life. What an absolute joy and privilege it has been to serve Him for almost 70 years.

Roy, 91
Strathclyde House,
Skelmorlie



“‘Come on, come on... Granny's waiting.' 7am Christmas morning! My brothers and sister were responding to our parents' exhortation to sing outside Granny's bedroom door. Her favourite carol 'While Shepherds Watched' was sung every year, all six verses, in musical parts, before we all piled onto her bed, to her delight!

“After receiving one penny per year for our age (carol money), we opened our stockings excitedly. Long hiking socks, stuffed by Mother, with small gifts making curiously enticing shapes. Then, dressed quickly, we had breakfast round the Christmas tree.

“There were no 'main presents' until 3pm, for celebrating Jesus' birth in church was first. Back home to lunch with 'extras' playing charades, singing round the piano, then PRESENTS at last! It kept us happy till bedtime. Not every child has such privileges, but repeating it with our own children 25 years later was even better!”

Alison, 76
Royd Court, Mirfield

“My first Christmas memory would have been in December 1940. One night during the London Blitz an incendiary bomb landed on the roof of the Grace Hall, Grosvenor Road, Wanstead, lighting up the night sky. My second memory would have been in December 1961 when I gave birth to my first-born son Rowland, a baby for Christmas.”

Norma, 91
Homesdale, Wanstead, London

“Christmas was different when I was a child, not like today's Christmas when children have everything given to them. I grew up in a small village in Devon and was the youngest of five children. Mum and Dad made sure we had all that we needed. My mum ran a catalogue selling things, I think it was for Lever Brothers. Everything that was sold gave my mum a small dividend and she saved this up to spend on us at Christmas. I know Mum gave up a lot to make things Christmassy.

“It was a happy time. We had a stocking with an apple and an orange in it and we made paperchains that were part of a book of coloured bits of paper. We went into the local woods to collect holly, and my brother taught us the song 'The Holly And The Ivy'. One lovely memory is that one year instead of a chicken we had a pheasant that my Dad had caught. In 1963 we had a big freeze. We didn't have central heating like they do now. We only had a coal fire to keep warm but we survived.”

Helen, 93
Shottermill House, Haslemere





Welcome to Messy Vintage

Words: Helen Nathan

Through Messy Vintage, older people are being reached with the good news of Jesus and encouraged in their faith. We spoke to Katie Norman to find out more

In the early noughties, Messy Church sprang up as a way of engaging more people in church. A ministry of BRF, the approach has Christ at its centre, is open to all ages and embraces creativity, hospitality and celebration. If you haven't been to Messy Church yourself then you may well have seen the posters featuring colourful paint splats and exciting craft projects.

A fan of Messy Church, Katie Norman could see the potential to go further still, connecting older age groups. She explains, "Lots of older people have disengaged with church or can no longer attend due to a change in circumstances such as a move to a care home. It's a way to bring church to them where they are at."

Essentially, Messy Vintage is Messy Church 'at a slower pace'. Katie is part of a 23-strong team running Messy Vintage on the island of Jersey. Each month, a Messy Vintage afternoon takes place at the Philadelphie Messy Centre. Those who come are treated to a sumptuous afternoon tea, with daintily cut sandwiches and finger slices piled high on three-tier cake stands. "It's important that people feel welcomed in and loved," says Katie.

The session follows a similar structure each

time, with a Bible reading, a thought to share and hymns. Then comes the craft time, designed to prompt talking and reflection on the session's theme.

"The craft is where people have time to speak," says Katie. "Memories are shared. There is fun, laughter and joy. You might find yourself speaking to someone you wouldn't normally meet. It's a time of just being together."

Everyone is included. One lady who comes is profoundly deaf. "In other settings, she might struggle but here she engages totally with the group," says Katie. "We find ways to communicate and it's so heart-warming to see others come alongside her."

It can also help those who are lost find their way back. "One day a member of our team bumped into an older lady in the town centre and they got talking. This lady had been very damaged through church experiences she'd had as a child. She came along to Messy Vintage and at the end she said, 'That was the most at peace I have felt for a long time.'"

Soon she joined the Messy Team and comes to Sunday church too.

As well as this regular monthly session, the team visit care homes and hospital wards around the island. For these settings, adaptability is key. Many of those they visit in care homes are living with dementia and respond well to a multi-sensory approach.

