

**GENERAL SYNOD****Anna Chaplaincy****Summary**

We are living in an age of unprecedented longevity. Countries across the world are working through the implications of seeing their populations increasingly dominated by third and fourth agers. This is a cause for celebration but requires churches to develop ways of supporting discipleship in advanced old age, including where later life brings disability. Understanding the spirituality of later life and dementia, for those with a faith and those without, is a key responsibility.

In Rochester Diocese a central strategy in addressing the needs and contribution of our elders has been to encourage a sense of calling to specialist ministry with older people. In partnership with The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) we are appointing Anna Friends and Anna Chaplains to work in parishes, offering spiritual accompaniment to older people, including those with dementia.

We call upon synod to encourage the development of this specialist Anna Chaplaincy ministry, so churches can contribute to lives lived well in the final quarter. We urge the national church to work with Government to support age friendly and dementia friendly communities.

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Motion from Rochester Diocese

That this Synod:

- (a) recognise and commend the important work of 'Anna Chaplaincy'\* and 'The Gift of Years'
- (b) request all dioceses to raise the profile of work with those diagnosed with dementia and their carers; and
- (c) call on Her Majesty's Government to report on progress on the achievement of the Prime Minister's 'Challenge on Dementia 2020', and on what steps are being taken to join up health and social care to ensure the seamless transition from one to the other for people with dementia.

\*'Anna Chaplaincy' to the elderly, especially those with Dementia, is named after Anna in Luke 2:36-38; it is part of 'The Gift of Years' programme from The Bible Reading Fellowship, which also produces publications for the elderly and those with Dementia.

**Responding to an ageing society****1. Demographics**

Statistics on the nature of our older population make for striking reading. While the experience of multiple co-morbidities in later life places strain on our welfare system, much of the informal care received by older people is given by other older people.

a) Ageing

- In 2010 12,000 people in the UK were aged 100 or older; by 2040 this figure will rise to 160,000. A third of babies born in 2012 are expected to live to 100.
- By 2040 the number of people aged 75 or over will double to 10,000,000.

b) Dementia

- The UK has 900,000 people living with dementia, rising to 2 million by 2050.
- 750,000 people in the UK care for a relative or friend with dementia.

c) Carers

- 1 in 10 over 85's in the UK cares for a friend or family member and this will double within 20 years.
- Most carers aged over 70 spend more than 60 hours a week caring.

(Statistics from Office of National Statistics, International Longevity Centre, Alzheimer's Research UK, Carers Trust)

## 2. Towards a Theology of Ageing and Dementia

Joanna Collicutt, in *'Thinking of You: A Resource for the Spiritual Care of People with Dementia'*, says:

*'Part of understanding oneself, and other people on the journey of ageing, involves reflecting on spirituality; identifying the things that give us a sense of deep peace and wellbeing, so we are able to dwell in the present moment and feel "It is good that we are here".'*

John Swinton, in his seminal work on the pastoral theology of dementia (*'Dementia – Living in the Memories of God'*, 2012) says:

*'The problem with dementia is not that people forget, but that they are forgotten.'*

## **Recognising and commending the important work of 'Anna Chaplaincy'**

### 3. The Origins of Anna Chaplaincy in Alton, Hampshire

In 2009, when former broadcaster Debbie Thrower answered a local advertisement for a community chaplain to work in her home town with older people, she says that *'she knew in her bones that if they developed a good model then it could and should be replicated elsewhere'*. At the time, little did she know that the idea would go national with the backing of The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF).

### 4. What is Anna Chaplaincy?

An initiative of BRF since 2014, Anna Chaplaincy was pioneered in Winchester Diocese, and is an ecumenical, community-based chaplaincy to older people. Predominantly lay led, it is named after the faithful older woman, Anna, who appears with Simeon in Luke's Gospel. Anna Chaplains can be lay or ordained. They work in care homes, private

homes, churches and community settings with people of strong, little or no faith, and are appointed by their local church.

