

# The Pilgrims' Magazine

WINTER 2019

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**PILGRIMS'  
FRIEND  
SOCIETY**

Pilgrims' Friend Society exists to provide excellent care for older people, inspiring and encouraging them to live fulfilled lives in their later years.

Rooted in the Christian faith, the Society is committed to top quality, personalised care for each member of our family, ensuring that their physical, emotional, spiritual and mental needs are met as far as possible.

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*“Behold, I am making a new thing ...I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

ISAIAH 43:18-19

# Immanuel – God with us

**This is the season when we praise God for Immanuel – God with us through the changing seasons of our lives.**

Jesus knew what it was like to live at a time of crisis as His earthly family fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s persecution. He came as part of God’s plan to redeem His creation from the many crises that result from people’s disregard for the command to love the Lord our God with all that we have and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

This season has seen increasing evidence of a crisis in care that is growing as the number of older people in our population starts to accelerate. The Care Quality Commission that oversees and regulates things doesn’t normally go in for hyperbole but in their State of Care report this year they highlighted that 1,400,000 older people are not getting the support and care that they need and they bemoaned the fact that there is no consensus or plan for how adult social care is to be organised or funded. In other words, we have a crisis that will worsen, and government is ignoring it.

That makes our work to provide more places for older people in new homes, built as part of what we have called our Renewal Programme, a vital initiative that is an important witness that older people matter to God and that Christians are doing something to improve things. You can read more about that on pages 12 and 13.

The Bible shows us in chapter 11 of Hebrews that sometimes we are

allowed to see God’s plans come to fruition on earth and we praise Him that the foundations of the first of these new homes in Chippenham will start to be laid in January 2020.

The new home will have over twice as many rooms as the old home and it will usher in a season of excellent Christian care for people with a wide range of needs in a state of the art but homely setting. Community rooms and a bistro open to the public will allow us to share what we have learned about being with older people with local people and churches who are caring in the community.

*“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”*

HEBREWS 11:1-2

Later in Hebrews we read about men and women of faith who had God’s promise but only saw difficulty and danger in this life. We have experienced some of this as well. In October we had to announce that we were to close our home in Brighton before we could build the next of our Renewal homes in the area. The challenges to our capacity to sustain good



care in our (very) old building were just too great. We pay tribute to all of those whose work at Brighton God wonderfully blessed over the years on page 9.

Finally, this is a significant moment in the history of this charity when like Abraham in Hebrews 11 we step out in faith on a long journey, a new season, to bring all of our buildings bang up to date so that we can sustain wonderful Christian care over the next 50 years. We say more about this and the significant monies we need to raise over the next decade to make this happen on page 12 and 13.

Unless Christians can show by what we do that people are precious in older age our

words of encouragement in this regard will count for little.

Please do keep on praying for us and supporting us as we show and proclaim God’s love for older people and celebrate their value in God’s kingdom in increasingly challenging times.

Yours in Christ,

Stephen Hammersley  
Chief Executive

# News from Chippenham

**By God's grace, the building of our new residential care home in Chippenham is underway!**

Middlefields House, a state-of-the-art residential care home in Chippenham, is the second phase of our Renewal projects. Opening in early 2021, it will offer high quality, personalised care for 48 residents aged 65 or older, including those with dementia, who want to live in a Christian care home.

## Large rooms and wonderful facilities

Middlefields House has wonderful facilities arranged as four households. Each household has twelve large rooms with ensuite facilities and an open-plan lounge, dining area with kitchenette, a separate second lounge area and access to the outdoors.



## Homely in scale

The household layout creates a homely environment, similar in scale to a large family home that will help everyone to build friendships. There will be ample space for those who prefer a more peaceful environment and for those who want stimulating activities or to pursue their own interests.

## Café and Community

Middlefields will also have a café open to visitors and communal rooms for larger group activities and for use by churches and others from the community.

## Grounds and Gardens

The generously-sized grounds will include ample parking provision and thoughtfully designed gardens which wrap around the building on all sides and includes spacious lawns, a wildlife garden, a vegetable plot, plenty of places to sit and paths that link the different areas. Residents who enjoy gardening will be able to take part in maintaining the gardens which will feature areas with raised beds to allow the less mobile to be involved.

## Spiritual Life

There will be opportunities for individual pastoral support and prayer, and regular services of Christian worship. The home will also maintain strong links with local churches and encourage visits from church ministers and others in the community.

## Keep abreast of progress

To keep up to date with progress on the new build and to pray with us for the new



project, visit: [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/middlefields-house](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/middlefields-house). Priority at Middlefields will be given to residents of our current home in Chippenham.

## Support Middlefields and our Renewal Programme

We need your prayer and financial support to help us build Middlefields House and after that to do the same in other UK locations.

We value one off capital gifts and regular giving. Middlefields House and other Renewal projects will be an amazing

Christian legacy to which you might want to contribute through your will. To find out more about how you can support us visit [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/middlefields-house](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/middlefields-house).

If you have spare funds now that you might need back, or if you like the idea of lending to a charity that does good, we are exploring how we can offer social investment options.

If you would like to discuss this or register to receive more information please email our Chief Executive; [stephen.hammersley@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk](mailto:stephen.hammersley@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk).

# Community living at Strathclyde House

By Ann Goodwin, Chaplain at Strathclyde House

**As I drive along the coast road to Strathclyde House on the shores of the river Clyde I always find the views out over the islands of Bute and Arran to Dunoon to be ever-changing yet they have stood for centuries. Life is ever-changing yet God remains steadfast and unchanging – He is always there for us in the everyday.**

So in our Strathclyde House community, God is an everyday occurrence. Although we have a mix of Christian traditions, we find ourselves together in one place. Each individual flat is respected as home and community begins with invitation while the lounge provides a great place to meet and greet, as does the Clyde Tea Room restaurant downstairs where tea, coffee, home-baking and meals are available both to residents and to the public.

On a weekly basis we have a Keep fit class, a scrabble evening, carpet bowls, prayer meeting and mid-week service with visiting speakers from local churches and further afield. (We even had some Christian Bikers come and tell their stories of finding faith.)