"We recently did a session on Nehemiah and rebuilding the temple," says Katie. "Our craft was to make a toolbox with lots of different bits inside to explore. This brought back memories for people of DIY or painting."

Even for those far along the dementia journey, moments of profound spiritual connection can flow.

"I'll never forget one gentleman who was living at a dementia unit," says Katie. "He was often agitated and the staff struggled to get him to settle. During one session, he stood up and said to others, 'You think God is here just when these people come in, but He's here all the time. My God is there when I go to bed and when I get up.' He then started praying that all people would know God, and he wanted to sing and dance. It was incredible, we had no idea there was such a strong faith locked inside him."

Afterwards, Katie often finds herself in the car crying. "There are always those moments that make you go 'wow'. It's a lot of work putting it all together, but it's so worth it.

"I feel as Christians we shouldn't just be stuck in our comfort zones about what works for us. Instead, we should bring church to people in a way that works for them."

"Why should your faith journey stop just because you are older or you live in a care home?"

Tips for hosting Messy Vintage in a care home:

- ensure every member of your team has had a DBS check
- get in touch with the home's activities co-ordinator. They are often best-placed to help you organise your visit
- ensure those living in the home have been made aware the session is taking place and can choose whether to take part or not



The book Messy Vintage by Katie Norman and Jill Phipps contains 52 ideas and is a useful resource for anyone thinking of starting up Messy Vintage/ looking for ideas for ministry with older people. Priced £8.99, it's available from:

 www.brfonline.org.uk/products



To find out more about Messy Vintage, visit:
www.messychurch.brf.org.uk/latest/projects/messy-vintage/



“It’s brought us all together. It’s nice that we’re all doing the same thing.”
Doris

Super snowdrops

Folk from Dorothea Court, our housing scheme in Bedford, tried out a session from the Messy Vintage book themed around and 2 Corinthians 12:6-10 and with a snowdrops craft to make.

“Snowdrops are hardy. They look delicate but they come up regardless in the snow.”
Doreen

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
2 Corinthians 12:9

“My great aunt got married in winter and had snowdrops in her bouquet.”
Pauline



“They signify hope. Spring is coming.”
Gill



“Age brings opportunities. We [Michael and his wife Joan] were in a café the other day and a young man came up to us and asked, ‘Are you a couple?’ I said we were and that we had been married 64 years. He asked, ‘How did you manage that?’ and I was able to tell him about the shared Christian faith at the heart of our marriage.”
Michael



Resources

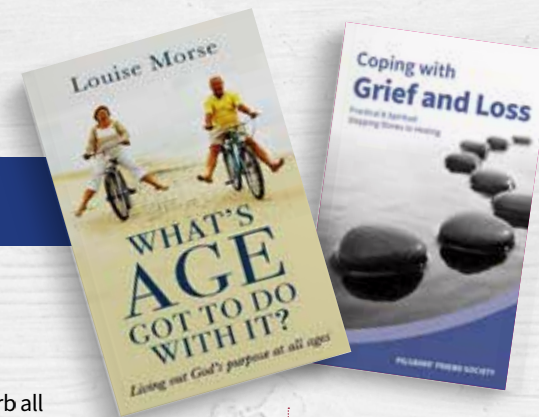
Get equipped for ministry with older people

What’s Age Got To Do With It?, £8.50
by Louise Morse

Ageism is a set of beliefs that we absorb all our lives, that affect us powerfully but subconsciously. What’s Age Got To Do With It? shows how to live the way God intended from the beginning.

In this book, there are accounts of many people living full, purpose-driven lives well into their 90s and even 100s.

For example, you’ll meet the lay preacher who wrote a book at 100 years of age because he couldn’t stand long enough to preach as he used to, and the 95-year old who organised more Christian support for his care home. And many ordinary people who refused to be diminished by ageism – and who are making a difference to the lives of those around them.



Coping with Grief and Loss, £3
by Louise Morse

Written within a Christian context, this booklet looks at the impact of grief and loss and explores key stepping stones to help the reader navigate the tricky waters of bereavement.

Christmas gift idea...

God’s Word in God’s World – bundle

Our glossy colour photo book **God’s Word In God’s World** pairs Bible verses with beautiful images from creation. Our **two 48-piece God’s Word in God’s World jigsaws** feature images and verses from the book.