Anna Chaplains devote at least a day each week to their role and have a strategic focus, raising awareness of needs in ageing and dementia and taking a lead in worship and group activities. Anna Friends spend several hours a week in role, offering one to one support and helping at services and groups.

#### 5. Anna Chaplaincy in Rochester Diocese

As a Diocese we are working in partnership with BRF to establish a network of Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends with funding from Henry Smith Christian Projects. We have a growing team of 19 Anna Chaplains and 29 Anna Friends, covering 33 parishes and Rochester Cathedral. There are seven Anna Chaplaincy hubs which meet for support and reflection, and training is offered on aspects of ministry with older people, including a module on Anna Chaplaincy within our Foundation in Christian Ministry course. Under an agreement between Rochester and Canterbury Dioceses and BRF, we are now developing Anna Chaplaincy in East Kent. Through a new partnership with The Heart of Kent Hospice in Aylesford, on 1 October 2018 we launched an innovative Anna Chaplaincy service to work alongside the hospice specialist dementia service.

#### 6. National Anna Chaplaincy Network

Since launching Anna Chaplaincy in 2014, BRF has supported a growing network of Anna Chaplains and others in equivalent roles spanning the country, enabling them to meet annually for residential gatherings and sharing news through a monthly newsletter. The original Anna Chaplain, Debbie Thrower is now on the staff at BRF and authored the Anna Chaplaincy Handbook, an invaluable tool for developing ministry with older people. Anna Chaplains are found across England, from the South Coast (e.g. Southampton and Brighton), to the North East and North West (e.g. Northumberland and The Fylde Coast).

### **Requesting all dioceses raise the profile of work with those diagnosed with dementia and their carers**

#### 7. Dementia Friendly Church initiatives in the Diocese of Rochester

A growing number of parishes are establishing regular activities aimed at those with dementia and their families. This might be a dementia café, a carers group, or a dementia friendly church service. Several parishes are seeking recognition as 'working towards being dementia friendly'. Rochester Cathedral hosted an event for Dementia Action Week 2018 entitled Opening Doors to Dementia, attended by over 400 people.

#### 8. Dementia Friendly Church initiatives throughout the UK

Several dioceses have projects on Dementia Friendly Church and national charities are supporting this work:

- Lichfield was the first Diocese to appoint a project officer to work alongside parishes to help them become dementia friendly. It was also the first Diocese to be registered as a Dementia Friendly Community of Interest by the Alzheimer's Society under the Prime Minister's Challenge;

- Churches Together in Cumbria is pioneering the appointment of ‘dementia enablers’ in churches of all denominations across Cumbria;
- The charity Livability has developed essential tools for churches in addressing inclusion and spiritual care for people with dementia.

**Calling upon Her Majesty’s Government to report on progress on the achievement of the Prime Minister’s ‘Challenge on Dementia 2020’, and on what steps are being taken to join up health and social care to ensure the seamless transition from one to the other for people with dementia**

In particular, we request that Her Majesty’s Government report on aspirations within the Prime Minister’s Challenge that:

- *‘Every person with dementia having meaningful care following their diagnosis, which supports them and those around them..., e.g. carers of people with dementia being made aware of and offered the opportunity for respite, education, training, emotional and psychological support so that they feel able to cope with their caring responsibilities, and to have a life alongside caring.’*
- *England ‘lead the way in turning Dementia Friends into a global movement’.*

Mrs Julia Burton-Jones, Dementia Specialist Project Officer

January 2019

References

- Anna Chaplaincy Handbook (2018), by Debbie Thrower, published by The Bible Reading Fellowship.
- Dementia: Living in the Memories of God (2012), by John Swinton, published by SCM Press.
- Thinking of You: A Resource for the Spiritual Care of People with Dementia (2017), by Joanna Collicutt, published by The Bible Reading Fellowship.
- The Prime Minister’s Challenge on Dementia 2020 (2015), published by Department of Health.

To view a short film about the Dementia Café at Christ Church Chislehurst, visit <https://vimeo.com/242200832>.

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