Another community occasion is the Coffee Afternoons where funds are raised for charities eg The Haven (a local Rehabilitation centre for young men caught in addiction which is run in conjunction



with the Teen Challenge Bus), Ardgowan Hospice, Help for Heroes to name but a few. Our residents home-baking is second to none which always ensures good attendance!

Thanks to our social committee there are trips to local areas of interest such as museums, shopping malls, National Trust Estates etc.

As chaplain at Strathclyde House, I encourage all residents to become involved in a local church and to support the varied programmes these churches offer. This finds our residents preaching and taking local meetings, being part of a newly started Cafe Church, serving in a drop-in cafe, helping to support a prayer space in a shop front for local churches together, the Women's Guild and wherever God is at work in the local area.

Bi-monthly we host a Strathclyde Special on a Sunday evening where the community along the coast are invited to attend. There is lively Christian music provided by The Preshal Trust praise band and visiting speakers such as George Verver, Teen Challenge and Hope for Glasgow. We are looking forward to our Christmas Event with a Bethlehem scene on the front lawn with residents singing or tending the live donkeys and sheep that make an annual appearance.

So there you have a snapshot of community life at Strathclyde house but community is what takes place where people meet and especially where God's people meet so get involved wherever you are and make your community thrive!

# Glorious things: Our Brighton Home

**Receiving bad news is never easy, but it can be revealing. When our worlds are shaken we can discover things overlooked in the usual run of things and appreciate qualities otherwise hidden.**



In October we announced the bad news that after a long, thorough and prayerful process we had no alternative other than to close our home in Brighton. Two and a half years earlier we had identified that it was becoming increasingly unfit for purpose as people's expectations and needs ran ahead of what the building could provide. But this was unexpected bad news as we had hoped that we would have been able to build a new home in the area before matters came to a head.

There was deep disappointment, but also a re-discovery of what makes our work so special:

- Our dedicated staff team were shocked and upset but out of concern for our residents rather than worry about their own jobs
- Our residents were tearful and unsure, but resolute in their trust in God
- Our supporters, some of whom had known the home for many decades, were challenging but understood that this unpalatable decision had been well made.

The Brighton home has served God's people since 1879 and we praise Him for the thousands of people who have benefitted from superb Christian Care over that time. In its first few years it closed, relocated, extended and changed from

being only a temporary convalescence home – so we also thank God for its subsequent stability.

The Renewal Programme (see separate article) is all about avoiding similar situations in other places where we have old buildings. The programme still has an objective to build a new home on the South coast so God willing there will be a legacy from the vision and work of Angus Croll (who started things off in West Worthing 140 years ago) and many subsequent employees and friends.

Please do pray with us about this as we continue to look for sites and partners with whom we can collaborate, and please do pray for our residents who have had to move, and staff colleagues who have to find new jobs.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”*

JEREMIAH 29 11

# Why Christian care makes a difference

By Sylvia Clovey

**Christian care is built on the foundation of faith, hope and love, with the greatest of these being Love. The compassion that Christian carers have comes from knowing Christ and the gift of grace, and for many this is a calling to use their God-given gifts to serve others as Jesus commands.**

As part of the marketing team at PFS I have been blessed and privileged to speak to hundreds of older people, relatives and friends attracted by the prospect of being able to live out their faith in a caring Christian environment. Just talking about the way we care and the biblical principles that guide our work brings a real

excitement and hope; a reassurance that they or their loved ones will be safely and well cared for and their spiritual needs will be met too.

Kindness and compassion for the weak and vulnerable are in the DNA of Christian caring. I have seen first-hand and heard many stories from around our homes of carers coming alongside residents who are feeling sad, worn down by frailty or constant pain, or even having a crisis of faith because of their circumstances. A word of encouragement from scripture or offering to pray with someone can make a world of difference – the prayers go up and the Holy Spirit does the work!



We also know that older Christians in our care have been hearing about God's promises and have experienced God's grace over many years, so they know that their frail bodies, and even death, isn't the end of the story – they are looking forward to an eternity with Christ where pain, sickness and death are no more – a new season of life! I was so humbled to hear a 102-year-old resident with multiple health issues in one of our homes say: "I have so much to be thankful for..." and "I know God has got more work for me to do here..."

## Caring in the light of eternity

Christians care in the light of 'eternity'. Through their understanding of the gospel, Christian staff can see why the spiritual needs of our residents are as important as their physical and social needs. In Matthew 25 Jesus exhorts his disciples to use their God-given gifts in the service of God – their personal abilities ("talents") as well as their personal wealth. 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:45).

Pilgrims' Friend Society believes the latter part of life should be a time of fulfilment and flourishing. Indeed, Psalm 92 says "...they will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green". We know that when plants flourish they grow, they bear fruit, they flower, and they scatter seeds; however, if a plant fails to flourish, it droops, it doesn't bear fruit, it shrivels up and eventually dies. Flourishing means life, and for Christians it means abundant life with Christ.

Good Christian care enables older people in our homes to continue to grow and flourish as God intended. As well as excellent physical care, Christian carers in our homes encourage older Christians in their faith through quiet bible reading, one-to-one prayer times, fellowship through devotional times, services etc. A verse from one of my favourite hymns (Yet not I but through Christ in me) sums up beautifully why the care of older Christians is so important to PFS:

With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
For He has said that He will bring me home  
And day by day I know He will renew me  
Until I stand with joy before the throne.

# Renewed hope for later life

In a society which is growing older the need for excellent, God-centred care for the elderly has never been greater, which is why we've launched our Renewal Programme.

**“1.4 million older people (nearly one in seven) do not have access to all the care and support they need.”**

This year's State of Care report from the Care Quality Commission laid out in stark terms the challenges in providing care for older people across the UK, highlighting the increasing needs of older generations and the decreasing capacity the rest of society has in meeting those needs.

At PFS we're responding to these challenges through our Renewal Programme which will see six brand-new, state-of-the-art residential homes for older people built over the next 12 years. It is our prayer that the Renewal Programme will enable us to reach some of these older people with the care that they need, both physical and spiritual, in order to flourish in their later years.

