

# The Pilgrims' MAGAZINE

WINTER 2021



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**REPEAT THE SOUNDING JOY**  
Carol singing memories

**SOCIAL CARE FUNDING**  
What the new announcement means

**SPECIAL DELIVERY**  
The rainbow envelopes that raised smiles

**PILGRIMS'  
FRIEND  
SOCIETY**

**PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY**

Pilgrims' Friend Society exists to provide excellent care and support for older people, inspiring and encouraging them to live fulfilled lives in their later years. Rooted in the Christian faith, Pilgrims' Friend Society is committed to creating Christian communities in residential care homes and independent living housing schemes in England and Scotland.

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'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights'

James 1:17



☎ Looking to contact our homes and schemes?  
✉ See back cover for details  
📍



## Middlefields HOUSE official opening celebrations



Following the opening of Middlefields House in the summer, an official celebration took place on 2nd October.

We were joined by Rosemary Howard whose mother Leonora Gay was instrumental in the opening of our old care home in Chippenham, Leonora Home. Rosemary opened Leonora exactly 47 years previously, on 2nd October 1974, and she repeated the honour at Middlefields House. As she cut the ribbon, she said, "It gives me great pleasure to see the wonderful legacy of Christian care in Leonora Home move into this new chapter at Middlefields House. I think it's important for the Chippenham community to feel that it's part of them and hope that they will continue to be involved in the home. I think it's an

amazing step forward into the future and my mum would be absolutely thrilled and overwhelmed."

After we had given thanks and dedicated the home to God, tours of the ground floor were taken. Visitors were able to see firsthand how the new household model will work, explore the Winter Garden, test out the seating arrangements, and see the new hair and nail salon and breakout space.

More staff, friends, and supporters gathered at Ladyfield Evangelical Church for a service of thanksgiving before moving to the home for more tours. All those who saw the home were very impressed with its design and layout, and very positive about the continuing ministry to older people that the home affords.



## The Way We Care video - available now

A new video exploring The Way We Care, our bespoke approach to caring for older people in a Christian environment, is now available to watch on our website. The video features interviews with our 'family members' (as we call those who live with us) and staff. There's also an interview with Elspeth, whose father Jack lives at Framland (read his story on p.30).

To watch our video, visit:

[www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/thewaywecare](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/thewaywecare)



## Harvest celebrations



For our homes and schemes, Harvest is an important time of thankfulness and fellowship. At Emmaus House, Harrogate, there was a short service with traditional hymns and prayers of gratitude, and food donations were taken to the Harrogate Homeless Project. Those living at Pilgrim Gardens, Leicester enjoyed a Harvest Service followed by a simple lunch. Framland, Wantage, were able to enjoy a small crop harvested from their mini vegetable patch.

## In other news...

Booster vaccinations for COVID-19 have now been rolled out across our care homes. Under plans set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), everyone aged over 50 and care workers is eligible for a booster vaccine. Vic Stone, Operations Manager and Coronavirus Lead, said, "We welcome the booster vaccines and put everything in place to ensure every 'family member' who wanted a booster received it as quickly as possible. It is great that they now have this additional protection."

At Bethany Christian Home, Plymouth Tracey Ikerd joins us as Registered Care Manager and Sally Lear is the new ACE Facilitator. Dave Alderson joins us as ACE Facilitator at Framland, Wantage. Karen Bley is the new Business Manager at Finborough Court, Great Finborough. In our Head Office team, Albert Madeinlo joins as Financial Controller and Priscilla Amofa joins as Marketing and Communications Administrator.

For more great stories, follow us on social media:





*Meet the manager...*  
**Nathan Barnes,**  
 Hospitality Manager

Nathan Barnes is part of the team at Middlefields House, our new care home in Chippenham. We caught up with him to find out more about the role and how it's going so far

*As told to: Helen McKay-Ferguson*

"I joined Middlefields House in May 2021, before the home opened in August. Before that I'd been working as a recycling loader and binman in the Cotswolds. It was very physical work for four or five hours each day.

