

PILGRIMS'

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.

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If you don't yet get the magazine, you can sign up here:



www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/magazine

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Pilgrims' Friend Society is a registered charity and a company registered in England and Wales. Charity No: 1045920 • Company No: 03027071

CoverSTORIES



What makes Christian "co-housing" distinct



Dr Fiona Costa on why music has a calming effect



Julia's experience of finding care for her mother

MEET A SENIOR

Wavne has been with us 20 years and counting

SUPER BOWLS MONDAY

A masterclass from bowls veteran Steve

PRAYER GUIDE Every prayer you pray for us is precious

LOUISE ANSWERS Why prolonged grief is normal

Geoff "the world's oldest office boy"

RESOURCES

Get equipped with our materials

26 **GROWING IN OLDER AGE**

technology

Mary shares why older age can be a time of flourishing

LET'S GO DIGITAL How we're embracing

RESIDENTS' STORIES: ROBABEH

Autumn 2022 CONTENTS 3

God's transformative power in the life of a young girl in Iran

GIVING Could you support our work?





Looking to contact our homes and schemes?

See back cover for details



WELCOME

Stories from across our organisation

Welcoming our **new trustees**

In July we appointed two new trustees to our Board...

Sylvia Clovey

Sylvia worked on the Pilgrims' Friend Society Marketing and Communications Team until her retirement around three years ago.

Before that, Sylvia had over 25 years' experience of strategic HR management and consultancy. Sylvia has held various trustee/ volunteer positions with charities and community organisations concerned with older people, mental health, homelessness, social care and substance misuse.

Sylvia heard about Jesus from her maternal grandparents, and when she was 15 she gave her life to Christ and was baptised. Sylvia is a

member of the Christ Church Leyton PCC and the Communications subcommittee. She assists with children's and women's ministries; is a co-leader on Christianity/Hope Explored courses; facilitates one-to-one ministries; and gets involved with other things as they come along!

Mark Curran



Mark was brought up in Northern Ireland and became a Christian in his early teens. Moving to England to attend Warwick University, Mark joined Canley Community Church in Coventry. He has worshipped there ever since and is now an Flder and leader.

After university, Mark spent 25 years in international business building process plants around the world and travelling extensively. In 2004. Mark moved into the retirement sector. first with the ExtraCare Charitable Trust, building 14 large affordable retirement villages across England, and latterly as Development Director at Anchor, the largest provider of older people's accommodation in England – so he has experienced plenty of encouraging and challenging issues in the older people's sector.

Mark has recently retired. He is married to Karen and they have three married children and nine grandchildren.

We praise God for bringing Sylvia and Mark to us and ask that you would join us in praying for them as they help guide the direction of our charity.



Helping family caregivers

Explore the one thing that helps family caregivers the most. 20th September, 2.30pm

In her Zoom sessions. Louise Morse looks at issues that affect older people and their loved ones. For many families the effort of caring for frail members, including those with dementia, can be overwhelming. This meeting will explore how church members can support those in their communities who are caregivers. Whether you are a caregiver yourself, or someone who is supporting, you are invited to learn from the latest research and from others, and to share your own experience about what has worked best in your situation.

Sign up by visiting www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/events



During the July heatwave, Framland in Wantage were featured on ITV News sharing how they were keeping cool. At Middlefields House in Chippenham water fights ensued, Shottermill House in Haslemere made some refreshing smoothies, while Milward House in Tunbridge Wells enjoyed a visit from the ice cream van.

Supporter Survey

With this issue for the magazine you will have received a copy of our Supporter Survey. We'd be so grateful if you would complete it and send it back to us in the Freepost envelope, or complete it online at: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/survey

As an organisation, we'd love to know you better so that we can make sure we're

connecting with vou in the best way possible and helping you to serve older people in your community.

In other news

In the Support Office, Zena Hicks joins us as Property Services Manager and Anniefrida Kadzura joins as Purchase Ledger Assistant. At Koinonia Christian Care Home in Worthing, Rachel Borland joins us as Business Manager and Katherine Rickwood is the new The Way We Care Lead.

For more great stories. follow us on social media:







Thriving in community

The trend for "co-housing" among older people is on the rise. Ruth Broomhall, one of our operations managers, explains how our housing schemes are places where older people can enjoy life in community in a uniquely Christian setting

A recent article in Platinum magazine highlights the rise of "co-housing", where people – often of or approaching retirement age - choose to live in a community or in shared housing of some kind. Not a new concept perhaps, but one that is on the rise in the UK as people search for solutions to the challenges of older age (note the word 'older' not old!).

The article cites several challenges: isolation, loneliness, cost of living, lack of local family/ support networks, health. 'As a society in the UK', it states, 'we often care differently for our older generations than other areas of the world where intergenerational living is normal.' Indeed, a significant memory from the time I spent living and working in Asia was how the elderly parent/grandparent/relation was at the centre of the family home, respected and cared for as a matter of course. Duty, love and respect for the elderly member merged together to ensure their physical, practical and emotional needs were met.



'Other European countries look at us like we are crazy that we don't look after our elderly people in this way,' the writer observes. 'Generations live together in many cultures across the world. But it's something that Britain has got out of the habit of doing...'

Why is this? There are many valid and genuine reasons: our transitory culture, where families are spread across the UK and beyond; pressures of work and the rising cost of living, combined with the increasing role of women in the workplace, all impact time and resources available; the rise in pensionable age.

Co-housing is not a new concept to Pilgrims' Friend Society. Independent living schemes have been at the heart of our work for many years. Indeed, this type of provision has become a developing focus for our organisation as we recognise the challenges facing this particular generation.

So what are the benefits and what makes our communities unique?

The best people to answer these questions, of course, are the occupants themselves! Living close to Dorothea Court, our independent and assisted living scheme in Bedford, I was able to spend an afternoon with a few of the 'DC family'. As we enjoyed a cup of tea together in the conservatory overlooking the beautiful

gardens, they shared their thoughts on why they had moved to Dorothea Court, and what it means to live in this community.