PFS homes are known for their homely, family atmosphere and we plan to be able to provide more space for older people to flourish through our new homes. In each of our current home and housing schemes, this atmosphere of flourishing allows us to celebrate and enjoy the blessings and

giftings that older people offer our communities. We believe that this kind of care is a shining example of how later life brings glory to God and each of our new homes will help us to show others just how precious later life is.

Each new home will be able to offer care and support to more older people, surrounded by bespoke, purpose-built facilities which will mean that we are able to provide top-quality care. In 2018 we piloted the Renewal Programme through an extension to our home in Great Finborough, and in 2019 we bought a plot of land in Chippenham to begin building a brand-new home. This home, Middlefields House, will be able to offer care to 48 residents, including those with dementia. Built as four households of 12 residents, Middlefields House will be model of new ways of caring for older people. In the following years we expect to replace five more of our homes with new buildings.



## But we can't do all of this without your help.

Firstly, we ask that you would be praying for the Renewal Programme. Do pray that God would provide favour as we consider next steps and meet with local authorities to make plans for the future. Please do also pray for Middlefields House which we expect to open in Spring 2021. You can find out more about this on pages 6 and 7.

Secondly, it's our heart to see local churches and communities equipped and encouraged in their ministry to older people. Please pray that this new home will encourage Christians and churches in Chippenham to see the incredible value

of our older sisters and brothers, and to be inspired to find new ways of offering spiritual and practical support. Please do also pray for the work our Community Engagement Officer in Chippenham, Ruth Ranger.

Finally, could you help support the Programme financially? Over the next 12 years we expect to spend in the region of £32million. If you aren't able to give, we would so value your prayers that we would find favour with those who can give.

To find out more about Middlefields House and the Renewal Programme, visit [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/middlefields-house](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/middlefields-house).

# Harvest for the homeless in Plymouth

**During September, the residents and staff at Bethany celebrated their Harvest Festival with Rev David Evans leading the service. It was a beautiful service, much enjoyed by all. Bethany's residents and staff joined together to give to the Shekinah Mission, another Christian charity in Plymouth that cares for people experiencing homelessness and complex issues. A vast supply of food was put together by residents and staff and all sent to Shekinah.**

Bethany has a connection with Shekinah as Vivienne Chapman, housekeeper/activities coordinator at the home and her husband Peter both helped to start Shekinah in 1992. Peter recently spent an afternoon at Bethany giving a fascinating talk about Shekinah to the residents.

Vivienne tells of how Shekinah got its name: "Early in 1992 we were offered the use of the old Bath Street Mission Hall. We decided that we needed a proper name, so we had a night dedicated to seeking the Lord for the name. We all felt



that the name had something to do with light. During the evening, two of us said "Shekinah". When asked why I thought this, I said, soon after my conversion the vicar at the church I was attending preached on King Solomon's temple and when God's Shekinah Glory fell (His light), the priest had been unable to stand. I cannot remember the other person's explanation, but the group unanimously decided on 'Shekinah' - God's Glory".

Shekinah is now run by Vivienne's daughter Tracey Ikerd who was the previous manager of Bethany Christian Home! She sent a special message to Bethany:

*"Shekinah sends its grateful thanks to Bethany Christian Home for the abundant Harvest received on 30th September. I miss everyone and am always recommending Bethany and PFS as the most caring and professional care service I have ever experienced."*

Shekinah is still thriving today with homeless people making their way to the hall for free cups of tea, food and a warmup. They have access to showers, clean clothing, sleeping bags and warm coats. On site there is medical support and people to give advice about housing. They also provide a listening ear and support to help people to achieve their goals.

Bethany's Harvest Donations were used to help provide free breakfasts and other food throughout the day and was free to those who are not able to pay.



# Unadorned clay pots: best gift for the lonely at Christmas

By Louise Morse

**Unless you are one of those people who make a list and stock Christmas gifts the whole year round, like the rest of us you will worry in the next few weeks over what to get for your relatives and friends, particularly those whose preferences you don't know because you don't see them very often. Yet the best gift of all, the one that literally changes lives, is the simplest. And, like an expensive fragrance, its effects last for a long time. I'll come to it later.**

Christmas can be the best of times and the worst of times (with apologies to Charles Dickens). For those who love it all – the candlelit services, the Christmas dinner, the gifts, the coming together and so on, it's the best of times. We can almost



hear the 'angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold'. One of the blessings of Christmas is that it magnifies our sense of belonging, both with our families and friends and our churches. The smiles and hugs as we meet tell us that we are valued and accepted.

But for those who are lonely it is the worst of times. Some of the saddest stories about loneliness crop up at Christmas time. For example, Edith, an 89-year-old widow who spent most of Christmas Day listening to the message on the answerphone that had been left by her husband who had died months earlier. Then there was the 94-year-old who spent Christmas with his daughter's family but was devastated on New Year's Eve. His wife had died four years before and they had always seen in the New Year in together. 'Oh, the loneliness, the loneliness,' he told a BBC interviewer.

For close-knit couples who have lived most of their lives together, the passing of one of them is like tearing away a part of the soul, and it isn't helped when people avoid visiting because they don't know what to say. A pastor in a church in Wales said that many in church congregations believe it is the role of the pastor to visit



the bereaved. Seriously? Where is the instinctive reaching out from one human to comfort another? We could learn from the Jewish example of 'sitting Shiva', where for seven days relatives and friends go to sit with the bereaved person. It's just to be there, sitting with the person, taking his or her lead and talking or simply being silent – but present. Usually it involves taking food. Americans tend to do this well. In South Carolina, when my son lost his battle with Leukaemia last October, my daughter in law didn't need to prepare a meal the whole time I was there. People would telephone to ask if we would like clam chowder or green bean casserole or whatever, and friends and family, and colleagues from her clinic came over and just kept us company. It's especially important when someone

has died from dementia, as caregivers can become more and more isolated as the disease progresses. A church in Southbourne runs a group called 'The Afters' for people who are putting their lives together again after a bereavement like this. They meet and chat in church and go for walks and do social things together, for instance, going to the theatre and visiting people in care homes. A special delight was the friendship that developed between a resident whose first language was French, and a woman in the group who had lived in France for some years and was fluent in it.