With this special bundle buy all three for **£29.99**
~~£34.97~~



For the full range of our resources covering everything from living with dementia to growing older together, visit:
www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/resources
Alternatively, ☎ 0300 303 1403



All through the night

Our night carers keep a careful watch over our family members, ensuring they feel safe and secure through the hours of darkness

Denisa, 44, Milward House, Tunbridge Wells

"I always wanted to work in a care home. I had a close relationship with my grandmother and when she had dementia I helped to look after her. Now, I want to do the same for others.

"I came to the UK from Slovakia and for many years I've worked as a domestic in the hospital. Eight years ago, I saw the job of night carer at Milward House advertised and decided to apply as it would fit with my other work. Some people are quite negative about care homes. They think everyone sits around being sad but that couldn't be further from the truth –

Milward House is a place of smiling and happiness.



"When I first started working nights, it was horrible. My body clock was so confused. Now it's absolutely fine, I'm used to it. It can be a very busy job, with bells ringing. You have to be able to multi-task.

"I have my ladies who I call my 'night birds'. They are the ones who stay up late watching television and they like it when I bring them cheese and biscuits. Sometimes I'll help them pick out their clothes for the next day.

"Then I have my 'early birds' who wake up around 5am. I'll help them get washed and ready for the day. I'll make sure they've had the medication and talk about what they're going to have for breakfast.

"Through The Way We Care training, I've learnt the importance of getting to know what different people like. At night some people like to keep their door open and wave to me when I go past while others like to have it shut. Some people like to have someone sit quietly with them and hold their hand, others will want a chat.

"People can get confused and frightened at night, especially those with dementia. What's lovely is that our care home is small and has a family feel. People get to know my face and so when they see me they feel reassured and safe."

Juywayria, 27, Evington Home, Leicester

"I started working as a night carer at Evington Home three years ago. My sister joined first and I joined a few months later. I love the calm atmosphere there is at night.

"If a family member can't sleep, I'll sit with them and they will tell me about their life. It's interesting to hear about the different jobs people have done and the places they have lived – not everyone is from Leicester. People often talk about their families, for example a husband or wife who has passed away and about their children. It's made me reflect on my own life and the importance of holding family and friends close.

"It's interesting to hear about people's faith in Jesus. There are lots of Bibles around the home and if someone is feeling low I'll pick one up and read it to them. People find real comfort from it in the midst of their anxiety and grief. I'm a person of faith so I can understand the need to seek comfort in something spiritual.

"When I started as a night carer I was studying for my undergraduate degree in English. I'm now doing a PGCE and training to be a secondary school English teacher. Although I have a busy schedule, I'll keep working here on a Saturday if I can as I enjoy it so much."

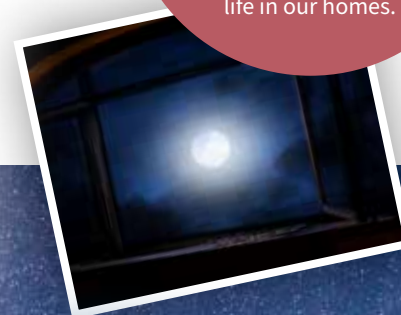
'God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.'

Genesis 1:16



Please pray:

Thank the Lord for our night carers whose work is often unseen but who are nonetheless a vital part of life in our homes.



Could you come and join our team and help us look after older people really well? For all the latest vacancies, please see:



www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/jobs



Christians in Care

Lucy Honeysett, Lead Coordinator of Christians in Care, takes a look back at all that God has achieved through this initiative since its launch



Christians in Care is a new but growing network that seeks to connect Christians who work across the care sector; together inspiring and encouraging one another to live and speak for Jesus.

Last year I joined Pilgrims' Friend Society to lead the new work of Christians in Care. I'd been praying for some time that God might bring about a new opportunity to use my experience as a carer and hospice nurse, and my desire to encourage people in their walk with Jesus. God wonderfully answered this prayer and brought me to this role which combines all these things! Isn't it amazing when we see God work like this.

