

Thanks for
making us feel
safe, mate.

A construction worker to the
chaplain at Hinkley Point C

Chaplaincy & Hope



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.



Emerging from lockdown and meeting in person again...
‘Exploring Chaplaincy’ Training [above and p. 22]
and a Chaplaincy Quiet Day [below]



 ‘They had kept the faith, clung to hope and prayed for us.’ This is what Hazel Ramsay wrote of the residents of a care home when she was able to visit again as an Anna Chaplain after the lockdown finally ended [p.21]. It could also be said of all chaplains across Somerset and beyond, as we have journeyed through vulnerability and hope.

If there is inspiration and hope in this booklet, as I believe there is, it is because of the chaplains and the inspiring communities they serve.

Those communities are as diverse as the chaplains and models of chaplaincy which serve them. Yet, I believe that the difference that chaplaincy makes shines through each story, each testimony.

For this booklet I have listened especially to young people and staff within education. I have listened to Christians, Muslims, atheists and those who aren't sure. All have valued chaplaincy and it is a privilege to be able to transcribe a few of their words.

If you would like to discover more about chaplaincy, please get in touch.



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When I was in year 4 the chaplain helped me a lot. When I was angry she helped. She had a big bear in her room; afterwards I felt happy.

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Primary School Chaplaincy

St Michael's Junior Church School, Twerton, Bath.

Gwen Kearley: Chaplain

Signs of Hope came in many guises during 2020/21 at St Michael's Junior Church School.

- Planting sunflower seeds with the children and watching them grow.
- Getting alongside individual children and families through times of grief.
- A rare opportunity to visit church and explore the Easter story.

These, and many other moments of shared hope, are a tribute to a committed and hardworking staff and to God's faithfulness to us as a school through this challenging year.

There was also a new and wonderful sign of hope. Over the past five years we have had several Syrian refugee families settle in the local community and join our school. We have helped practically and pastorally over the years, but something shifted in 2020/21 which we can build on as we start a new year in the life of the school.

Two boys in year 5 and 6 chose to observe Ramadan by fasting and they shared their experience with us in a time of worship. Not only did they share about their early morning 'get ups' (4.00am some days!) but their struggles and their honesty helped us understand and respect them and their faith in a greater depth.



Year
5 and 6 children were asked to describe their chaplain in one word. This is a representative sample of their words.

Awesome
Faithful
Nice
Caring
Forgiving
Good vibes
Special
Best in the world
Very, very kind
Loving



Year 5 and 6 children were asked to describe chaplaincy.

“ It’s really nice, you can go into the chaplain’s room and be quiet.

“ Gwen helps people when someone they know has died.

“ It’s nice, because I want to learn the Bible, I want to be a Christian.

“ We welcome new people to school, so new people feel happy.

“ I see Gwen calming us down, she helps us think about the positives.

“ When I was in year 4 she helped me a lot. When I was angry she helped. She had a big bear in her room; afterwards, I felt happy.

“ She does interesting stuff about Jesus. I’m a Muslim, I’m still interested.

Preparing with them and talking together as people of faith, we shared the things that are important in Christianity and Islam. Eid gave the school an opportunity to express our compassion for them as we gave each family some Eid treats.

During Refugee Week we were overwhelmed by the generosity of Muslim parents who cooked food for each class to enjoy. Children shared with their classmates about their journey to the UK, their home life and Muslim faith, and with this came a greater understanding and respect.

These small steps we took in understanding our Syrian families were significant. Like the sunflower seeds we planted, our friendship and respect will only grow as we keep nurturing, talking, and learning from each other. To me that speaks of hope in a world too often divided and fearful. Thank you to our Syrian families for all that you have taught us.

Reflections from Primary School Head Teachers



At a time in which schools and school staff have been under enormous pressure, our chaplain, Jerry Parr, has been a reassuring presence, there at the end of a phone or, in our case, a welcome presence on our playground at the start or end of the day. Although we are not a church school, it's great to know that there's someone there to offload to, with a listening ear and a sympathetic word. In what have been some quite dark days, he presents the still, small voice of calm and a quiet but constant flicker of hope, for which we are very thankful.

Mr Damian Knollys , Head Teacher
Peasedown St John Primary School



Sharing hope is...