Research by Age UK has found that a surprising number of older people (over a million) are lonely because they feel that they are worth nothing and

that nobody wants to know them. Studies show that they have grown older with a very poor view of old age. They've absorbed ageist attitudes that constantly paint a negative picture, such as being a burden on society, and of no use. The best gift for them at Christmas time is hearing from another human being that God values them so much that He gave the best he had, His beloved only Son, to bring them into His family. Many are the 'Sunday School generation', who will still hold to the tradition of coming to church for Christmas services. We can usually spot new faces at church and it's an opportunity to welcome them warmly, and perhaps give a list of church meetings and activities with the Order of Service at the door.

There's also the loneliness of people who are isolated in their own homes because of frailty or lack of transport. Many bus routes have been axed to save money with devastating effects for older people relying on them. Over half of all people aged 75 and over live alone, and two-fifths (about 3.9 million) say television is their main company. At Christmas time most churches put a lot of effort into events for older people in the community, often run by older volunteers themselves. They put notices outside the church and in GPs' waiting rooms, on supermarket notice-boards and in the local press and often help by arranging lifts for people. At a Christian event this year an elderly visitor told me that he went to three different churches. Not sure whether he really

knew Christ, I asked him to tell me more: he said that he was living on his own and that three churches within walking distance had 'something going on' on different days of the week. They were the highlights of his week, and yes, he had committed his life to Jesus Christ many years ago. It's just that his friends group had 'passed on'.

Writing to the Christians at Corinth the apostle Paul told them, "if you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious message around in the unadorned clay pots of our lives." (2 Corinthians 4, The Message Bible). We're also told that Christians carry with them 'the fragrance of Christ' (2 Corinthians 2: 15-17). Never mind the expensive presents and the fancy wrappings – it's our unadorned clay pots that make the best gifts at Christmas, simply the giving of our time, and of ourselves.

*"...if you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious message around in the unadorned clay pots of our lives."*

2 CORINTHIANS 4

# Prayer Calendar

DECEMBER 2019 – JUNE 2020



*"Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. The LORD works out everything to its proper end..."*

PROVERBS 16:3-4

Thank you for joining with us in prayer for Pilgrims' Friend Society.

Whenever you pray, please remember the following key themes:

## Leadership

- **That our leaders will be led by the Lord and always seek His will**
- **For God to equip and enable when dealing with challenging situations**
- **For our home managers – for wisdom, discernment and energy**

## Residents

- **A sense of fulfilment in lives well lived for the Lord**
- **Godly fellowship and friendship and the opportunity to serve**
- **That those with little or no faith will come to know the Lord**

## Those who serve in our Homes and Schemes

- **That they carry out their tasks 'as if working for the Lord' (Col. 3:23)**
- **That carers show kindness, love and compassion as they serve**
- **Thank God for our volunteers who serve faithfully**

## Kingdom life in our homes

- **For strong and fruitful relationships with the local Christian community**
- **Guidance for those leading worship and proclaiming God's word**

## Daily Prayer Guide

(Please pray as the Lord leads)

### Sundays

#### Bethany Christian Home, Plymouth

Manager: Emma Hughes

#### Strathclyde House, Scotland

Managers: Ian Ramage and Graham Hare

#### Board of Trustees

That they be faithful servants and guide the Society well.

#### Residents living with dementia

For the Lord's peace and reassurance for their relatives and/or carers.

### Mondays

#### Dorothea Court, Bedford

Manager: Evelyn Bissell

#### Emmaus House, Harrogate

Manager: Lesley Harris

#### Occupancy

That people of God's choosing are drawn to fill our care rooms and retirement accommodation

#### London Office Staff

For safety, protection, godly service and good stewardship of the society's resources.

### Tuesdays

#### Milward House, Tunbridge Wells

Manager: Annabelle Purdie

#### Pilgrim Gardens, Leicester

Manager: Mandy Smith

#### PFS speaking team

For wisdom and spiritual insight as they raise awareness, inform and train on issues of old age and dementia.

#### The Society's finances

That the Lord will continue to provide for all our needs at the right time.

### Wednesdays

#### Evington Home, Leicester

Managers: Jeanette Davis and Mark Dillamore

#### Finborough Court, Suffolk

Managers: Rachel Fishburne and Jonathan Dorrington

#### Property Services Team

Led by Andy Walsh  
Managing the Chippenham building project and the challenges of keeping our homes functioning well and safe.

#### PFS conferences in 2020

For the practical arrangements and that God will bring many to hear about PFS.

### Thursdays

#### Leonora Home, Chippenham

Managers: Gaie Marshall and Jackie Bridgen

#### Luff House, Walton-on-the-Naze

Managers: Rosie Ely and Sharon Rowley

#### Operations Team

(Led by Maureen Sim)  
Keeping PFS homes safe and compliant.

#### Finborough Housing, Suffolk

Manager: Sylvia Humm

### Fridays

#### Florence House, Peterborough

Manager: Philip Smith

#### Framland, Wantage

Manager: Beth Kneale

#### Chippenham church engagement

For Ruth Ranger as she connects with churches in the Chippenham area.

### Saturdays

#### Royd Court, Mirfield

Manager: Vicki Miller

#### Pilgrim Care, Mirfield

Manager: Abi Jessop

#### Church leaders

As they serve older people in their churches and their communities.

#### Shottermill House

Managers: Mike Beere and Ann Ward

## Praise and thanksgiving from around our homes

Life in the care sector as a whole at the moment is extremely challenging, and PFS has had its fair share of challenges over the past six months – from prolonged staff vacancies to empty rooms, to broken lifts, and even the closure of our home in Brighton (see page 9). But our Lord promises us that He is always with us, renewing our strength when we grow weary, and granting us **new** mercies every morning.

In a world that is broken and older people are made to feel less and less useful and more isolated, there's a common theme running through some of our homes at the moment, for which we want to give thanks and praise. Our residents are telling us that moving to PFS has brought them closer to God, strengthened their faith, given them purpose! One home reported that the residents would be very disappointed if there was no morning devotion. Staff too are feeling a sense of calling to the work and are keen to share their faith with residents and non-Christian colleagues.