Moves were inspired by a range of factors, often more than one combined: personal circumstances, reduced independence, the desire (or need) to be nearer family or to join friends, the appeal of Christian community.

Benefits mentioned were extensive. Company, security, release from routine stresses, fellowship, practical help, location, activities, the wonderful staff. Alongside these, living in such a community enables independent living for longer, provides opportunities to help each other, and gives members a real sense of purpose and fulfilment.

Pauline moved to Dorothea court in 2019 from her home in Norfolk to be nearer extended family. She mentioned the warmth of the welcome she received when she moved in, and commented that, from day one, the community at Dorothea felt like "one big happy family". Her extended family have become part of the Dorothea community too, joining in with events throughout the year and supporting not just Pauline but other members of the Dorothea family through their fellowship and friendship.

Challenges - thankfully only one mentioned! The occasional conflict/clash of personalities that sometimes occurs within community living (as it does in families); but this, they commented, was (or should be) less of a challenge in a Christian community where each is conscious of their own imperfect nature, and each able to exercise Christian grace and compassion.

But most impactful and inspiring, of all the comments and conversation, was their combined emphasis on the absolute importance of being part of an intentionally Christian community. Community where Christian values, Christian leadership, and regular Christian fellowship are at its heart. Knowing that Christ is at the centre, that all members enjoy a shared faith and common foundation enables, as they put it, "rest in your soul", "peace in the house", and "oneness". And being part of a Christian society which is also mission-minded, the







Wayne has worked at Emmaus House, Harrogate, since the age of 18. He tells us why he loves being part of the family and never wants to leave

I have worked at Emmaus House for 20 vears. I started as a kitchen assistant and needed some more work so asked if I could move into care. I've been here ever since.

If someone gave me a contract to stay for the rest of my life I'd sign it right now. I can't imagine working anywhere else.

When I come to work, I don't see it as going to work. I see it as being part of a family. It's like I'm a grandchild to everyone who lives here. I never feel stressed or worried about coming to work.

Lots of us have been at Emmaus for a long time. I can think of at least two people on the team who've been here for over 20 years, and two who have been here over 15 years. Like me, they don't want to leave!



If I'm off for a few days our 'family members', as we call those who live with us, always notice. They say, "It's great to see you". I feel very appreciated.

As a small home we're a very tight-knit community. There's a maximum of 22 people living with us at a time. We all know each other and have a lot of laughs.

One of my first jobs in the day is doing the meds round. This is something I'm responsible for as a senior carer. I always have five minutes to see everyone. It's a nice way to start the day.

At lunchtime, I like to eat with our family members. It's a lovely time when we all come together and chat.

One of my favourite places in the home is the kitchen. It's where there's cross-over within the staff team among those who work in care and those who work on the catering side.

Through working here, I've had opportunities to train and learn new **skills.** I completed my level 2 and then my level 3 NVQ in Health and Social Care.

Sometimes friends say to me, "I could never do what you do." They can't see past what we call personal care. That's a shame. Caring for people is such an amazing role and ultimately it's all about the people.

I have such a good time chatting to our family members. I love football and one of our family members, Tony, was a keen footballer and we'll enjoy chatting together about that.

I like getting to know the friends and family of those who live here as well. It's lovely when I see people I recognise in the street and we stop for a quick chat about how their loved one is getting on and what we've been up to in the home.

It's true that COVID has been a very challenging time. At the start, it was a big unknown. I was ill with COVID at the very start of the pandemic and had to isolate. We had lots of problems with staff shortages. But as a team we have a very strong team spirit and all came together and helped each other out.

When people walk through our doors, they notice something different about our home. So many

times I've heard people say, "It just felt right".

I'd sav our Emmaus House has a very homely feel. It's not flashy or posh like a hotel. But who wants to live in a hotel?



In his spare time Wayne enjoys...

- Spending time with family and trying to find activities that hit the spot for all ages. He is married to Claire and has four children, Oliver, 20, Jake, 14 and five-year-old twins Bella and Bobby.
- · Watching his favourite team Leeds United. He's a die-hard fan and has tattoo of former Leeds coach Marcelo Bielsa on his bicep.
- · Managing and playing for his own six-aside football team, Bartle's Barmy Army.



We're always looking for brilliant staff to come and work with us. If you think you could join our team, take a look at:

www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/jobs

Listen up

Dr Fiona Costa is an Ambassador for our sister organisation Faith in Later Life. A research fellow at the University of Roehampton, her research explores how listening to music can lift the spirits and impact quality of life for older people



Music is ranked amongst the top ten things that people find highly pleasurable. Most of us listen to it regularly, and many of us play it - or wish that we could. Life without it would be strange indeed - it accompanies so much of our lives, from the big events to the day-today. It is essential not only to our weddings and our funerals, but also to our exercise classes or our drive home from work.

Music affects us deeply. As the violinist Yehudi Menuhin said some years ago, it can reach us through every "barrier, disability, language and circumstance". No-one is excluded from its touch.

"It takes your

mind off whatever

you are bothered by.

It makes my brain

calm, so peaceful."

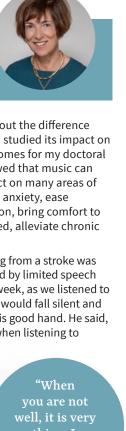
Keen to learn more about the difference that music can make, I studied its impact on older people in care homes for my doctoral research. Results showed that music can have a significant effect on many areas of our lives: it can relieve anxiety, ease symptoms of depression, bring comfort to the lonely and bereaved, alleviate chronic pain and much more.

A participant recovering from a stroke was confused and frustrated by limited speech and movement. Each week, as we listened to his favourite music, he would fall silent and start to conduct with his good hand. He said, "You can't feel lonely when listening to music like that".

Others reported similar experiences...

"When you are not well, it is very soothing, I can get into another world."