- knowing that there is someone there to chat to if I need it
- thought provoking 'Chaplain's Chats' which make you reflect on current issues
- bouncing ideas off someone on how to improve chaplaincy within school environment

We are very thankful.

Danielle West-Gaul, Headteacher St John's CofE Primary School, Midsomer Norton



The chaplain, Jerry Parr, has been an excellent support to myself and staff during some tricky times. He has regularly provided inset day reflections and has offered support to staff well-being when required. 'Chaplains Chat' has been well received by staff and given them a moment to reflect.

Curiosity and the Kingdom

Chaplains learning from the children

Helena Power, Chaplain to Rockwell Green CofE Primary School and St John's CofE Primary School, Wellington

Three pupils from Year 5 at Rockwell Green CofE Primary School were planning class collective worship. Our subject was curiosity. We wondered about God, and remembered that when people in Jesus' time asked him what God was like, he answered with stories.

I told them the story of the prodigal son and they decided to present it to the class as a short sketch. We listed the characters it would need: 'The father,' said someone and volunteered. 'The son,' said another. Then, maybe remembering the Trinity candle which was a feature of whole school worship, someone said: 'the Holy Spirit'.

'Now that's interesting,' I said, 'tell me, where do you see the Holy Spirit in the story?' The young lad thought for a moment or two, and then said, 'It was the Holy Spirit who made him reflect when he was with the pigs, and decide to go home again.'

The prodigal son as an illustration of the Trinity was explained to me by a child in a busy corridor in a rushed session squeezed in before lunch. If we can listen and be curious, then at unexpected times and from unexpected people we might be privileged to see little glimpses of God's kingdom.



Glimpses
of God's
kingdom



Secondary School Chaplaincy

Emails from students to their chaplains, Ruth Motion, Chaplain at King's Academy, Cheddar, and Helen Weld, Chaplain at Huish Episcopi Academy, Langport. Used with permission.

“ How funny that here I am just logging in randomly and for no real reason, at half ten at night to my school email and here I have received one from you haha! I am very well thank you, as I hope you are :)

I want to thank you for helping me through some really tough times at school - it certainly was not easy but I have pulled through and can say with pride that I have really grown into myself. Just wanted to let you know that you really helped with that, talking to people is key when one is in a place of sadness and that is what I am now making my mission to show everybody!

I do hope the sun comes out soon, and I hope that you have the loveliest of summers and I may bump into you one day, who knows what lies ahead! All I can say is that my future looks great and it once looked bleak - all made more hopeful by you having listened and understanding me.

Thank you once again for this check in and all you have done for me and so many.

Student at Huish Episcopi Academy, Langport



“ I wanted to tell you that I just had the first full week with no suicidal thoughts in two months!!!! I realised this at CBT last night and I'm very pleased with it. I'm also super proud to be honest and i didn't think i was ever going to get here and part of getting here was you and the countless times you've picked me up off the floor after I'd had a crap day or week and showing me that I am going to be better than okay!! Thank you so much.

Student at King's Academy, Cheddar

Secondary School Chaplaincy

Nailsea School

Neil Wylie: Connect Worker | Chaplain

Students from Year 8 and Year 11 were asked to describe chaplaincy.

“ Neil, the chaplain, is someone to talk to. Without him I'd feel all my emotions would be bottled up. He also bring in people from the churches to help with mentoring.

“ He helps people see different kinds of diversity. We are all unique, that's OK, we're not all the same.

“ If Neil wasn't here I'd have a lot harder time with Ethics [the academic subject]. The were topics I didn't understand until Neil discussed them with me. Neil also helps in RE classes.

“ He's a Jesus teacher because he loves Jesus. With CU you feel included. You can talk about religion and stuff in school more freely in a faith group.

He filmed assemblies throughout lockdown. [Students remembered cream eggs and de-donkeying the nativity...]

“ You can relate to him. He's a good guy. Neil is a skater. The Skate Park brings people together, a lot of people from school go there and they meet Neil there. He knows the lingo. He relates to teenagers. He understands what teenagers are going through.

“ Without him there would be a lot less cake.

He's like a general handyman, an emotional handyman. He does a bit of everything. He always has the right thing to say, or he can point you in the right direction. His words are his tools. He has people coming to ask questions.



University Chaplaincy

Reflections from students at the University of Bath about Chaplaincy, led by Nigel Rawlinson. There was a diverse combination of national, international, graduate & post-graduate students.