**Finborough Court** have started an 'Alpha Course' for staff so they can get a better understanding of what our residents believe. At **Dorothea Court** they have a number of informal groups which meet for a range of reasons – discussing the spiritual life at the home, practical ways life could be improved and the 'family' supported, and what the

Bible has to say on chosen themes. These groups involve staff, occupants, Friends and Auxiliary. One resident referred to life at Dorothea as 'spiritually rich' and 'challenging... in a good way'! More than one staff member has said that they feel God has brought them to that home for a purpose – confirmation that this is not just a job, it is a calling!

At **Luff House** a 'prayer partnership' established by the Care Manager, Rosie Ely, has seen the home building strong links with local churches, resulting in more Christians moving into Luff House. The number of Christian staff has also increased, which is making a real difference to the Christian atmosphere around the home. Praise the Lord too for **Pilgrim Gardens** in Leicester where God is sending people who need the safety and comfort of the Christian community there. Morning devotions have never been so vibrant and the community is richer for it!

Praise the Lord for the real sense of discipleship which is clearly permeating our homes. We give thanks too for the Christian residents and the wonderful staff who are drawn to our homes and for the way they all embrace the 'Christian family' ethos. Even amidst the significant challenges there is so much to be thankful for! Praise God.

*“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”* ISAIAH 40:31



## Prayers for the Chippenham building project

**As we embark on the next phase of our homes renewal programme, with the construction of a new home in Chippenham, please pray for God's leading and guiding for all those involved. Pray especially for Andy Walsh (Property Services Director) and his team as they oversee the building project – that they may be a godly witness to those they work with and for wisdom in their decision-making.**

Below are some specific prayer suggestions for the Chippenham building project:

- Above all, for God's guiding and leading in all aspects of the project
- For wisdom in all planning and decision-making
- For God-honouring interactions with third parties such as building inspectors and contractors
- For a safe and mistake-free build
- That God would be preparing those He has chosen to live, work and volunteer in the new home
- For the necessary fund-raising
- For increased interest from and connections with the local churches
- For the ongoing work at the existing home
- For the work of Ruth Ranger, our Community Engagement Officer in Chippenham.

Thank you.

# Pilgrim Gardens – where God puts the lonely in families

By Mandy Smith

**At a recent Christian conference for women it upset me to hear two of the speakers, speak of their fear of growing old alone. As single Christian ladies, they are not alone in their anxieties.**

Pilgrim Gardens is a community of elderly Christians, many having never been married, never having children, having been widowed or having families that live many miles away, sometimes in other countries; but what these elderly Christians do have is an environment where they can flourish with other Christians. Here are the stories of two of them...

Having spent 33 years on the mission field, Jill had always been housed with others. However, when she retired at 60, she realised that she would have to start living alone. Although she wasn't concerned about being lonely, she did question who she could turn to when she was no longer independent and able to drive. An internet search led her to Pilgrim Gardens. To her the unique selling point was the Pilgrim's Friend Society's Evington Home just next door, meaning that once Jill could no longer cope independently, she could be supported by their 24hour care. But in the meantime, Jill appreciates her daily call from the Pilgrim Gardens office to check that she is



Jill and other residents enjoying Christmas dinner together and Jill at the recently started singing group Singing for Fun

*“God sets the lonely in families..”*

PSALM 68:6A

Margaret at the new exercise class Stretch and Breathe



ok and the Christian neighbours that she is surrounded by. Jill says, 'being single means that you can't join in with many of the conversations that other elderly people are having, like comparing grandchildren, but having Christian neighbours always gives you that common ground for conversation about the Lord.'

Margaret's son had introduced Margaret and her husband Geoff to Pilgrim Gardens and on their first look around Margaret described it as a place of 'beauty, peace, quiet and bliss'. I remember Margaret's words to me through teary eyes were, 'it feels like home'. Margaret had been spending much of her time caring for her husband Geoff, who had dementia, Margaret struggled to see as she has

macular degeneration and she confesses to being timid. All these things meant that she had become quite lonely where she had been living. Once Margaret and Geoff had moved in, they made friends very quickly as neighbours made themselves known and chatted freely when they were out and about. Sadly, Geoff passed away four months after moving in. Margaret is very grateful of God's provision of her home at Pilgrim Gardens, where although she is now alone, she never feels lonely because of the warmth and comfort of the lovely neighbours close by.

For more information about living at Pilgrim Gardens or for a look around, please call Mandy on 03003038455 or email [pilgrim.gardens@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim.gardens@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk)

# Examine your thoughts on growing old, and choose those that are true (Philippians 4:8) By Louise Morse

**Have you ever arrived at an airport without your passport? Derailed your train of thought steaming up an attractive side-track? Met people you know but can't remember their names, even though they seem to know you well and even affectionately? I've done all those things, and more – in my early 30s. It never occurred to me then to call them 'senior moments' because the older people I knew weren't any different to me, just that they were older.**

Next time you have a momentary lapse and call it a 'senior moment' ask yourself what you are saying about older people. Do you really believe that every older person is forgetful, and by implication, mentally inferior? It's an example of the ageist labels we apply unthinkingly to the older generation, the result of myths we've absorbed for the last five decades. Those myths also say that older people are stubborn, can't learn new things, are less adventurous, are less adaptable to change, and have poorer memories. But these things also apply to some people in all generations, so why pinpoint them in seniors?

'We're prone to believe that mental prowess, along with physical ability, peaks while we're young, but new research shows that this thinking is largely wrong,' writes David DiSalvo in Forbes Magazine (March 2015). 'We now know that certain areas of the brain never stop changing, that new neurons grow with astounding frequency, and that thought itself affects change in brain structure to an extent that few researchers, even 20 years ago, believed possible.'<sup>i</sup> It chimes with the findings of Professor Becca Levy's team at Yale University who found that older individuals with more positive self-perceptions of

ageing, measured up to 23 years earlier, lived 7.5 years longer than those with less positive self-perceptions of aging and had better health.<sup>ii</sup>

Older people themselves can be deeply ageist, having internalized a lifetime of negative stereotypes about ageing. How often do we hear, 'what do you expect at my age?' Ashley Applewhite is a leading anti-ageism activist, and writer. Her feisty TED talk has been viewed 1.3 million times.<sup>iii</sup> She says that recognising your own ageism and tackling it with others to change society has radical effects and real rewards. 'I hear regularly from people who have begun to reject age shame that they feel instantly relieved and empowered.'<sup>iv</sup>

Researchers at Massey University, New Zealand, have come up with seven strategies for fighting ageism.