"If I'm feeling lonely, then I will feel less cut off when music is on. It's like an old friend, just a sense of companionship."





For older people whose lives become increasingly restricted due to frailty, illness and isolation, music can be life-changing. How can we use music in a way that achieves outcomes such as these? As a first step, we can encourage our older friends and those we care for to simply listen.

But to what music? Does it all have the same effect? Does the choice matter?

I would say that the choice matters very much. We all have our own unique musical histories, experiences and preferences. We all like some things and not others. Listening to music that we don't enjoy will annoy and irritate us, however beautiful someone else might find it. Bach and Mozart, often regarded as the musical equivalent of a 'super food' are not going to help someone who hates classical music.

Here are some questions to help you make a playlist with an older person:

What genre of music do you like? What music did you listen to in your teens? Do you have favourite performers, composers, instruments? What hymns or other church music are special to you? What music is associated with important life events (e.g. the first dance at your wedding) or with family? And crucially, what music don't you like?

Making a playlist and listening to it together can elicit memories and conversation and, over time, bring about some of the benefits described above.

Some practical points:

- · Check the volume level
- · Listen for 30-45 minutes, no longer
- · Make it a regular activity, daily if possible
- Find music players that are simple to operate – e.g. Geemarc Viso Tempo Music Player/Koto Simple Music Player
- If the music elicits painful memories or feelings, remove from the playlist
- Adjust the mood of the music if anxious or agitated, choose more calming music
- Some will be more responsive to music than others

As well as listening, it's good to participate. Perhaps you have an older peoples' group in your church - try and incorporate some regular singing sessions. If you have a good musician in the congregation, invite them to lead some singing. As above, choose songs that will be familiar to the group: e.g., wellknown hymns (these can also be a springboard for discussion); songs from the 1940s or 50s; folksongs. Experiment, and gradually compile a song list that the group likes. If there is no suitable musician, all is not lost. Download the music and sing along together.

These are a few ideas to get started. Music is a gift from God. Let's try and use it well and see some of the rich blessings that it can bring.



For more ideas on how to make a playlist, see: www.playlistforlife.org.uk

Super bowls Monday

Lawn bowls is a traditional game that can be enjoyed at any age, as Communications Manager Helen McKay-Ferguson found out from bowls veteran Steve, 75, who lives at our housing scheme Carey Gardens in the Leicestershire village of Kirby Muxloe

"Exercise, socialising and competition all in one place!" enthuses a notice on the railings outside the Kirby Muxloe Bowls Club.

I pass through the gate, turn the corner by the end of the clubhouse and it's there - a serene rectangle of green secluded by conifer hedges. Dotted around the edge are wooden benches, red roses, bright flowers in pots, even a pair of 'gnomes' in bowling gear. Birds tweet. Somewhere a lawnmower purrs. Steve, dressed in a cream waterproof and lightcoloured trousers, emerges from the clubhouse to greet me.

It's a Monday afternoon in early July and I've come to try this quintessentially English pasttime – lawn bowls. The lawn has been set up ready with red and blue marker cones and yellow jacks. But first I need to find my bowl





K.M.B.C

KIRBY

He bowls with a size 3 and has his own handsome set of red bowls, a gift for his 70th birthday from daughters Debbie and Emily.

We examine the shape of the bowl. As Stephen explains, it's not round but elliptical, giving it a bias. There are also golden circles on each side, one slightly larger than the other. To curve your bowl round to the right, as we'll be doing today, the smaller circle needs to be on the right-hand side. The bowl is also dotted with grips, along which you place your index and fourth finger. The action, as Steve demonstrates, is a gentle pendulum swing. Bowls in hand, we step off the paving and over the ditch (Steve flags the danger of catching a foot) and onto the green itself.

The green is divided into sections known as rinks. At the start of the rink is a mat. To bowl, you step onto the mat with both feet. take aim, step forward with one foot and send your bowl on its way, or 'put your bowl down' to use the correct terminology.

wobble their way towards the jack with varying degrees of accuracy. "Not bad. Some people struggle to get their ball up the green on their first attempt," says Steve encouragingly. Then it's time to use an exciting piece of apparatus known as "the pusher". Redolent of a Zimmer frame, this curved metal frame is a handy way to round up the bowls and trundle them back again, with a satisfying clonk as we go.

After a few more practice bowls, we attempt a game. Steve wins. But one of my bowls isn't far off the jack, which I'm pleased with. The second game goes less well. "It's a straight-arm game," Steve reminds me as one of my bowls bounces down the green, missing the jack by yards. Which in this game is actually a lot.

Bowling over, we sit by the clubhouse to chat. Steve first got into bowls in late 1978 at the suggestion of his father-in-law who was then the president of the Kirby Muxloe Bowls Club.

I've always loved sports, especially basketball and cricket. But then I dislocated my knee and I was looking for something a little less arduous. The rest is history."

Steve stayed at Kirby Muxloe Bowls Club for five or six years before moving to Westcotes Bowls Club. "I'm very competitive," Steve admits. Bowls can be played as either singles, pairs, triples or fours, also known as a 'rink' (not to be confused with the bowling area itself). Among Steve's numerous bowls achievements is winning the club championships (a solo competition) three times at Kirby Muxloe in 1989, 2013 and 2021, and three times at Westcotes in the 90s.

During his working life, bowls was a welcome break after the pressures of the day – Steve was a pattern maker in an iron foundry. "When you're so focused on a game you don't have time to think about work or any other problems," he says.

In the late 90s, Steve decided to give up bowling. "I'd done it for so many years it was time for a break," he says. However, following retirement in 2011 Steve returned to bowls. rejoining the Kirby Muxloe Bowls Club with his wife Susan joining too. The couple moved to Carey Gardens in 2020, a five-minute walk from the bowls club.