“ Chaplaincy is a space in which different people from different backgrounds can gather, including those who feel lonely. It's not always related to faith, it's human. Somewhere for people who need hope, who need emotional, mental or spiritual support. You don't have to be religious. It's a quiet, safe space.

“ Nigel, the chaplain, is constantly meeting people for coffee, he puts people in touch with each other. I've connected with other people and formed friendships through the chaplaincy, with people I wouldn't normally spend time with. When I walk past, you see people from different backgrounds, contexts and cultures. It's constantly set up to be welcoming, to enable people to talk in a kind way. Nigel likes to break stereotypes.

“ Nigel was calm and supportive in a crisis and listened and continued to give caring support. To have someone who cares for you as a person, who invests in you, who prays for you, that made a huge difference.

“ I don't think that the university would properly be the same without chaplaincy. It gives an extra layer for people who have fallen beneath the system. It's really helpful.

“ I've done bible studies with the chaplain, he's prayed for me, he's exceptional at exploring difficult questions. We did morning prayer every day through lockdown. The chaplaincy gave me hope that Christianity could be for me. They gave me a vision of the church family, before I'd met the church.

A safe
space...



The chaplaincy at Bath Uni has been a consistent grounding of hope in my time as a student.

University Chaplaincy

Reflections from staff at the University of Bath

Greg Sharp, Deputy Director of Sport, shared reflections.

“ The chaplain, Nigel, is a fantastic listener. He is an impartial, critical friend, that I'm able to signpost people to. There have been quite a few incidents this year. Nigel is someone who they can talk to without any fear or repercussions. This is different to signposting to HR. Nigel is embedded on campus and understands the challenges of each department. He has empathy and understanding so the individuals are supported. The impact of that is huge.



Fantastic
listener
Embedded
on campus
Huge
impact

“ Focus
on the
vulnerable

Richard Butler, Professor of Aerospace Composites and Jonathan Bowker, Hospitality Operations Manager, also shared reflections

“ There
in an hour
of need

“ Nigel, the chaplain, was very supportive with the team after a member of staff died. At the hour of need, Nigel is there. He understands the pressures of University, he's a good person to chat to. There is a group of Christian staff who meet in my department and Nigel has been supportive. He has been a fantastic person to get to know over the last few years.

“ Good
person to
chat to

“ There is a focus on the students who might be more vulnerable. On a personal level, Nigel gave me hope. I have always found, having discussed things with Nigel, that I have come away hopeful. I'm not a practising Christian, so my outlook might be slightly different. There are no 'sides' to chaplaincy. In working life there are hierarchies and with Nigel it is human to human.

“ Giving
hope

Chaplaincy at Hinkley Point C

Ewen Huffman, Lead Chaplain [pictured on the front cover]

Ewen Huffman has been chaplain at Hinkley Point C since January 2020. It has been his privilege to share hope on site during lockdown.

Ewen says 'When Covid started, we had no idea of it's impact, but it was scary. I felt that the chaplain should be on site, every day, giving hope, and be the "last to leave". In fact, one leader said to me: "If you leave site we're all f***ing stuffed, mate!". In reality, the site felt a very safe place to be.'

Ewen reflects that hope was shared by:

- **Simply 'being there'.** One comment from a huge bloke called Matthew summed it up: 'Thanks for making us feel safe, mate'. 'Presence' is such a huge part of chaplaincy and a little bit goes a long way. Maybe that is because we represent a bigger presence.
- **Listening,** as people 'talk it out' and try and make sense of their complex lives and find an [the] anchor.
- **Lamenting.** People can't be positive all the time - it's not real! The Bible is full of lament and the last year has been as well. Chaplaincy can help to express some of this.
- **Loving.** Being a friend to people and journeying with them even when there is no answer in sight.
- **Finding faith.** Through lockdown there were often conversations about faith and God's involvement in the world. A good number of staff found personal, life changing, faith through an Alpha Course.



Thanks for making us
feel safe, mate.

Port Chaplaincy

Jeremy Hellier, Mission to Seafarers Chaplain
to Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Docks.

Courageous Advocacy

Courageous advocacy for seafarers is one of the most important aspects of the work of Mission to Seafarers. 95% of all that we use in this country comes to us by sea, and those who sail our ships are therefore vital to our lives and they need our care.

