

## Anna Chaplaincy and Care Home Ministry in 2020

Anna Chaplaincy is an ecumenical, parish-based chaplaincy to older people. It is named after the faithful older woman, Anna, who appears with Simeon in Luke's Gospel. (*Luke 2: 22-39*) Anna Chaplaincy values and respects the elderly.

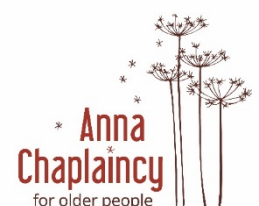
When Elizabeth was commissioned as an Anna Chaplain at Canterbury Cathedral in September 2019 she said: 'Proverbs tells us 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, defend the rights of the poor and needy.' (*Proverbs 31: 8-9*) Residents in Care Homes cannot always 'speak for themselves': we should help those who are former church-goers to have their rights to spiritual care and Church services, so those needy people are reminded that Jesus loves them. I would love to see Care Home Ministry develop with people from all the Churches in each Deanery who feel called to this ministry receive training by becoming Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends.'

Early in 2020 Elizabeth trained volunteers to lead Services at *Pilgrim's Way*. They were to start leading Services with another Anna Chaplain in training at *Bowercroft*, but then Lockdown happened in March with Care Homes closed to visitors. Early in 2020 Elizabeth led monthly services at *Abbeyrose*, *Lukestone* and *The Poplars*. Eleanor led a monthly service at *Mont Calm*. It is good that those four care homes in our parish had monthly Church services and the residents who are communicants could receive Home Communion. We also took Home Communion to housebound parishioners.

Since March Elizabeth has been leading individual Telephone Services most weeks for residents at *The Poplars* and *Lukestone*. She led Telephone Services at *Pilgrim's Way* until June, when Irene from the Methodist Church continued this ministry. Elizabeth led Skype Services for *Abbeyrose* twice a month and started Skype Services at *Lukestone* in December. Elizabeth talked about Telephone Services at an Anna Chaplaincy Network Zoom Meeting and these Services were described and commended on the BBC YouTube Service about Anna Chaplaincy on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October. She sings hymns, prays, reads from the Bible and leads communicants in an act of spiritual communion. Elizabeth leads Telephone Services for house-bound members of the congregation with no internet. It is lovely to see the residents when leading Skype Services. *Abbeyrose* residents gather in the Lounge for the YouTube Mass from St Michael & All Angels' on Thursdays and Sundays.

Elizabeth contacted people who used to lead Care Home Services in Maidstone before Lockdown. Some people were phoning the Care Homes and delivering cards. Other Care Homes had no Church contact. In December Elizabeth coordinated across the 24 Maidstone Care Homes so that all these Care Homes had a Christmas Service via a DVD, Telephone or the Internet. 2020 has been such a terrible year for Care Homes that Elizabeth wanted all of them to have Church contact at Christmas and be reminded about the love of Jesus. Coordinating Care Home Ministry across Maidstone will continue in 2021 so the residents of Care Homes know that Jesus loves them and that Jesus is with them.

Thank you to the Mothers' Union who knitted twiddlemuffs that have been greatly appreciated at *Lukestone* and *The Poplars*.



Elizabeth Bryson, Anna Chaplain