I ask why it appeals to so many older people. "Obviously having the time is part of it. But it's also something that you can adapt to. As I've





SKILL SHAKING

got older, I've had more trouble with my knees, so I bowl with a different action now. Those with arm or back problems can use a special device that looks a bit like a litter picker.

"But actually I'd say bowling is really a young person's game played by older people. Go the championships and you'll find that those at the top of their game are the younger ones."

One young player who has risen to the top of the game under Steve's careful guidance is 16-year-old Tegan (see side panel).

The bowls club is undoubtedly a social hub for the village.

Step into any bowls club in the country and you'd be guaranteed a warm welcome. I've made many friends through bowling."

In retirement, Steve has had a very active role. He doesn't just compete in the tournaments. He's also a coach, the Green Ranger, Bar Manager and Chair of the social committee. He helps to put on regular board games afternoons and caters for several social events, his speciality being jacket potatoes and chili.

One reason Steve is so invested in the bowls club is that it gives him an opportunity to share his Christian faith. "Brian, one of our neighbours at Carey Gardens, gave a talk recently on church. He reminded us that the church is just a building and that Jesus was always going out amongst people. That's how I see the bowls club – a place to meet people. If you can witness and show your life people will come to you and you can help them."



Are you an older person with a skill to share? To be considered for future 'skill sharing' features in our magazine, get in touch...

info@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



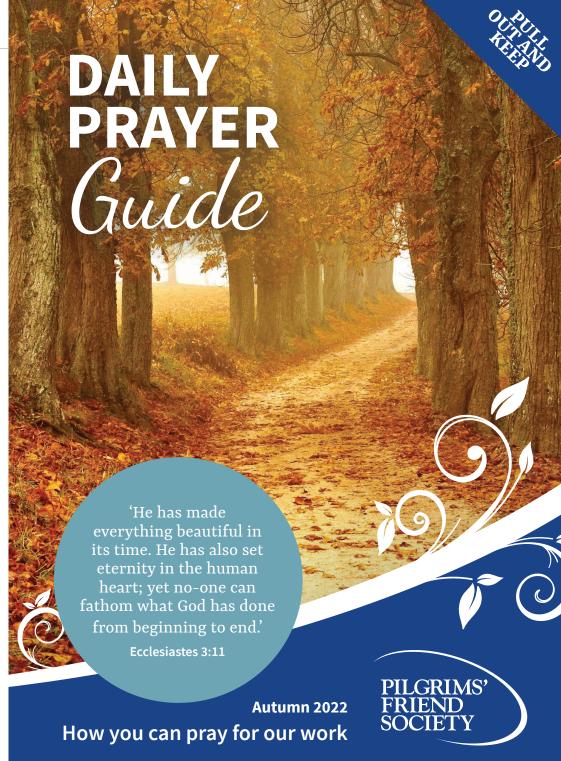
Thanks, Coach!

"I first met Steve in 2018 when I started to play lawn bowls. I cannot say how much his encouragement has helped me get where I am today. Early on, Steve saw my potential and took time, out of his own free time, to help with my progression.

"Not only does Steve train me, he chooses to go to my matches, competitions and tournaments, including ones outside
Leicestershire. From the very beginning, he has been there, getting me out of bad habits and so much more. He not only has a professional manner, he also makes the learning process enjoyable, for example, by saying that I was not allowed to put my hands in my pockets or he would sew them up.

"After every game, he waits by the end of the rink to give me a run-down, a motivational chat and, most importantly, a hug. This compassion makes all the difference and gives me the fight and determination to keep being ambitious with my goals.

"Steve, you have got me to where I am and I am proud to have you as my friend, coach, mentor and bowls grandad!" - Tegan, 16



Welcome

to the Autumn 2022 edition of the Pilgrims' Friend Society Prayer Guide. Once again, we are so blessed by the uniting of the saints in prayer for the work of the charity. Thank you for your commitment to us in prayer.

The end of summer and the beginning of autumn is always a beautiful reminder of the changing seasons and of God's faithfulness through it all. As we watch the leaves turn and fall once again, let's give Him praise and thanks for His steadfast goodness and faithfulness to us.

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

'For great is your

love, reaching to the

heavens; your

faithfulness reaches to

the skies.'

Psalm 57:10



Bethany Christian Home, Plymouth

– Tracey Ikerd

Emmaus House, Harrogate – Chrissie Medway-Steel Carey Gardens, Kirby Muxloe –

Mandy Smith



Those living in our homes and schemes

Thank God for our 'family members'. Pray that they would know His fullness and peace as they live with us.



Care teams

Praise God for our incredible carers and care teams. Pray for them as they work hard to comfort, support, and encourage those who live with us.

Mondays



Evington Home, Leicester – Jeanette Davis and Richard Cowlishaw

Dorothea Court, Bedford - Evelyn Bissell



Our catering, maintenance, and administration teams

Thank God for those who provide such indispensable support to our care teams. Pray for God to bless their work and relationships today.



Our resources (see more on p.25)

Praise God that we are able to produce great resources to support those ministering to older people. Pray that more people would be made aware of them and make use of them.

Tuesdays



Finborough Court, Great Finborough – Rachel Fishburne and Karen Bleay

Pilgrim Gardens, Leicester

- Mandy Smith



Activities and Community Engagement (ACE) Facilitators

Thank God for the work of our ACE Facilitators as they oversee volunteering and develop local connections. Pray their work would flourish.



Renewal Programme

Pray for a breakthrough with finding a good piece of land on which to build on the South Coast. Ask God for His wisdom and leading for the team.

Wednesdays



Royd Court, Mirfield - Vicki Miller

Finborough Court Housing, Great Finborough - Sylvia Humm



The Operations Team overseeing our homes and schemes

Thank God for the wonderful support our operations managers provide. Ask God to care for them as they travel and meet with our homes and schemes managers.



Church and community engagement

Thank God for increasing opportunities to connect with churches. Pray that our homes and schemes would be able to share more about what we do with more churches.