- 1. Develop an optimistic view of ageing.** The better you feel about getting older, the healthier you will become.
- 2. Don't fall into the "senior moment" trap.** Attributing a slight memory lapse to something ominous going on in your brain will lead you, and others, to see yourself as less than mentally capable.



**3. Resist the temptation to tease others about their age:** Have you ever sent an ageist greeting card? These supposed jokes about being "over the hill" can become self-fulfilling prophecies.

**4. Confront reality and plan for your future care needs:** Face the fact that there may be physical changes that might affect your life as you age. By being willing to confront reality, you'll be able to tap more effectively into proactive coping.

**5. Get with the new technologies:** If you don't already know, learn how to use email, social media, and texting. This will not only stimulate your brain but will help keep you in touch with others. Many parents and grandparents are keeping in touch with their families via Skype for example.

The most important thing to remember is that God designed life to include ageing on purpose. Being old is not about hanging on till you get to Heaven. Our senior years are about 'being', not 'doing', about letting God minister to others out of the depth of our relationship with Him.

i. [www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-832261.pdf](http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-832261.pdf)

ii. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797614567339>

iii. [https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton\\_applewhite\\_let\\_s\\_end\\_ageism](https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton_applewhite_let_s_end_ageism)

iv. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/sep/14/the-ugly-truth-about-ageism-its-a-prejudice-targeting-our-future-selves>

**6. Manage being the recipient of ageism:** It is almost inevitable that you will be the target of some form of ageism as you get older. When this happens, point out that ageist jokes are as offensive as any other "-ist" jokes, such as those about race and gender.

**7. Resist the lure of anti-ageing products:** It's good to try to stay healthy but if you're spending your hard-earned money on frivolous and ineffective treatments, you're only giving into the most insidious and expensive ageist trap of all. Regular exercise is better, boosting circulation and releasing 'feel good' hormones.

# Everlasting to everlasting

## God is the unchanging One throughout the changing seasons of life

By Alexandra Davis

**We all go through seasons in life – seasons that we’re comfortable with, seasons that we’re not; seasons that we can choose and control to an extent, seasons that we are completely at the mercy of; seasons that we share with others, seasons that we journey alone. When we look back and remember what’s gone before, we can see how our life has been shaped by different seasons and we know which ones we enjoyed and which ones we didn’t.**

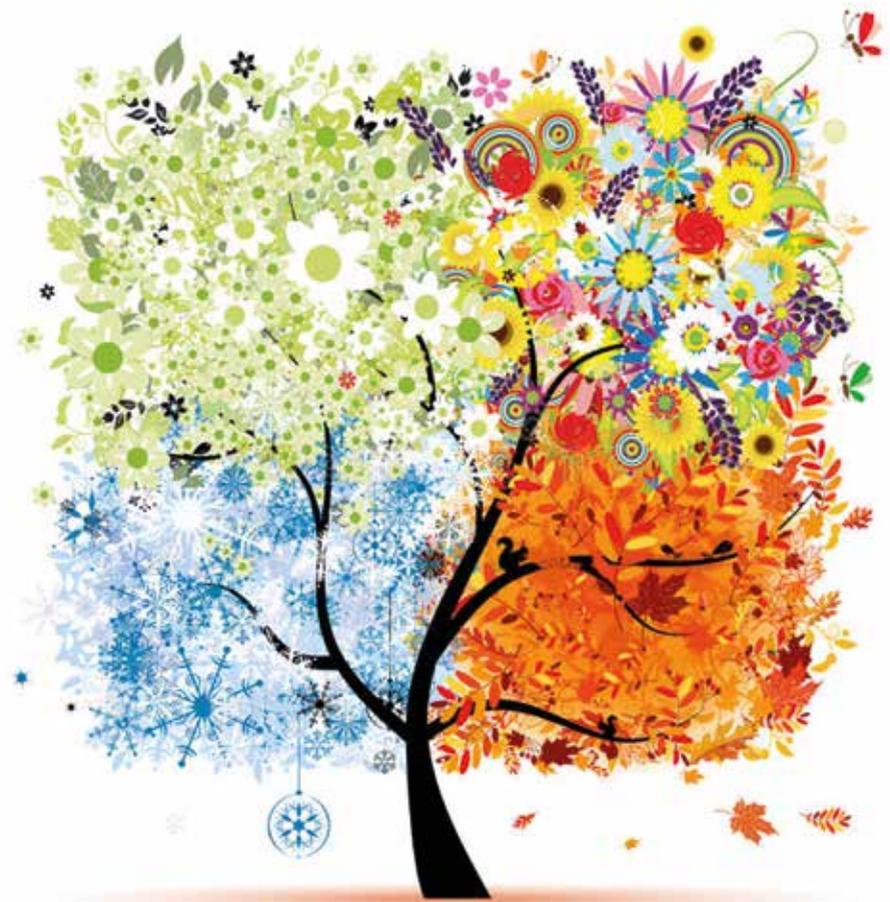
This September marked the end of one season and the beginning of another for me as I left my old job at the Evangelical Alliance and started my new job as director of marketing and communications here at Pilgrims’ Friend Society. Having been in my previous job for almost four years, the shift to a new job and new colleagues was a bit of a challenge – an exciting and welcome one, but a challenge nonetheless.

Often, when we reflect on the changing seasons of life, we are reminded of the one thing that was constant throughout – God. God’s love and faithfulness is the one constant many of us who have journeyed through life with Him can point to. When I left one job on Friday afternoon and started another job on Monday morning, it was God who walked out of one door with me and in through a different door with me a few days later. He did not change, even though my



circumstances changed. He remained exactly as He has always been – Mighty God and perfect friend.

