



Anna Chaplaincy

is the title of a specialist ministry or service that began in 2010 through Debbie Thrower (former journalist and BBC presenter) and the Rev Keith Underhill, Superintendent Minister at Alton in Hampshire. It reaches out to people of the *Third Age* (60s-80s) and the *Fourth Age* (80s-90s). Though the edge into 80+ is blurred, it occurs sooner or later.

People of the *Third Age* are largely free of responsibilities: mortgage, family, their own parents and are into or nearing retirement – free to take up new hobbies and active interests. However there can be other changes:-

Loneliness and fear. Loneliness – the needs of such elderly people are exacerbated by reduced mobility (housebound, wheelchair-reliant), reduced functions, fewer people-meetings, and ‘watching the local world through the window’. There is a reduced percentage of elderly with technology ownership and capability, and a more stark reality of distance from family and friends – by miles, counties and countries; the greater sense of loneliness and questions about self-worth. Fear is of the ‘**Last Taboo**’ – the reluctance to face and talk about the inevitable: dying, died, dead, death. Avoided by so very many elderly people there develops an alternative, easier language: “lost”, “gone to be with...” – you should be able to reach double figures of different words, an indication of people’s struggle to avoid the inevitable.

Anna Chaplains and volunteer **Anna friends** (professionally trained, accredited and licensed nationally by the Church) are

available to engage with people of Faith or No Faith, are Not Judgemental, serve individuals or groups, and seek to Listen. Through **Messy Vintage** (elderly version of *Messy Church* for young families) elderly people are encouraged to engage, to whatever degree within their capabilities, in activities to recover or develop their self-worth. These are opportunities for conversation, open or confidential, enabling them to fulfil life in their circumstances.

This is about “**Well Being**”, which is described as **Spiritual Care**. There is Medical Care and Social Care. Spiritual Care focusses on the value of the person and whatever limited experience of their living might be possible, even as far as **Dementia Care**.

The Bangor&Holyhead Methodist Circuit has unanimously agreed to develop this ministry, beginning this autumn in the combined Llanfairfechan & Penmaenmawr section. Five people have already completed their training through the ‘*Bible Reading Fellowship*’ to be licensed part-time volunteers. We now look to appoint a part-time **Anna Chaplain**. Grants have been applied for. One Trust has already committed to £1,000 for each of five years and a personal donation of £1,000 has also been received.

We are now asking you, please, to make whatever size of donation you can, if possible *gift-aided*, to your Church Treasurer and**Thank you.**

God Bless you.

Royce Warner