Thursdays



Framland, Wantage - Tia Fox Pilgrim Care at Royd Court, Mirfield

Abi Jessop

Koinonia Christian Care Home, Worthing

- John Manea, Rachel Borland



Our Support Office - Finance, HR, and **Communications teams**

Praise God for the careful and important work of our Support Office. Pray they will continue to work diligently alongside our care teams and housing staff.



Our IT project

Thank God for continuing developments in our IT project (see p.28). Pray that this technology would increase our efficiency and productivity.

Fridays



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



Volunteers

Praise God for our wonderful volunteers and the skills and gifts that they bring. Pray that more people would be inspired to spend time with those who live with us.



Thank God for all that He provides for us through charitable giving. Pray that more people would be inspired to give financially towards this work.

Saturdays



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



Directors and trustees

Thank God for our Directors and Trustees. Ask for His discernment and leading as they consider the future direction and work of the charity.



Families and relatives

Pray for those whose loved ones live with us. Pray that they would know the peace and comfort of their loved one being cared for so well by our teams.



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 a writer 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 situation

My friend's husband died six years ago, and she's still grieving and says life is empty without him. Shouldn't she have moved on by now?

A common assumption is that grief diminishes with time and that we 'move on', away from it. But grief, sharp and visceral, does not diminish. It becomes less dominant as our life grows larger around it, and we become altered. But it can be triggered at any time.

Prolonged grief can lead to depression. One of the symptoms is difficulty engaging and reintegrating in ongoing life, and this prevents the 'resizing' balance that changes perspective. It could be that this is what is happening with your friend.

It's good that you are here for your friend and can listen with empathy. But don't suggest that she should have moved on by now. You will have pointed her to Heaven, and reminded her that because of Calvary we are living on a timeline that extends beyond the physical to eternity. It may be that she feels her loss in the here and now is too great to bear. Counselling with an experienced Christian counsellor might help, remembering that as Christians we view death differently (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13).

A few years ago my youngest son died when he lost his battle with leukaemia, and eight weeks later my 19-year-old grandson was killed in a motorcycle accident. Luke and I were very close, and to compound it, he was so much like his uncle. I found the most healing element of grief, apart from the Holy Spirit, is the people God puts around you. Also, the Holy Spirit brought the Scriptures, with all their truths and promise, to life for me.

On Luke's birthday his mum and dad and I laid flowers and prayed at the crash site, and we will do the same in the Garden of Remembrance for my son. Our grief is as deep as ever, but our flowers and prayers confirm that although my son and grandson are lost to us here, we will be together again one day. It also helps that this is something practical we can do.

There are things we can do to cope with bereavement. My little booklet Coping with Grief and Loss describes stepping stones through the grief journey. It has had very positive feedback. Do get a couple of copies - see p.25 for details.

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

Meet our team, "the world's oldest office boy", **Geoff Norris**

Geoff, 70, has been a familiar face around 175 Tower Bridge for two decades. We found out a how he came to work with us and why he's stayed so long

The Mexico World Cup in 1970 and playing cricket had a part to play in shaping my early career path. I was doing my A-levels that year and got a bit distracted... I didn't get the grades needed for university so had to find something else to do.

My brother had just gone into law and so I thought I'd give that a go. I looked at the job adverts for articled clerks. I found a position where I could train on the job as a solicitor.

By the time I was 23 I was a qualified solicitor. I spent five vears in the role but never settled into it. In 1981 following a sequence of events that started with a visit to our church by a Scripture publishing ministry I was offered a job as office manager.

The organisation was Scripture Gift Mission or SGM (now known as Lifewords). The organisation was founded in 1888 by William

Fun fact:

Geoff once dressed up

as Postman Pat for the

Scripture Gift Mission

children's party. No wonder

he's been so good at

handling our post!

Walters, a printer who wanted to make the Bible

> accessible to everyone. I left in 2002 but I'm currently a Trustee of the pension fund and another charity that has links with SGM.

I first came to 175 **Tower Bridge Road in** 2002 to take up the role of office manager with Latin Link, who were in the building at that time. We shared a floor with Pilgrims' Friend Society.

Latin Link then moved into their own building in Reading in 2006, which was too far for me to commute. So I left in 2007 and for the next five years I worked as office manager for a friend who was a financial advisor. One day a friend called Sylvia Clovey (see p.5), who was in the marketing team at Pilgrims' Friend Society at the time, pinned up an advert for a PA role with the organisation at our church, Christ Church in Leyton.

I applied for the role and on the interview panel was **a familiar face...** I'd often chatted to HR Manager Phil Wainwright. In 2013 I was appointed Office Manager and PA to the Chief Executive, working for three consecutive holders of this post. In 2014 I also took on the role of Company Secretary.

I always looked forward to coming to work. Everyone was very friendly and I found it fulfilling to be doing something for the benefit of Christians.

We sometimes had Trustee meetings at the care homes. I was always impressed with how well they were run and how staff went out of their way to care for people. It's so important to provide Christian places for older Christians to live.

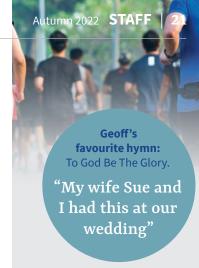
I tried to retire in December 2017. Instead, I ended up moving to a part-time role in the HR team.

When lockdown came, my role changed again. I was one of the only people who still went into the office, opening post, sending out resources and watering the plants (when I remembered!).

Since then, I've still found plenty to keep me busy. One of my jobs is going through the huge archive of

paperwork from all our old homes. It's fascinating, but vast. It brings home the need to make things digital (see p.28).

I've always enjoyed solving practical problems. In my job it has always been important to me that people find it easy to come to me for help. I'm glad to be useful.



In his spare time, Geoff likes to:

Take part in Parkrun: "My granddaughter Emily got me into it. She wanted to take part with her dad and older brother but needed to have someone to do it with as she was only seven at the time. When it came to it, she was more interested in picking flowers! She soon stopped but I've kept it up and have recently completed by 97th Parkrun."