"My background is in the hospitality industry. I started out as a bar man and worked my way up to management level. Over a period of about 20 years, I worked for many of the big chains. I've worked in pubs and hotels all around the South West, including in Bristol, Southampton and Highworth (near Swindon).

"As I went further into my Christian faith, I lost my passion for working in this sector – I've seen the devastating impact alcohol can have on people's lives, including its close associations with gambling. Although I managed to evangelise on a daily basis, I got to the point where I felt I couldn't work in pubs and bars any longer and that's when I moved to refuse collection.

"I have Type 1 Diabetes, and so at the start of the pandemic I had to shield. After about 15

weeks at home, my mental health was suffering so I got myself signed back on. However, I was then diagnosed with Sjögren's Syndrome, a rheumatoid condition which can cause chronic fatigue. I was starting to struggle with the physical nature of the work. That's when I saw the Hospitality Manager role at Middlefields House advertised on a jobs website and I thought 'I wonder...'



"I was delighted to be offered the position. In my role I oversee the Reception, Catering, Housekeeping and the Laundry at Middlefields House. I also share the oversight of Maintenance with our General Manager. A big part of my role will be overseeing the coffee shop at Middlefields House, which will be open to the public.

"We've called it the Harvest coffee shop. The name not only links to the local area (the home is situated on the Cornfields estate), but also ties in with the biblical idea of spiritual harvest. I'm looking forward to it being a place where we can welcome members of the public in, and start getting to know them, including sharing our faith. I hope the name will be a talking point.

"To prepare, I received specialist barista training, along with the coffee shop team members. Our beans will come from a local

roastery in Bristol called the Triple Co. Roast, which sources its beans via direct trade from Brazil. When I was in the pub trade, the idea was that you made it as quickly as possible. Here, there's definitely a bit more finesse!

"One of the things I've really loved about being in the home is getting to know some of the family members. Spiritually, it's so encouraging being around older Christians, hearing about the things they know and share. I've enjoyed sitting in with the Daily Devotions sessions and I've even led one myself – I was nervous about doing it but I'm sure I'll get more confident as time goes on.

"As a staff team, I feel like we're all finding our way here together. Lots of the team are new, and the building is new for all of us. We're on the journey together."

**Nathan would love you to pray:**

For his health, as his medical condition can leave him feeling very fatigued

**In his spare time, Nathan:**

- Goes for a 5-10km run three times a week. Worship songs like 'We Are The Free' by Matt Redman and 'Let it Be Known' by Soul Survivor help him to keep going
- Is learning to play the drums and has joined the worship band at church
- Manages a local Diabetes UK Facebook page

**Could you join our team as a Manager?**

For all the latest jobs, scan here:





## Grand projections

At Pilgrims' Friend Society, we're always looking for ways to enrich the lives of those who live with us. That's why we've invested in new technology as part of The Way We Care, our bespoke approach to care

The Mobii is an advanced projector with sensors that pick up on a person's movement. Sweep a paintbrush across a monochrome meadow scene and a profusion of bright daffodils will bloom into life. Aim it right and a ball will bounce into a puddle. Images, colours and sounds have been carefully chosen to have instant appeal, triggering memories and raising smiles.

The projector has wide appeal, but it's been specially designed for those living with dementia. "What's so brilliant for people with dementia is that it interacts with them in a way that lots of things can't," says Lynn Hall, our The Way We Care Specialist and Dementia Lead.

The activities cover a broad range of themes, enabling a person to revisit whatever hobbies or experiences they have enjoyed in the past – a trip to the seaside perhaps, with the sound of waves, or sitting in a beautiful garden listening to birds. Our family members can enjoy exploring it independently, or as part of a group.

As well as immersive experiences, there are games and quizzes. It's also portable, meaning that it can be brought to a person's bedside and the image projected onto a small table.

Some of the Activities and Community (ACE) Facilitators told us how their family members have been enjoying the table so far...