The Christmas season is a special time for remembering the unchanging love of God. We remember that the Alpha who spoke the universe into being became a baby who grew to be a man who died on a cross to take away the sin of the world. That Alpha and Saviour is the same God who called me into being at the appointed time, that I would live in this season and do the work that He has called me to. And He is the same Omega who will come again and with whom we will live in glory for all eternity.



My favourite seasonal Bible passage is a classic for this very reason. In Isaiah 9 when we speak of the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace we remind ourselves repeatedly that God is unchanging. Those names were true of God when Isaiah was written, they are true of God now and they will be true of God forever.

As you reflect on life, think about the pattern of God’s faithfulness to you. Acknowledge that ways that God was present, faithful and leading you on. Though our little worlds change, and we experience the joys and trials of different seasons, God is always good and always faithful to us.

*“For to us a child is born,  
a son is given and the  
government will rest  
on His shoulders.  
And he will be called,  
Wonderful Counsellor  
Mighty God  
Everlasting Father  
Prince of Peace.”*

ISAIAH 9:6

# Brown Owls spark happy memories in dementia resident

**In July this year our Wantage Care Home had a special visit from the 'Brown Owls', the local Girl Guide group.**

The Home Manager found out that one of our residents, Pam Scholes (currently living with dementia) was a very happy Brown Owl in her youth, so thought it would be a good idea to invite the local Brownies to visit Pam. Not only did they accept the invitation, they decided that they would make a quilt and present it to Pam on their visit.

According to Pam's husband, Roy, when she was being presented with the quilt, her eyes lit up – she recognised the rainbows on the quilt, and she was clearly delighted



to receive it. Seeing the Brownies obviously sprung up something in her memory too and the expression on her face spoke of happy memories.

The quilt now hangs on Pam's bedroom wall so that she can enjoy looking at it and maybe unearth some wonderful memories of an age gone by. Pam barely speaks now, but whenever the staff speaks about the quilt, they say they can see her facial expression change, as if she is remembering the happy days of being a Brown Owl herself. God knows!



# Postcards with love

**During the summer, Leonora joined a Facebook group called 'Postcards of Kindness'. It is a group where residential homes can post their addresses and ask folk to send postcards from their holidays for the residents to enjoy.**

Shortly afterwards, Leonora decided to create their own little project, 'Postcards with Love' where they asked their own followers and friends to send a postcard to share.

Well, they were inundated! They had the most gorgeous collection of cards, from all over the world. Some were immediately loved and kept by family members, but most made it to the pin board in the orchid corridor.

Residents/Family Members enjoy these simple gifts so much, they are shared, pored over, discussed and treasured. Often a picture or a message will spark a memory. Some of the post cards asked questions – 'Where did you go on holiday?', 'What is your favourite book?', 'Have you ever lived abroad?'

Activities Coordinator Jo is now preparing to make a great, grand scrapbook of them



all, to be browsed in winter, when all those summer adventures will seem so far away.

Meanwhile, Leonora House put out the call for Christmas Cards with Love! It's not too late, if you find yourself with a spare robin, shepherd, or nativity scene, to pen a line, add a favourite Bible verse, or a Christmas memory, and pop it in the post to Leonora, or any of the other PFS Homes, for all to enjoy.

# Easyfundraising



Easyfundraising is a free service that allows charities like us to raise money when our supporters shop online with over 2,700 retailers, including Amazon, John Lewis, Next and Argos.

Just go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk), select Pilgrims' Friend Society as your charity to support, shop online as normal and PFS receives free donations, without costing you an extra penny!

# Worshipping Together

## A devotional resource for time with seniors

Some time ago a newspaper reported that thousands of people said they had found faith after visiting an ancient church building. They had been drawn first by the beautiful architecture and a sense of perpetuity, then once inside by the stillness and the atmosphere. Then followed a thoughtful process of discovery that led to faith in Jesus Christ.

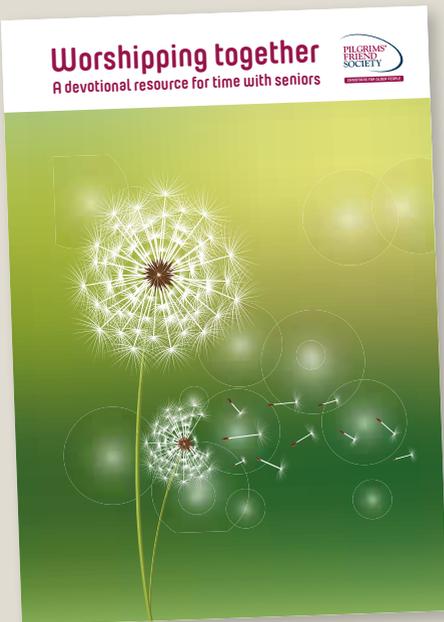
A question we ask when talking to faith groups and churches about helping people with dementia, is what they would miss most if they couldn't get to church. More often that not the answer is 'corporate worship'. It's more than singing, of course; the whole experience of being in church together, listening to the Word and focusing on Jesus Christ is part of worship.

In church there are prompts that move us towards worship. The greetings at the door and the music that's often playing quietly, the hymn numbers in the rack, the overhead screens, all are things that help us to enter in, and to engage. We take them for granted. We are here on purpose, for a purpose.

It's different for residents in care homes, or for older people in their own homes. Many care home residents are too frail to go to church, so churches are taking services to them. In our housing and care homes there are devotions every day, often taken by the manager, or another member of staff, a more active resident or a volunteer from a local evangelical church.

But without the 'church prompts' when you're frail it's harder to find the energy to engage; it's easier to be passive and just let it all wash over you.

So we've devised a devotional resource for time with seniors in an A4, ring bound book called, 'Worshipping Together'. From the outset, everyone is encouraged to be responsive and engaged, letting them know that their thoughts matter and that they are valued. Each devotion begins with a visual prompt giving a clue to the topic of the day, and a few questions to stimulate answers and discussion. Themes have been chosen that chime with the mindsets of those who are 'up in years', and are suitable for older people in small fellowship groups or even one-to-one with families in their own homes.



# OUR RESOURCES

For the Wellbeing Of Older People



## New! Worshipping Together

Bible reflections and prayers written with elderly residents in housing or care in mind, but works equally well with older people in small fellowship groups or even one-to-one with family in their own homes.