I've been so encouraged over the last 18 months as Christians in Care has grown. We're now connected with over 130 carers and have monthly virtual meetings for frontline carers and for Christians in positions of leadership

across the care sector. We have flourishing WhatsApp communities where carers can share prayer requests, Bible verses, encouraging worship songs and answers to prayers. We now have our own website which acts as the hub for resources and information about events and support available and we have a Facebook page. We've provided a safe space for carers to share the highs and lows of their work and their faith. We've supported care homes who want to root themselves in Christian values and be distinctly Christian and intentional in sharing the precious gift of Jesus with those who live and work within the home. And we've provided talks and resources on how we can share the love of Jesus in our workplace and how we care for ourselves and lean into the Father as the source of compassion and strength.

We've also had a platform to talk about modern slavery which is a concerning and increasing problem within the care sector. One of the ways God breaks the chains of slavery is through the action of His people. We have resources on our website which help us spot the signs of modern slavery and know what to do with those concerns. We joined with CARE and Their Voice to provide a talk on this and will continue to use God-given opportunities to help carers who may be victims of slavery and as well as helping all of us be more alert to the problem around us.

We've also spoken about assisted suicide and joined with Our Duty of Care, the clinicians' arm of Care Not Killing, to explain what it is, why we oppose the legalisation of assisted suicide in the UK and what we can do practically and prayerfully. At the heart of this debate is the value we place on a life. The Bible is clear that every life is irreplaceable and priceless, not dependent on what someone can do, but who someone is. I can see that God strategically places Christian carers into the lives of people who are at risk of feeling worthless, forgotten, a burden and better off dead. They convey the value we and God places on them, they care tenderly for them and enable them to flourish and know their worth. Also central to this is the provision of good end of life care, so, we are providing end of life care training for carers to equip them to do all they can to provide dignified, compassionate care to people who are dying.



God has been so kind and has opened doors for us. We can truly see His hand of guidance and blessing in the work of Christians in Care. But if I could sum up the greatest encouragement of all in that last 18 months, it's being alongside carers. It's an immense privilege to see compassionate brothers and sisters in Christ care for people every day, lean into the Father for the strength needed to do this, and often still have enough in the pot to care for one another, to encourage each other in the faith and to keep running the race that is set before us. Carers like Uche...

“

My name is Uche and I'm a home care support worker, primarily working nights. I love Jesus and want to serve Him. Everything I do I do for Him. I believe my care work is for Him and I'm honoured to touch the lives of those around me. I'm grateful to God for Christians in Care. I do not feel alone. I have been blessed and refreshed by the Christians in Care meetings and fellowship we enjoy together. Thank you, Lord.”



To find out more about Christians in Care, visit: www.christiansincare.org



Are you a carer working in the care sector? Come along for some interactive online learning on end of life care, with a certificate available on completion:

End of Life Care Training
Friday 17th January
9.30am-2.30pm on Zoom



Book your **FREE** place:
www.christiansincare.org/events



My Story: JOAN

Words: Helen Nathan



Joan, 94, lives at Homesdale in Wanstead, London. She told us how God protected her and her family through the Second World War, leading her to a life of adventure as a naval wife and opening the door for prison ministry in her later years

Joan's memories of her childhood during the war in Plymouth make for astonishing listening.

"My mother and I were in Plymouth all through the Blitz and twice she saved our house when it was firebombed," she recalls. "We were in the shelter at the bottom of the garden and saw all these flames coming out of the roof. So my mother picked up the big metal bucket of sand and took it up the stairs and up a ladder to the loft and put the fire out. She was a very brave lady."

Joan's father was in the Royal Navy Submarine Service and so Joan and her mother lived with constant worry. "Many submarines were being lost. We never knew if he would return home."

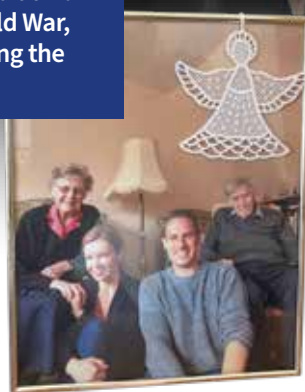
When he did come back to base, it was usually to Scotland. "Dad couldn't reveal his whereabouts and so he and Mum agreed on a code and he would send her a telegram. She would immediately pack up and go to the secret destination. These times together were

precious as they never knew if they would be the last."

On VE Day, as the nation celebrated, Joan's father was away in the Far East where war continued. He did eventually make it home for good, but only after a narrow escape. "The hydroplanes [used to control the submarine] got stuck and so his submarine had to go 1,000 miles on the surface back to base. They were a sitting target."