Enjoy live sport: "My teams are Spurs for football and Saracens for rugby."

Eat out: "The Bang Bang Oriental Foodhall in Colindale is one of my favourite places. I'll escape there with my son when my wife hosts a houseful of children and adults for tea."



Interview by Alexandra Davis

Navigating Social Care QA

In our Need to Know series, we hear from Julia Hallawell whose mother Gillian, had a series of falls before moving into a care home.

Julia shares her experience of managing the social care system, choosing the right home, and how her mother is doing now.



When did you first start thinking about care for your mum?

Mum was diagnosed with Cognitive Impairment Disorder in 2014 and although she managed well for several years, driving began to be more difficult and others noticed a change in her. Lockdown in 2020 had a big impact, causing confusion, and, after a fall down the stairs at home in May that year, life in her lovely Victorian cottage became difficult. In February 2021 she moved into a sheltered housing scheme with carers onsite who were wonderful, but who became concerned for Mum's safety. A few months later a further fall made it impossible for her to go back.

While she was still in her house, an Occupational Therapist spoke with us about what Mum wanted and encouraged me to think about a longer-term solution. I hadn't really wanted to think about Mum "going into a care home" and it felt a bit like a death sentence, somewhere that we knew she'd never leave. There is a bewildering array of care options when you first start exploring this so it's hard trying to work out what would make her the happiest but meet her developing and complex needs.

There is a bewildering array of care options when you first start exploring this so it's hard trying to work out what would make her the happiest and also meet her developing and complex needs.

What were some of the challenges you faced?

We had got into the social care system after my mum's first fall in May 2020. There's an appalling lack of "joined-up-ness". The relationship between the hospitals and the social workers can get really frayed with social workers trying to do their best and with hospitals trying to protect their beds and resources. Care teams and social workers are always changing, and they can be hard to contact so you don't always know who you'll speak to.

After one fall, the council agreed that Mum could go home and that they would put falls sensors in her flat. But none were put in place, and she had another fall 10 days later and that's when I ended up in A&E, with the social worker ringing around to find a local care home that would take Mum.

Mum has a particularly complex property ownership and financial situation, and as she didn't have the funds immediately to pay for her care, the situation wasn't straightforward. Months later, I am still working with the council to put in place a "Deferred Payment Agreement" which basically means that the balance of Mum's care will be paid for from the sale of her house. This has also cost several thousand



pounds in legal and other fees – all of which comes out of her diminishing savings and pension income going towards Mum's care.

How did you choose the home where your mum now lives?

It was recommended to me by the social worker when Mum was in hospital. I did look to see if there was a Pilgrims' Friend Society home near us, but sadly there wasn't. I visited a different home but didn't think it was right for Mum, so I got in touch with the home she's now in which the social worker suggested. I visited and could see that it was clean and bright, I saw the room that Mum would be living in, I also looked at the home's Facebook page and could see that they did lots of activities which I liked. Mostly, I had a good feeling about it. Once she'd been there a few weeks she was assessed as needing full-time specialist dementia care (she left the hospital on a "Discharge to Assess" basis – a four-week period during which the council paid for her care) as being looked after in the home meant that she'd not had any more falls and was eating and drinking more.

Mostly, I had a good feeling about it.

Brain and Soul Boosting

'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Iesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do'

Ephesians 2:10



How is your mum doing now?

Mum is now happily settled in the care home. When we ask her if she is happy, she always says yes. She likes the food - hot buttered toast! - and gets her hair done in the little in-house salon. Because Mum used to be an artist, she really enjoys the art and crafts activities when they happen, and she is comfortable with the other residents, although it's harder to make real friends without being able to share history, especially as Mum now finds communication guite difficult.

We have made her room look very homely, with her precious things around her and her beautiful paintings on the wall. And I am happy she is there as I know the carers really care about her and she can still make them laugh! It can be hard to see some of the other residents, but my lovely Mum is safe, warm, well-fed and watered and it means I can just concentrate on being with her.

What would you say to others thinking about care?

Don't be afraid of care homes! They really aren't the death sentence we fear and it's important that the whole family appreciates that. I wish I had looked around ahead of time so I knew where I wanted her to go one home that I'd seen I thought would be good as it was local but when I looked into it, the reputation for care wasn't very good and it was expensive. Ask around your local community too – word of mouth is always the best recommendation.

If you can, have conversations with your loved one about their care, and try to visit the homes with them. It makes all the paperwork and admin much less complicated if you have Lasting Power of Attorney in place. Age UK do have resources, and there are solicitors who can advise in this area as well if there are property and financial issues to consider.

Resources

A selection of the resources we offer...

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

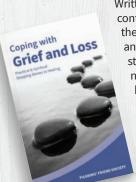
Our updated and refreshed small-group resource is designed to deliver cognitive and spiritual stimulation for older people, including those with dementia.

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 celebratons 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.

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. The aim of the booklet is to give an understanding of what grief is, how it affects us, and how we can live through it.

God's Word in God's World, £8.99 compiled by Ruth Ranger

Presented in an A5 format, this hardback glossy photobook brings together Bible verses and photos from nature. Designed with older people in mind, it reminds the reader of the world they have experienced and of God's creativity and faithfulness, supporting them as they continue in their journey of faith. Large print, thick pages and a landscape format make it easy to read and handle.



For our full list of resources and to order online, visit:

www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/resources

Alternatively, **Q** 0300 303 1403



If you're beginning to think about care for yourself or a loved one, here are some helpful places to get you started:

Social care series: www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/needtoknow Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/

1) We're constantly evolving spiritually

Once you get to a certain age, your spiritual growth doesn't just stop. We're all continuing to evolve from the gifts we have been given through contact with our heavenly Father. The growth doesn't come from ourselves but from Him. There is no cut-off point.