£8.00 (p&p free)



## Dementia Information Pack

Loose-leaf information pack of useful information on different aspects of dementia, including diagnosis, caring, managing challenging behaviour and caring for the caregiver.

£8.00 (p&p free)



## Brain and Soul Boosting for Seniors

A workbook (with DVD) designed to deliver cognitive and spiritual stimulation for older people, including those with early stage dementia, in a social setting that is fun and engaging.

£20.00 (p&p free)

## Books

To inform, inspire and encourage.



## Booklets

- Caring for an Elderly Parent
- Visiting People with Dementia **Newly revised version**
- God's Purpose for our Senior Years
- What Matters in the End • Six Steps to making a Dementia Friendly Church



Order these resources online at [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/shop](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/shop) or call us for more information and to order by telephone: 0300 303 1403

# Dates for your Diary 2020

## February

### Saturday 29th

#### Working with Older People and Supporting Those with Dementia (with Louise Morse and Dr Jennifer Bute)

Organised by Melbury Team Dorset, Sherbourne Diocese.  
See [www.melburyteam.co.uk](http://www.melburyteam.co.uk). Venue to be announced.

## March

### Wednesday 4th – Thursday 5th

#### Christian Resources Exhibition, Midlands (PFS Exhibiting)

NAEC, Stoneleigh Park, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth CV8 2LZ

### Thursday 12th 9:30am – 1:00pm (provisional time)

#### 'Empowering those in Later Life' (with Louise Morse)

An interactive day to inspire, encourage and equip delegates to demolish the myths of old age and undo the damage of ageism, with actions going forward.  
All Saints Church Weston, Church Street, Weston, Bath BA1 4BX

### Saturday 28th 10.00am – 4.00pm

#### PFS Annual Meeting (South and West)

Freshbrook Church, Worsley Road, Swindon, Wilts. SN5 8NU

### Saturday 28th 2.30pm

#### Finborough Easter Praise

Wetherden Baptist Church, Elmswell Rd, Wetherden, Stowmarket IP14 3LN

## April

### Saturday 4th 10.00am – 1.00pm (Provisional time)

#### 'All about Dementia' – with Louise Morse and others

Heath Evangelical Church, 122 Whitchurch Rd, Cardiff CF14 3LZ

## May

### Saturday 2nd 10.00am – 4.00pm

#### PFS Annual Meeting (South and East)

Cuckfield Baptist Church, Polestub Lane, Cuckfield, West Sussex RH17 5GP

### Monday 4th – Thursday 7th

#### 'Faith in the Second Half' – Preparing Christians to deepen their walk with God and serve others

Keswick Teaching and Training with Faith in Later Life, speakers including Louise Morse, and Revd Roger Hitchings, Debs Fidler.

Keswick Ministries, Rawsley Centre, Keswick, CA12 5NP.

For more information and to book go to: [keswickministries.org/event/fish/](http://keswickministries.org/event/fish/)

Call: 017687 80075 or email: [events@keswickministries.org](mailto:events@keswickministries.org)

### Saturday 16th 10.00am – 4.00pm

#### PFS Annual Meeting (Central and North)

Christ Church Bedford, 140 Dudley Street, Bedford, MK40 3SX

## June

### Monday 7th – Sunday 13th

#### PFS Week of Prayer

# Conference



## Faith in the Second Half

Preparing Christians to deepen their walk with God and serve others

4 – 7 May 2020 Church Members

5 – 6 May 2020 Leaders

Keswick Ministries, The Rawnsley Centre, Keswick, CA12 5NP

Whether you are firmly in later life, have retired recently, or are reflecting on what life looks like now your children have left home, this stream of seminars aims to provide teaching and insight into a variety of aspects of later life.

There's also a church leader's stream for those involved in leading ministry with older people so they are resourced to inspire, equip and empower those in the second half of life.

### Speakers

Rev. Roger Hitchings, Carl Knightly, Pippa Cramer, Dave Fenton, Janet Jacob, Dr Garry Williams, Rev Dr James Robson, Dr Philip Giddings, Louise Morse.

For more details, and to book, go to: [keswickministries.org/event/fish](http://keswickministries.org/event/fish)

for the leaders' stream: [keswickministries.org/event/fish-leaders/](http://keswickministries.org/event/fish-leaders/)

or call 017687 80075

Alternatively, you can email: [events@keswickministries.org](mailto:events@keswickministries.org)

We would love to see you there!

## Response Slip

Thank you for reading this magazine. PLEASE DO SUPPORT US as we have ambitious plans to improve our Homes and equip individuals and churches to help older people.

**Yes!** I would like to help.

- I would like to pray regularly for PFS. Please add me to the email list to receive the PFS Family News.
- I would like more information about PFS care homes and housing schemes
- I would like to make a donation.  
[Please complete details overleaf, and don't forget to GiftAid it, if eligible].
- I would like to hear more about leaving a legacy to PFS
- I would like to encourage more people to read this magazine and to pray.  
Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ extra copies of Pilgrims Magazine, Free of charge.

*'Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness'* 2 Corinthians 9:10

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please return this completed form, together with the completed Gift Aid slip overleaf in the pre-paid envelope supplied.**

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VISA  Mastercard  Switch With a single payment of £ \_\_\_\_\_

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I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Pilgrims' Friend Society. *giftaid it*

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Rev'd/Dr \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify the charity if you change address or no longer pay sufficient tax on income and/or capital gains.

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[www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk)





PILGRIMS'  
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# Bearing Fruit

## Christian flourishing in later life

Join us in 2020 for an inspiring day of inspiration and encouragement for Christians who want to live well in their latter years.

**Saturday 28 March**

Freshbrook Church  
Worsley Road, Swindon SN5 8NU

**Saturday 2 May**

Cuckfield Baptist Church  
Polestub Lane, Cuckfield, West Sussex RH17 5GP

**Saturday 16 May**

Christ Church Bedford  
140 Dudley Street, Bedford MK40 3SX

**Book early to secure your place:**  
[pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/conference2020](http://pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/conference2020)

Tel: 0300 303 1403

**FREE ADMISSION**