

Welcome to the September 2024 newsletter for Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends in Devon. In this issue, one Anna Friend has shared news about her work in the Holsworthy area. Thank you to all those who have submitted stories and news items. Please keep them coming! Contributions for the December 2024 newsletter should be submitted to the editor by 15th November 2024. Contact details at the bottom of page 2.

The Anna Chaplaincy community in Devon - Welcoming New Members



On 9th June 2024, Joy Miller (in white trouser suit) was commissioned as an Anna Chaplain at St Bart's Yealmpton by Rev Sheila Melot (also an Anna Friend). Joy was presented for commissioning by Annie Jefferies.



On 21st July 2024 Rev'd Madeline Bray was commissioned as an Anna Chaplain by the Archdeacon of Barnstaple, the Ven. Verena Breed, at St Mary's Bideford. In Annie Jefferies' absence, she was presented by Rev'd Preb. Claire Rose Casemore

and a special award for an Anna Friend

On 9th June 2024, Denise Robinson, an Anna Friend from Ashburton, was awarded a St Boniface Medal and thus became a Companion of St Boniface in a special service at Exeter Cathedral led by Bishop Jackie. The St Boniface Awards honour lay people who go above and beyond to serve our churches, church schools and their communities. Congratulations, Denise!



Gatherings - Past and Future

On 13th June 2024 we had a most enjoyable and informative study day at St Matt's Church in Exeter.

In addition to giving those attending chance to meet or catch up with other Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends, there was a very interesting presentation by Rev'd Lucyann Ashdown, spiritual lead at The Exeter Hospice. She told us about her work at The Hospice and invited us to join in a discussion whilst we enjoyed a soup lunch. Many thanks to Ellen Holah for all her hard work!

On 23rd October 2024 from 10.00am to 5.30pm, the Anna Chaplaincy Annual Gathering will be held. The theme of the gathering is 'The Gift'. This year the event will be online. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Anna Chaplaincy as a national movement, and the day promises to provide an encouraging and enjoyable programme, including a time of thanksgiving and celebration.

Debbie Thrower will be looking back with gratitude at the gift of Anna Chaplaincy and participants will consider their own 'gift of time' reflecting on the 'gift of grace' and 'gift exchange'

The cost is £45 which will include a participant's pack posted out beforehand.

The booking link and further details were sent by BRF via email on 27 August. If you did not receive this email, please contact Annie Jefferies or Josie Whitfield and we will forward the email to you.

Mary Aicheler, from the Holsworthy area, shares how she applied what she learned from the Spiritual Care Series to her own work as an Anna Friend.

Earlier this year I joined the Spiritual Care Series on zoom. During the first couple of sessions there was quite a bit on our own spiritual journey. I had done this before but it was good to think about it again, until it came to considering what your plans for the future were. As I realise that that is more in God's hands, I take one day at a time on most things. I am older than some of the people I minister to so I found I would have to adapt some parts of the course. The time they seemed to imply one would have to spend with each person each week would be virtually full time in one care home if one were to reach the standard they were recommending.

I needed to think it through, adapt it to my situation and gain what I could. In the circumstances I found myself in locally during and just after taking the course I found it stood me in good stead.

At the time I was going into two care homes once a month and had two home visits. In one care home I was just visiting one lady who was nearly deaf and nearly blind but I had taken her Communion for over seven years, first in her own home and then in the care home. In the other care home, Deer Park, I took a Communion service in the lounge for about 10 people and was then asked to visit some of the rooms to give various people a blessing. I only had time to stay a few minutes with each person so there was little time for real meaningful contact. The spirituality course had been about meaningful contact so things had to change.

I could not give more time on any one day; it was just too tiring both physically and emotionally so I arranged to go in on a second day in the month just for room visits. Just before the first visit I got a phone call to say the home was closing in 14 days and all the people were being moved. I agreed with the entertainments officer to go in anyway to see who was still there and where they might be going. Another care home in town seemed to be the place most were going so I got in touch with them as I had been there before but had stopped when their Entertainment Officer left. Yes, they would be happy to see me.

That last day in Deer Park turned out to be something special. I had taken the Communion elements with me just in case and after talking to one or two residents we ended up in the lounge for what was a special service before we went our separate ways.

Going into the new care home was not without its problems. Their Entertainments Officer left after my first interview with her and I was left to just get on with things. Thankfully years in care homes stood me in good stead and we were able to have the service. I had arranged to go in twice a month: once for Communion and once for an Afternoon Prayer service both with hymns, music provided from my laptop. The new entertainments officer turned out to be the one from at Deer Park! We get on well, the visits are lovely and I speak to most of the people individually afterwards. In this home, due to the layout of the building and with far more residents in the later stages of dementia, I do not go into the rooms. Dementia is an area that I am still trying to explore so I can reach out to those people. Most books as well as the course all end during the early stages, leaving a growing number in a lost world. We can pray but we need help so we can do more. Even the course I was on did not cover this difficult area. If you know any that do please contact me. They are still God's children and need his love shown through the people who care for them. *(The editor has Mary's contact details if anyone wants to get in touch.)*

The Spiritual Care Series is an eight-week comprehensive course for those who want to provide good quality spiritual care to older people in their local community. The course equips participants to understand the ageing process, supporting people to reconnect with their past and cope with the losses that ageing brings. It also covers the importance of good listening skills, communication and boundaries in the provision of this care. The course is made available by the Bible Reading Fellowship. See brfonline.org.uk for further information



Badges and Lanyards

Everyone can now submit their own lanyard information. The Diocese will prepare the lanyards for and then give to Annie Jefferies in preparation for your commissioning. Those Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends who still have only the paper badges can use the same link to request the new credit card style badges. Use this link:

<https://hop8a5h9big.typeform.com/to/laYHZyEn>

Contributions to the newsletter can be emailed to the editor at josiewhitfield@btopenworld.com

We are gradually going to have more Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends retiring. Please keep your eyes open for any potential Anna Chaplains or Anna Friends in your communities.

Remember the qualities are "a heart for working with older people and well developed listening skills". Talk to your local incumbents and alert them to the benefits of this wonderful ministry.