



Becoming an Anna Chaplain

The Diocese of Canterbury introduced a new commissioned role of Anna Chaplain in 2019 with a special focus on the needs of older people and their families. Anna Chaplaincy is an ecumenical, community-based approach pioneered by The Bible Reading Fellowship.

Anna Chaplaincy courses and regular gatherings allow Anna Chaplains to work together across churches, supporting each other in their ministry alongside older people.

Becoming an Anna Chaplain in Canterbury Diocese

Anna Chaplains represent their local church in offering person-centred spiritual care for older people of strong, little or no faith - those living in their own homes, in care homes and sheltered housing, as well as their friends, family members and care staff. Their work complements, rather than replicating, ministry already being done by churches. Anna Chaplains can be lay or ordained, male or female, and in paid or voluntary roles. Some have been in lay ministry roles for a while (as authorised lay ministers or readers), others are ordained, but for some Anna Chaplaincy is their first ministry role. The training needed for each person depends on their unique background.

Roles which can be part of being of Anna Chaplain in Canterbury Diocese

- One to one pastoral and spiritual support for older people and those caring for them, through listening, sharing, and prayer ministry;
- Designing and leading worship services inclusive of people with dementia;
- Initiating or supporting activities for older people, carers and those with dementia;
- Being involved in end-of-life and funeral ministry and bereavement care;
- Raising awareness of the needs of older people, those with dementia and their families, advocating on their behalf in the local church and wider community;
- Building bridges and working collaboratively with local care homes and support agencies to ensure spiritual needs are met for those in later life;
- Continually developing skill and knowledge in ageing, dementia and caring, and sharing this with the local church to increase understanding;
- Working with volunteers, especially Anna Friends.

Desirable background and characteristics of Anna Chaplains:

- ✓ A heart for older people;
- ✓ Compassion for those struggling in later life and those with dementia, alongside a positive, hopeful attitude which values the contribution they continue to make;
- ✓ Being a good listener;

- ✓ Skill in leading, energising and inspiring others;
- ✓ Willingness to work ecumenically and collaboratively with others from different Christian traditions;
- ✓ Experience of working in ordained or lay ministry, or a willingness to undertake training provided;
- ✓ A willingness to learn from and alongside older people and support them in having a voice in church and community;
- ✓ A sense of accountability to the local church and willingness to work collaboratively and be guided by the Christian community and supervisor;
- ✓ A willingness to reflect theologically on the experiences of ageing and dementia.

Time commitment

Anna Chaplaincy will vary from parish to parish, depending on the needs of the local older population. The role will take at least one day a week.

Support for Anna Chaplains in Canterbury Diocese

1. **Support** - Working alongside older people and their families is rewarding but can be emotionally demanding. Anna Chaplaincy provides a context for mutual support and learning.
2. **Supervision** - Anna Chaplains are supported and supervised by leaders of the local church. They are also often a member of the church pastoral team. Being integrated within church structures in this way enables good support and communication and allows accountability.
3. **Expenses** - Anna Chaplaincy is normally a self-supporting role but expenses are met through parish, deanery or diocesan funds.
4. **Training** - training is provided, including a new six session online course on Anna Chaplaincy.
5. **Networking** - Anna Chaplains are part of a national network and can join national events to learn and share experiences.

Next Steps?

If you are prayerfully considering a role within Anna Chaplaincy, please first speak with your vicar about needs of older people in the parish and how you might be involved in the church's response. Contact Anna Chaplaincy lead Julia Burton-Jones to discover more about the role of Anna Chaplain. She works across Rochester and Canterbury Dioceses and is based in Kings Hill.

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