

"The Things They Say!"



News from our Care Home Chaplaincy

The Care Home Chaplaincy is an Ecumenical project initiated by the Kidderminster and Stourport Methodist Circuit with help from the District. The Team, led by Stella Gray, has been sharing some stories about their work with residents, staff and visitors in our Care Home communities. A mixture of humour, news, comment and inspiration, we thought you might like to share them too!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Last year Stella told the story of Beryl who had been in a home for two years living with Dementia. The staff, friends and visitors are used to seeing Beryl walking up and down the corridors, talking to herself, in a language that was only known to her. She always looks happy. On the day of the carol service, Beryl was invited to join us-she usually comes into the service for a short time and walks out. However, today she stayed

and sang the carols from memory; something had clicked inside and her days of singing in the church choir came back that morning. The staff were in tears. I, too, had a tear in my eye watching her and staff members were called in and videoed her on their phones singing away. Beryl was happy, connected and singing and the true spirit of Christmas was in that room, that day. Praise the Lord.

The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of the sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

Luke 4: 18-19

Heard at Arch Hill:

"There is only one thing wrong with these services. They are not long enough"

Heard at Brook Court:

"When is he going to finish?"

"I wish I could sing" said Stella.
"So do I" said the resident.

REAPING AND SOWING IN THE KINGDOM

After a Harvest Festival service at a home in Stourport, a box of food was donated to us for the local Foodbank. It was a very kind gesture; sharing products from the care home with our local community.

Bread and wine were being distributed in a Communion service and taking a rather long time; as often is the case with older people. The staff

grew impatient and started offering sherry and mince pies from the other side of the room so there was a meeting in the middle and, unfortunately in this instance, The Communion was upstaged by the more 'festive' alternative.

At another home, strawberries were taken to share after the harvest service. However, one lady

couldn't wait so she periodically got up during the service and helped herself. There were not many left for sharing at the end but we had emergency biscuits, so it was fine.

Even the budgie joins in with the prayers and praise at Arch Hill and seems to know when to be quiet and when to say Amen.

BUT WHAT DO THEY ACTUALLY DO?

Chaplaincy visitors are people who have time to listen; are interested in the concerns of older people; are flexible and friendly; are there for residents staff and visitors of all faiths and none; are not there to impose their views on people but do believe in a God who cares and that all people matter.

Here are some of the things our Chaplains get up to when they visit Care Homes.

Phyl has helped a resident to choose a dress for a Grandchild's wedding and also taken things to the charity shop for people with no transport.

Cherrill has built up excellent relationships with residents and their families at The Herons and has received invitations to various parties and celebrations, thereby extending connections further.

Andrew takes his mandolin into Brook Court and performs folk songs as well as Christian songs.

Joy is building relationships at Ravenhurst. She visits residents frequently, helps in services and, like all the Chaplains, believes it is a two way process and benefits us as much as those we visit.

Ann has helped out at Holmwood with practical tasks such as helping at fetes and other functions and supporting the activity coordinator with creative arts.

Nell visits Brook Court and has begun taking services which are well received and build confidence for everyone.

Simply helping to wash up is really appreciated in some homes - just little things are often big things for the staff.

Several of us have attended free Dementia training at Brook Court at the invitation of the Management Team and it has been excellent.

*It's nearly 2 years since we started the Chaplaincy work, and it really has been the best job I have ever had! It has been and is a real blessing to spend time with these dear people.
Thank you,
Cherrill*

THE VIEW FROM HERNE'S NEST

I am increasingly seen as 'The Chaplain' to Herne's Nest Home in Bewdley; staff tell residents' families about me and I am asked to visit more people (men as well as ladies!).

When one of these ladies died recently her non-churchy fam-

ily turned to me to take her funeral and this provided an opportunity to meet with them, share my faith and hopefully provide comfort and reassurance. Apparently I am going to feature in the home's next newsletter, so more referrals may come my way.

I hope to take a group of singers from Bewdley Methodist Church to sing carols at Herne's Nest again this Christmas and my longer term hope is that we might be able to work alongside other churches to arrange a regular service there.

Mike

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH We received a phone call from Stan Brown asking for the secret of the success of the Wyre Forest Care Home Chaplaincy where others around the country had floundered. It is our belief that a team ethos of mutual support is engendered at our regular volunteer meetings and training sessions where we share our successes and concerns with each other. We are also inspired by the people we meet.

Please remember the care homes, residents, staff, Chaplaincy Team and their stories in your prayers and, if you feel moved to help in any way, we are always looking for volunteers as we grow our service into new homes.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION OR WISH TO BECOME MORE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THIS CHAPLAINCY, PLEASE CONTACT:

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