

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus.

Daily Hope, which is available from today, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

DailyHope.phoneline - 0800 804 8044

The service is supported by the Church of England nationally as well as through the Connections group based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Although thousands of churches across the country are now running services and prayer groups online while public worship remains suspended, many people – especially older people – do not have access to the internet.

The line also recognises the impact of social distancing restrictions and self-isolation measures on those suffering from loneliness.

Statistics from Age UK suggest that 49% of older people believe the TV or a pet to be their daily source of comfort and interaction. While many organisations are encouraging people to use better use of technology, ONS figures also state that 2.5 million people aged 75 and above have never used the internet.

Callers will hear a special greeting from the Archbishop before being able to choose from a range of options, including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19.

Options available include materials also available digitally by the Church of England's Communications team such as Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer, updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England weekly national online service.

A section called Hymn Line offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled 'Hymns We Love', provides a hymn and reflection and is based on an initiative by the Connections group

Archbishop Justin said:

"With many in our country on lockdown, it's important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are.

"The Daily Hope service will allow people to hear hymns, prayers and words that offer comfort and hope, especially in this Easter season.

"I want to urge people to spread the news about this service. If there is someone you know who is particularly struggling, give them a call and let them know about the Daily Hope. I'm going to phone a friend; will you join me?"

Carl Knightly, chief executive of Faith in Later Life, added:

"The Church must be those who offer hope to our nation at this time, and I am delighted that Faith in Later Life is able to be part of this project.

"We know as an organisation of the challenges for older people in our society in normal times and these are not those, so I want to add our voice to that of the Archbishop and get people sharing this number with whoever they know who would most benefit."

Pippa Cramer, founder of Connections, said:

"At Connections we have found that well-loved hymns are a source of comfort and hope to our seniors. Hymns we Love has proved to be an accessible and popular way to explore the story and meaning behind some of our favourite hymns."

## Notes for editors

**Connections** - One of the largest weekly gatherings for seniors in the UK, Connections welcomes over 150 guests to Holy Trinity Church in Claygate, Surrey. Started 10 years ago by Pippa Cramer, its vision is "to create a safe and welcoming community for seniors where they can connect with each other and the church and to provide the opportunity to demonstrate and share the love of Jesus". It reaches elderly church and non-church members, many of whom are lonely and isolated, building a community of support and friendship that has also served as a bridge into church.

**Faith in Later Life** seeks to inspire and equip Christians to reach, serve and empower older people through the local Church and to encourage older Christians in their faith. A key part of the Faith in Later Life mission is encouraging churches to reach older people of any faith or none in the wider community who may be isolated or lonely, and sharing the hope, love and good news of Jesus Christ.

**Prayer During the Day** and **Night Prayer** audio are available on [Soundcloud](#) and via the Church's free [Time To Pray app](#).

The weekly online service is available from 9am each Sunday and this, as well as the full range of national resources, can be accessed on our [church online page](#). This is all provided by the Church of England Communications team.

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