When a Seafarer hasn't been paid for months, is overworked or bullied, or is sailing in a ship that is unsafe, the fact that a chaplain stands up for them brings hope to their situation. Whilst the chaplain has no direct power, pastoral visits may be the point at which a serious situation is uncovered. The chaplain then involves the port authorities, the International Transport Federation, the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and others who have the power to improve things.

Real hope lies in the chaplain's visits.

“ The chaplain is the only person visiting a ship who isn't there to inspect or demand something. The chaplain is there to listen and care.

Where does hope lie in chaplaincy to Seafarers?

“ I would say the hope lies in believing you are not alone, and someone cares about you. There is a place to go wherever you come into port where you will be accepted and find some sort of community which understands through common experience what trials and hardships mariners can be facing. People who don't know God directly get to feel his love through people.

Hannah, former Merchant Navy Ship's Engineer Officer



Residential Care Chaplaincy

A resident at St Monica Trust writes of the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator [Chaplain] Lisa Loveridge at the Chocolate Quarter in Keynsham

Lisa is always, with everyone, her own self. She has an infectious laugh which is more than helpful when I say something ridiculous. It keeps me in the real world. Lisa does not put boundaries on what she is prepared to do for people, however full her timetable, never appearing hurried. Above all she gives one the feeling that she is there for you in fair weather and foul, without imposing, and also retaining a deep loyalty to St Monica's. She is silent where others would metaphorically shout.

Lisa has always been there to listen to me in my personal crises as they have come and gone over the last three and a half years. She has escorted me into the realm of interfaith spirituality enabling me to explore The Baha'i Faith, join with the Quakers at their meetings, attend the Catholic Mass and services of Holy Communion, all of which she has given a slot at the Sanctuary once a month. Also, she enabled me to discover a meditation group from St Dunstan's church, who meet there once a fortnight. Lisa agreed for a Songs of Praise hour in the Sanctuary once a month by a member of St Dunstan's congregation, for those who like singing, of which I am one.

Lisa created a beautiful service of remembrance for my husband which was greatly appreciated.

There is a deep-rooted happiness in Lisa from which we can all draw, and be helped, held and/or healed when life is hard.



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Mental Health Chaplaincy

Robin Pfaff, Chaplaincy Team-Leader for Community and Mental Health
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

As a healthcare chaplain in mental health and community hospitals I meet many people who feel desperately hopeless. These intense feelings that there is nothing worth living for might be a symptom of an illness, but often is an accompaniment to the reality of chronic illness, poverty, poor housing, loneliness and lack of opportunities. Many also speak of fractured relationships and abusive homes which can date back to early childhood.

Hearing these stories of despair is painful. It is often tempting to reply with words of encouragement. By staying with my own discomfort I become aware that I often want the other person's life or outlook to be different. This attitude is unhelpful.

When I am able to rein in my needs, hopes and wishes, I can more fully focus on the person I am with. I try to listen in a way that makes them feel heard. Without approving or disapproving I will try to acknowledge the individual's experiences, feelings and outlook. By actively listening I am hoping that the other person gains an opportunity to pause and reflect and find some of the healing that comes with talking to somebody who gives you undivided attention and deep respect for your life experience.

I am no longer frightened that this kind of listening is changing me, my values and beliefs. Deep spiritual pain tests hope, love and faith. If they survive the crucible they cease being a concept and become a living entity.



Deep spiritual pain tests hope, love and faith. If they survive the crucible they cease being a concept and become a living entity.

Spiritual support brings hope to patients

Aurelijus, Activity Coordinator, Mental Health Inpatient Unit, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Patients who come on our ward are mentally and physically at their lowest point. Some patients experience recurrent mental health issues and have to endure numerous admissions. As healthcare professionals we do try to provide all the medical and therapeutic support our hospital can provide. But we also understand that many of our patients require and need spiritual support and that is where our chaplaincy team comes in.

Hope is an important part of recovery. Our patients have many aspirations and wishes for their life. Spiritual support brings hope to our patients. Hope that there is more to life than just being a patient on the ward, hope that they will get better and go back to their loved ones, hope that people outside won't

“I am truly grateful for their support, input and their weekly Zoom reflections which have been a constant source of calm, a time to pause & happy fellowship. Thank you so much chaplains, you make a difference!

treat them disrespectfully just because they had to be a patient on a psychiatric ward. Our chaplaincy team always brings that little hope of light for our patients, leading and supporting our patients on a long and hard spiritual pathway that brings them that much closer to mental, physical and spiritual recovery.



When someone can feel so lost, vulnerable and hopeless, a chaplain can provide safe space, comfort and reassurance and can play a significant role within recovery and treatment.

Imogen Langston, Occupational Therapist, Mental Health In-patient units, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Spiritual Care at End of Life

Ann Fulton, St Margaret's Hospice Care
on behalf of Somerset Healthcare Chaplains

Chaplains bear witness every day to the value of gentle and appropriate spiritual care for those who are coming to the end of their life. We hear of the real contribution it can make to on-going bereavement care for patients, families and friends.

“ Many, many thanks for your kindness and compassion shown by your willingness to sit with us in silence whilst J died. The spiritual comfort that this brought was quite overwhelming.



“ I just wanted to say what a lifesaver it is having C ringing - she is such a thoughtful person. She has really helped me think through various problems and is a lovely person to talk to.

In June 2021 the End of Life Programme Board of the Somerset NHS Clinical Commissioning Group agreed that ‘spiritual care is a fundamental element of holistic end of life care (both in terms of local pathways of care and how it is practised)’ and the ambition that ‘everyone in Somerset has the spiritual care of their choice at the end of their life’.

We are now working with partners on a strategy to enable end of life spiritual care for all. This will include advocacy, resources and training. Related to this ambition, we are offering support and spiritual care resources to every Care Home in Somerset.



Spiritual care is a fundamental element of holistic end of life care.

End of Life Programme Board of the Somerset NHS Clinical Commissioning Group

Bath Abbey Chaplaincy

Chantal Mason, Vicar Pastor at Bath Abbey

Bath Abbey welcomes over 500,000 visitors a year. It's an enormous privilege to talk with people from across the UK and beyond. As we begin to move on from the pandemic, we are finding that many are coming to the Abbey to find a sanctuary; a prayerful space, somewhere to process their losses and to voice their questions. Sharing hope is a key part of our ministry; demonstrated through hourly prayers, the offer of a listening ear throughout the day, and New Testaments and 'Why Jesus?' booklets being freely available to those exploring Christian faith. One of the new ways in which we have endeavoured to radiate hope is through the offer of small prayer cards, 'A Prayer for Peace of Mind and Heart.' 9000 prayer cards have been produced and received since we re-opened in May.

“ Ivor Hughes, one of the Abbey Chaplains has said: I look upon the Abbey Chaplaincy as an attentive, available, prayerful presence. I walk around the Abbey with no agenda other than to be there for whoever wants to engage with me. Prayers on the hour are much appreciated, and on many occasions, someone will engage in conversation which leads to a moment of personal prayer.

“ Another Chaplain, Peter LeRoy, said: What is an unusual privilege is the conversations that naturally arise when we greet visitors warmly. We answer their immediate questions about the Abbey itself and then find that quite a number are very ready to go a bit deeper. Where else is it so easy to talk naturally and non-threateningly with complete strangers about spiritual matters, and gently point them to Jesus?

An attentive,
available,
prayerful
presence.



Community Chaplaincy Angels of Hope in Wellington

Selina Garner, Pioneer in the Wellington Team Ministry [Photos on p.24]

Chaplains from the Wellington Team created a Christmas Angels of Hope project. We made angels for a trail around the town and villages, giving angels as gifts and awarding Angel of Hope certificates to people who had brought hope during lockdown.

Our pastoral chaplain, Judith Dufour, mobilised her team of pastoral companions and friends to knit hundreds of angels to be given as gifts and take to the local shops and community organisations.

Such a kind and thoughtful gesture. Thank you from all residents

church to link with 8 local nursing homes and local sheltered housing and to give over 600 Angel of Hope bags to residents. She organised carols and a Christmas service DVD and gave Angel of Hope certificates for nominated staff and residents. Relatives, staff and residents really appreciated the bags of hope.

Our school chaplain, Helena Power, mobilised the pupils of two local primary schools to make Angel of Hope cards for the angel bags and helped film Angel of Hope assemblies to share the hope of Christmas. The school children from St John's enjoyed being on a Points West TV news.

A few of the angelic responses from members of the community

This is so wonderful for Wellington. Thank you to all involved in making this happen. 

Just such a beautiful way to conclude a crazy year. Well done to everyone involved as it's magical.

One of my clients had one, a lavender one, we hung it on the tree, lovely. 

This is amazing. I work in Care and this means so much, so thank you.

Anna Chaplaincy

Hazel Ramsay, Anna Chaplain in Wiveliscombe

An unexpected ray of hope touched me when we returned to our local Care Home on June 10th 2021 to recommence visits and Communion Services.

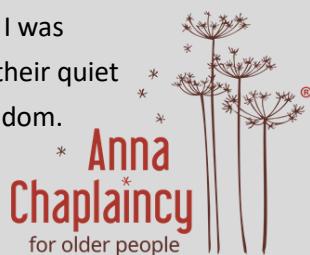
After donning the scary disguise of full PPE and taking the mandatory Covid Tests, we were bowled over by the instant recognition and warmth of welcome from the residents and staff. They had kept the faith, clung to hope and prayed for us.

Fears that we might be barely remembered and concerns of the long-term impacts of lockdown soon dissipated. Our congregation had survived Covid, even the 105 year old! As we chatted over coffee, I was

Kept the faith
Clung to hope
Prayed for us

humbled and inspired by their quiet courage, patience and wisdom.

We shared joy and gratitude.



Hedgerow Chaplaincy

Steven Wort

Steven was commissioned as a Hedgerow Chaplain in Milverton. His ministry will journey from church into the community, the highways, byways, fields, woods and holy wells. It will be a ministry of health and recovery, ecology and pilgrimage. Steven writes:



It is a new fresh air approach to church, for those who aren't sure about going to the church building for services. Even regular church visitors could find it a new and more natural way to communicate with God, being in the open air, being and feeling a real part of his natural creation.

Exploring Chaplaincy...

Training and Formation

Exploring Chaplaincy is an eight session course which could be appropriate for anyone who is discerning whether chaplaincy is something God may be calling them to, or for anyone soon to take on a chaplaincy role or someone who has just started as a chaplain.

The sessions of Exploring Chaplaincy

Session 1: Chaplaincy values and ethos

Session 2: Chaplaincy, day by day

Session 3: Listening, founded on grace

Session 4: Mental Health First Aid

Session 5: Prayer, Worship and Spirituality

Session 6: Re-thinking resilience: Reflecting on 2 Corinthians

Session 7: Reflective Practice and Peer Supervision

Session 8: Any questions... next steps.

To find out more, including dates and how to book, go to: bathandwells.org.uk/chaplaincy and follow the links to training.

People who have done Exploring Chaplaincy have said:

- Thank you for increasing my awareness and helping me to grow spiritually, as I continue on this journey that God has set before me. The openness, sincerity and faith will be a part of my building blocks in going forward.
- I've found Exploring Chaplaincy so helpful personally but also empowering in so many ways, I know I shall be able to be a better chaplain for having done the course.'
- Thank you for the Exploring Chaplaincy course. After a long day training can feel a step to far, but it has been such a blessing to meet and hear from others and to reflect after each session.
- I've really enjoyed Exploring Chaplaincy – it's just a shame it's almost over!



Afterword: The chaplaincy gift of time

Abby Lintern, Chaplain at Wadham School, Crewkerne

When I started as chaplain at Wadham School, Crewkerne, I had thoughts of what I would be doing as chaplain: collective worship, prayer spaces, supporting students and staff.

One of the things I quickly realised was the value of being the only person in the school that had time. Given the unique nature of the role, I was able to have time for everyone, be that a member of staff popping their head in my office or a student struggling with life at home. More often than not I was able to say, 'Come, sit, I've got time'.

There have been other things that I've done, with 'Thought for the Week' and Collective Worship, and much more, yet here has been so much value in having time. It should never be underestimated how important it is to just listen, and the biggest privilege of being Wadham's chaplain was being able to listen and care by being with people. As a chaplain described it on one of the training days, we 'loiter with holy intent.'



Commissioning
of a Hedgerow
Chaplain [p.21]



Hope and joy at
the Seafarers
Centre [p.14]



Angels of Hope in Wellington

[p.20]