2) God will provide in very difficult times

I was divorced when I was 60 and moved to a hamlet in Leicestershire. While living here I found out that Carey Gardens was being built and applied for a flat. I truly believe God led me here. To come into this community has been heaven. It's a bit like being in a boarding school in the nicest possible way. Everyone is so kind and considerate, whether it's sharing a washing line or sharing a cup of coffee. It's such a blessing to be here.

To come into this community has been heaven."

3) You can learn new things

In retirement, I've done lots of things including an art class, poetry classes and a course in local history. I'm part of an adult learning group where we discuss a different topic of general interest each time and I get so much out of it. I also do something called shared reading where a text is read to us and we are invited to discuss and respond to it. I love words and I love hearing other people's ideas and reflections.



'They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green' Psalm 92:14

4) It's fun to join in

At Carey Gardens I've taken part in a couple of our home-made pantomimes written and directed by a church member. In one I took the role of Prince Charming and when we did The Wizard of Oz I was the Tin Man. It was fun putting everything together, including finding and sometimes making all the different costumes. On another occasion, a lady who lives here, Pam, borrowed a set of handbells from the parish church and we learnt to ring and play a few tunes. She is positive with a capital 'p' and the whole experience was fun to be a part of and gave us the chance to share her enthusiasm.

5) God continues to use your gifts

There's a few of us at Carey Gardens who enjoy painting as a hobby. One year three of us got together to produce packets of notelets which were sold at our annual garden party to help raise funds for different charities. Over the years we have helped with proceeds to, amongst others, Air Ambulance, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Jessie's Fund, supporting children through music.

6) Physical exercise is important, even if you need to adapt

Many people living at Carey Gardens have been active in sports and achieved awards in bowls, golf, fishing etc. My exercise has been rambling and walking groups. But now I find that I can't enjoy walking and talking at the same time as I get out of puff. So being out in

the fresh air needs to include a seat or park bench for the talking part. For me, a good walk follows a figure-of-eight pattern – I don't like a 'there-and-back'.

HOUSING | 27

7) Listening

I love hearing other people's stories and the act of listening gives me new things to think about and a wider understanding of life.

8) Sharing faith

I'm not someone who loves being up-thefront but I'm happy to share ideas incidentally in a friendly conversation. It's tempting to look back at life and feel a failure, but trying to live faith is for me, the best way to share faith. So, I'm grateful to be open to inspiration from wherever it is to be found and value the many gifts the witness around me that strengthen my faith in God's presence with us.



To find out more about some of the benefits of living in one of our housing schemes, see pp.6-7.

Let's go digital

Alexandra Davis, our Director of Marketing & Communications, speaks to three members of our Support Office about how using digital platforms is making our work more efficient

We've been embracing digital technology over the last few years, especially within our Support Office. We're finding lots of new ways to make sure we're using new platforms to make our work safer and more efficient, saving us time and money and helping us steward our resources well.



Recruitment: Camilla Fitsum, HR Manager

"CareFriends is a referral scheme which enables our staff to earn extra cash while helping us recruit new employees. Staff can send information about jobs to friends and if their friend follows up, the staff member gets a point (one point = £1). If the friend is then employed, the staff member gets another cash reward and if the friend has never worked in care before, the reward can be up to £250.

"CareFriends helps with recruitment and retention. People who are recruited via the CareFriends app often share similar values with the person who referred them and that means they are more likely to stay in their role."

Invoicing: Andrew Williams, Finance **Operations Manager**

"Spindle is a web-based invoicing system - it's a tool for our budget holders to authorise payment for goods and services that we buy to run the homes, schemes, and other activities.

"It cuts out a lot of administration so there are no more emails between the budget holders and the finance team – the requests for information from the homes and schemes is completely automated which means much less administration for everyone.

"The best thing about Spindle is that it's fast. simple and user-friendly for both finance and the endusers. It saves so much time sending out invoices via email and getting information back from them. It was well worth the investment and the training!"



Database: Priscilla Amofa, Administrator

"Our supporter relations database is called Donorfy. It's where we store all our information about our supporters and what communications they want or don't want! - to receive.

"Having all our information stored electronically saves space and time as there is much less filing to do. It also makes it really easy to find relevant information. For example, if someone calls up about a gift they've given we can find the record quickly and efficiently. It's also GDPR compliant which means we're keeping everyone's data safe.

"One of the major benefits is that it's such a fast process once you're trained and know what you're doing!"







Residents' stories: **ROBABEH**

As a motherless child living in a small village in Iran, Robabeh's upbringing was tough. But God had a plan to bring her to Him. Now 92 and living in our care home Shottermill House in Haslemere, Robabeh, together with her daughter Ariana, took the time to share her incredible story

Robabeh's mother died when she was aged only five or six and her father remarried. Sadly, her step-mother did not treat her well. "She used to mock me in front of other people," Robabeh recalls. "I was very unhappy."

Robabeh couldn't wait to leave her home in the village of Chatrood in Kerman Province, South East Iran. At the age of 16 she went to study nursing at the Christian Hospital in the city of Kerman. "For me it was a way out," she says. Robabeh was very studious and excelled in her studies. However, she came very close to losing everything. One day, she got into an argument with a Christian student and became so angry that she slapped her. As a consequence, Robabeh was kicked out of the nursing school.

"I had nowhere to go, I couldn't go home because my stepmother didn't want me," says Robabeh. She appealed the decision and, thanks to her excellent academic record, she was



allowed to return. "The doctor in charge, Dr Wild, agreed that I could come back and finish my studies as long as I promised not to cause any more trouble."

Robabeh then moved to the Christian hospital in the city of Shiraz to gain further experience of nursing as well as experience in midwifery. It was here she met a lady who would change her life, Sister Muriel Tisdall. "She was very kind to me. She loved me like her child." says Robabeh. "She was the biggest influence in my younger life. I will never forget her love for me."