Joan describes the church she went to, St Philip's in Plymouth, as being the centre of everything and it was here she first learned to trust in God. "It was just something we all grew up with."

She knew her husband Peter through a family connection - her aunty was married to his uncle. Peter too pursued a naval career, making



Joan a naval wife like her mother before her. They had a daughter Nicola and then Peter was seconded to NATO in Malta to serve as Secretary to the Turkish Admiral.

They were then posted to Izmir in Turkey where Peter was Secretary to Captain Dickens, great-grandson of Charles Dickens. When they arrived, Joan was three months' pregnant with their son, Stephen.

Joan had to get used to life as a young mother in a country where she didn't speak the language. "My Turkish friends in Malta had kindly written a list of words to help me with the shopping and I went armed with this every time until I knew enough to get by."

Further postings for Peter followed in the Far East and then South Africa while Joan and the children remained in the UK. Peter was then posted to Scotland where they lived as a family.

Peter left the Navy at 39 to take up bookkeeping while studying to become a chartered secretary and the family moved to Luton. After the children left home, Joan and Peter moved to High Wycombe, joining a church at Tylers Green. It was here that a seed was planted that would lead them into a new area of ministry.

"We attended a talk at the Methodist church by

an ex-prisoner. I felt God was calling me to work with prisoners but I didn't know how."

Some time later, they moved to Devon to care for ageing parents. It was here Joan happened to meet a Methodist minister from Teignmouth who was part of prison chaplaincy. He connected her with the charity Prison Fellowship and she began visiting for the weekly services in the prison. "The Lord arranged it all."

Peter joined her with prison visiting and helping to support prisoners when they were released. "We kept in touch with them as long as they needed us."

This led them on adventures. "On one occasion, there was a young man newly released, who had to get a bus from Exeter to Bournemouth to report to probation, only the bus didn't turn up. We ended up driving him all the way so that he could make it in time, and he made it - just."

As far as Joan knows, none of the ex-prisoners ever went back in. She has kept up with some of them over the years and as we speak the phone rings and it is one such gentleman calling to say 'hello'.

Joan and Peter encouraged those they helped to find a church. "Sadly some churches weren't very welcoming so we'd tell them not to give up but to try a different one."

After Peter died, Joan moved to Homesdale in London in 2018 to be closer to family.

Having trusted God all kinds of circumstances over the years, she has developed a deep assurance. "I know He will look after me come what may. He has looked after me all these years."



Gift
FORM
...CONTINUED



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Winter 2024



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Your support helps us to bring joy all year round

2.3 million older people wish they had someone to spend time with at Christmas

748,000 older people say Christmas is a hard time of year as it feels isolating with shops and services being closed

1.6 million older people find Christmas Day to be the hardest day of the year*



Yes! I would like to give a gift

*Source: Statistics taken from a 2023 survey by Age UK.

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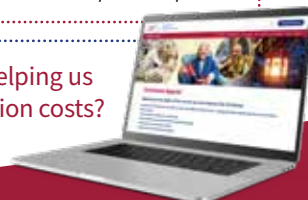
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Visit: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/Christmas2024



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Or contact our Support Office: 0300 303 1403 info@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



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carey.gardens@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Dorothea Court, BEDFORD

0300 303 1490

dorothea@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Emmaus House, HARROGATE

0300 303 8450

emmaushouse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Emmaus House, WHITEHAVEN

01946 591362

emmauscumbria@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Evington Home, LEICESTER

0300 303 1455

evington@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Finborough Court, GREAT FINBOROUGH

0300 303 1450

finboroughcourt@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

(care home) or housingmanager.finborough@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk (housing)



Framland, WANTAGE

0300 303 1470

wantage@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Homesdale, Wanstead, LONDON

0300 303 8485

homesdale@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Koinonia Christian Care Home, WORTHING

0300 303 8480

koinonia@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Luff House, WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE

0300 303 1495

luffhouse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Middlefields House, CHIPPENHAM

0300 303 8470

middlefieldshouse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Milward House, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

0300 303 1460

milward@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Pilgrim Gardens, LEICESTER

0300 303 8455

andy.harrison@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Royd Court, MIRFIELD

0300 303 1480

roydcourt@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Shottermill House, HASLEMERE

0300 303 1475

shottermill@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Strathclyde House, SKELMORLIE

0300 303 8465

strathclyde@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk