



# Offering spiritual care in later life

## Introduction to Anna Chaplaincy for Older People



*Enabling all ages to grow in faith*

**Anna Chaplaincy is part of The Bible Reading Fellowship.  
Other BRF programmes/ministries include:**

**Living Faith**  
**Messy Church**  
**Parenting for Faith**



# The growing need for Older People's ministry

- Changing demography
- The need for spiritual and religious care
- A 'ripe' time for ministry top people in their later years asking 'big questions'

# Increasing ageing population

- In the UK there are now more people aged 60 and above than there are under 18 – for the first time ever
- Two million people over 75 years of age live alone
- The number of those over the age of 85 are expected to nearly double by 2043
- There are around 850,000 people living with a dementia (set to more than double to two million by 2051)

# The need for spiritual care

- The need to give and to receive love
- The need to sustain hope
- The need for something and someone to believe in
- The need for creativity

**There's a need to achieve spiritual wholeness**

In old age...

We tend to be more reflective - more about  
'being' than doing

A time to consider death

The 'good news' of the hope of eternal life is  
ever more welcome at this stage

# Anna Chaplaincy for Older People – offering spiritual care

- Community based (going where people are, to those in need)
- No distinction between churchgoers and non-churchgoers (47% of older people served are not church members\*)
- Inclusion of relatives, carers, and care professionals
- Person-centred and non-judgemental
- Ecumenical (wherever possible)

# Growth of Anna Chaplaincy

- Started in Alton, Hampshire in 2010 with former broadcaster Debbie Thrower
- Now more than 200 Anna Chaplains and those in equivalent roles (e.g. Older People's Pastor)
- Emerging ministries to older people, often *by older people themselves*
- Wide ecumenical spread: Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Free Evangelicals etc.



## Ministry includes...

- Accompanying – walking alongside
- Listening to people's 'stories'
- Sensitive spiritual care
- Diverse contexts – to those who are housebound, care homes retirement facilities, community groups, dementia-friendly cafés ... and many more

## Ministry includes...

- Working with older people
- Supporting relatives
- Supporting staff working with older people
- Working with churches
- Working with the community
- Working across generations

# Anna Chaplains for Older People

- May be lay or ordained, male or female, paid or voluntary
- It's a vocation - gifts for this ministry are recognised and an individual candidate supported by local church; a chaplain is 'sent'...
- Linked and supported by BRF, Bible Reading Fellowship, through the national Anna Chaplaincy Network

# Key principles of an Anna Chaplain role

- Appointed and authorised by, and accountable to, their local church or group of 'Churches Together'
- Ecumenical and community based
- An advocate and champion in the wider community
- Reaching out to people of strong, little or no faith

# Advantages of Anna Chaplaincy for older people

- Extensive network of those working in older people's ministry raising professional standards
- Online training courses and BRF materials - relevant publications and blog

<https://www.annachaplaincy.org.uk/blog>

- Regular online get togethers, themed events and an annual gathering for teaching and sharing
- Sharing of a wealth of experience, including 'Messy Vintage' (Messy Church for older people)

- Churches recruit and manage their own Anna Chaplains
- Anna Chaplains are line managed and supervised locally
- They typically offer one day a week minimum
- Strategic task: spot gaps in provision, lead worship in care homes, manage volunteers (Anna Friends)
- Catalysts for new ideas

# BRF's Anna Chaplaincy core team developing it nationally

- Debbie Thrower – Founder and Pioneer



- Debbie Ducille – Church Lead (lives in Birmingham)

- Alex Burn and Wendy Hopkins– Coordinators





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