Robabeh was given a room in the sisters' compound where there was a Bible next to her bed. "No-one ever forced anything on me. Sister Tisdall said, 'The Bible is there if you want it." There was also a prayer meeting every morning, but Robabeh was told that there was no expectation she had to go.

However, the kindness of Sister Tisdall and the other nurses made a deep impression on her. Whenever they had lunch they asked if she wanted to join them. And so she started to read the Bible and to go to the prayer meeting. It was through encountering God's Word and the loving witness of these ladies that Robabeh felt compelled to put her trust in Christ.

When Robabeh told her father she has become a Christian, he rejected her. "He said, 'You are not my child anymore," she says. Robabeh started going to a church in Shiraz with others who had converted from Islam. It was here she met the man who was to become her future husband, Abdulmasih. Like Robabeh, he had lost his mother at a young age and he was sent

to a boarding school run by Christians where he became a believer. He had been born Abdul Ali but he changed his name to Abdulmasih, meaning servant of Christ. On moving to Shiraz, he met Reverend Norman Sharp, a missionary to Iran, who became a spiritual father to him.

Robabeh and Abdulmasih were engaged in 1954, a commitment marked in Iranian culture with a special ceremony. Before they officially married, Robabeh had the opportunity to come to the UK to continue her midwifery studies, which she saw as her vocation. "I asked Sister Tisdall what she thought, and she said, 'Why not?' She wrote a reference for me." Robabeh came to the UK in 1955, spending time at the Bermondsey Medical Mission and then in Cardiff in a home for single mothers. It was steep learning curve as Robabeh spoke almost no English when she arrived.

In 1957 she returned to Iran and she and Abdulmasih married. Her father refused to come to the wedding – bound by his culture and beliefs, he would not set foot in a church. However, with the birth of their first daughter, Shekufeh in 1959, there came a step towards reconciliation. They invited him to see the baby and Abdul and Robabeh's father struck

Robabeh's father had also sought advice from his religious leader. "The leader of his sect had asked him if I still believed in God." explains Robabeh. "My father said, 'yes'. His leader then told him that as I believed in God he should love and accept me. This was not a typical response of those in the Islamic faith in Iran at that time."

Further children followed – Mojdeh in 1961, Hirbod in 1962, and Ariana in 1965. Abdulmasih and Robabeh's father went on to become great friends.

When the revolution came in 1979, the church in Shiraz faced some incredibly testing times. Horrifyingly, a week after the revolution, the leader of their church, Reverend Sayyah, was found murdered in his office. He had been beheaded. Robabeh washed his body before the burial.

The Christian hospital in Shiraz was right next to the church. A group of rebels wanted to confiscate the hospital and had planned to build a wall to separate it from the church. Robabeh was outraged. The foundation for the wall had already been dug and so Robabeh did a very brave thing. "I lay down in the foundation and said, 'you can build it over my dead body," she says. Robabeh's brave action put them off, and eventually they went away.

At the time, many people believed that the revolution would be over quickly. But things remained dangerous and difficult. Robabeh had been appointed nurse supervisor of a very big hospital in Shiraz but she was hounded out of her position on the grounds of her faith. Robabeh then took a job as a midwife to Iran's nomadic communities.

Her daughter Ariana remembers accompanying her on her visits. "The village midwives were all scared of my mum," says Ariana, "She was very strict. I remember they used to give me goodies to try and win her over."

During this time she was also an active leader for the episcopal church and represented the Iranian church at conferences both at home and abroad, particularly in the Middle East.



all Robabeh

and Abdulmasih's

daughters moved to the UK. Ariana married Komraan, the son of Reverend Sayyah who had been murdered at the church in Shiraz. Sadly, Robabeh and Abdulmasih's son Hirbod died at the age of 38. Like Robabeh, Abdulmasih was a nurse but he suffered from kidney problems and was eventually unable to work due to ill-health.

In her role as a midwife, Robabeh continued to face intimidation from the authorities and was advised to take early retirement. Robabeh and Abdulmasih often came to visit their daughters in England, staying two, three or six months at time as it was expensive and difficult to travel. Abdul eventually died of kidney failure in 1992.

Robabeh settled in the UK and now lives at Shottermill House, where her daughters often visit. She enjoys reading the Bible with our Hummingbird Joanna, Psalm 23 and the letter to the Philippians being favourite passages. The country of Iran remains close to her heart and she prays that many people there will come to know the love of Christ just as she has.



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



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PMSFPT22

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www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/give





Could you help us support older people like *Robabeh*?

Your donations help us keep our homes open to everyone who needs Christian care and support.



Yes! I would like to give a gift



You can make a donation via our website www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/give or fill in the forms below:

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Our homes and housing schemes would love to hear from you

Support Office: 0300 303 1403 info@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Dorothea Court, BEDFORD 0300 303 1490

dorothea@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Middlefields House, CHIPPENHAM 0300 303 8470

middlefieldshouse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Finborough Court, GREAT FINBOROUGH 0300 303 1450

finborough@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Emmaus House, HARROGATE 0300 303 8450

emmaushouse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Shottermill House, HASLEMERE

0300 303 1475

shottermill@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Carey Gardens,
KIRBY MUXLOE

0300 303 8455

carey.gardens@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Evington Home, LEICESTER 0300 303 1455

evington@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Pilgrim Gardens, LEICESTER 0300 303 8455

pilgrim.gardens@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Royd Court, MIRFIELD

0300 303 1480 roydcourt@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Pilgrim Care (Home care services at Royd Court) 0300 303 1485

pilgrim.care@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Bethany Christian Home, PLYMOUTH

0300 303 8440

bethanyhome@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Strathclyde House, SKELMORLIE 0300 303 8465

strathclyde@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Milward House, TUNBRIDGE WELLS 0300 303 1460

milward@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Luff House, WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE

0300 303 1495 luffhouse@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Framland, WANTAGE 0300 303 1470

wantage@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



Koinonia Christian Care Home, WORTHING 0300 303 8480

koinonia@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