"We introduced the interactive projector games to one of our newer family members, Irene. She particularly liked kicking the ball and found this worked well in the 'scatter' type of games." – **Sarah, ACE Facilitator at Finborough Court, Suffolk**



"We're really enjoying quiz time! Using the big floor screen means everyone can see the questions, even if they are struggling to hear them. We play as a group, conferring is not only allowed but encouraged to get everyone involved. During our movement group, Jean F., Fay and Francis get quite competitive when we play the target games!" – **Andie, ACE Facilitator at Evington Home, Leicester**



"When Mary decided to have a go, there was such excitement in the room, as she very rarely joins in any activities. Both Mary and Kay found such delight in using the projector, encouraging others, both family members and staff, to have a go. The group activity generated a lot of laughter among all who took part." – **Dave, ACE Facilitator at Framland, Wantage**



**Could you join our team as an ACE Facilitator?** Read our interview with Susan on p.26 to find out more about this brilliant role!



## Rejoice, rejoice!

Those living in our homes and schemes share memories of carol singing from years past

"I remember going carol singing one time as a child at a big house and an interesting thing happened. The lady opened the door and when we started singing we could hear a bird like a nightingale singing too from the bottom of the garden. Maybe it was joining in with us!" – **David, Finborough Court**

"When I lived in Norfolk we used to go around the village on a tractor and trailer dressed up as the people from the Christmas Story and singing carols. I dressed up as a wise man. We had carol services at the chapel with real candles lit up." – **Pauline, Dorothea Court**

"In the early 70s I went carol singing with a group from my church. We called in at the Stockport Royal Infirmary where a lady who was once our pianist was very poorly. A handful of us were allowed to stand by her bed and as we were ushered in we were quietly told that she was not expected to last through the night. Miss Ezard had been a quiet, unassuming lady and was now well on in years. She sat in her bed, propped up by pillows and very pale but obviously pleased to see us. There was a kind of radiance about her and I remember thinking I stood in the presence of one who would soon be with her Lord. I cannot remember the carol we sang but there was a real sense of the Lord's presence with us. We later learnt that she had indeed slipped into His immediate presence in the early hours of the following morning." – **Isabel, Pilgrim Gardens**

"Helen and I (Joan) were serving as missionaries in Ludhiana, in the Indian Punjab. Helen was a doctor at the Christian Medical College and Hospital and each year all the Christian staff, their families and friends (including me) would process slowly from ward to ward carrying candles, Indian clay lamps and star decorations and singing carols. Sweets and oranges were shared with the patients and their carers with the

traditional Christmas greeting 'Bara Din Mubarak Ho' – 'may you and your Christmas be blessed'. We visited the children's ward last. Our glittering stars were left with them, then we emptied the fruit and sweetie bags to the utter wonder and delight of the recipients. Truly, Heaven came down on us all that Christmas Eve!" – **Joan and Helen, Middlefields House**

"In my teens, a friend took me to Handel's Messiah in Huddersfield Town Hall, performed by the great Huddersfield Choral Society and the Hallé Orchestra. I yawned through quite a bit of it until the final two choruses when I was jerked awake by the mounting volume of the music, and huge words of worship being offered at the throne of Him who reigns for ever and ever. Then everything softened and the choir sections quietly began to roll in, like breakers on a far-distant shore, all singing the same solitary word – AMEN! The volume and intensity increased as that word came again and again. When the Town Hall organ joined in, it felt like the whole building was shaking.

Then suddenly everything stopped. Complete silence – before the choir, orchestra, organ and pounding drums, all at full pitch, together thundered out the final two AMENS. Magnificent! I'd never heard anything quite like it, then or since. But I do wonder what it will sound like in the vast heavens, when we're sharing with endless millions of saints and angels in worship together before the throne of our Glorious God and King." – **Mary, Royd Court**

"I remember in Germany during the War, I had become ill and was in the hospital. I asked if the German Christians could come in to sing, but I was told by my senior officer, 'If I can't have them in the hospital, you can't!' – but in the end, I could hear carol singing and the German Christians came in and sang carols in the hospital." – **Barry, Evington Home**

"I remember when I was working at Torch and it was a clear frosty night. The blind children were glad that they could read using their fingers, without the need for a light. We were invited into everyone's house and given mince pies (we got very full) and the only house that we were not invited into was the vicar's!" – **Barbara, Evington Home**

# What's going on with social care funding?



Our Chief Executive Stephen Hammersley takes a look at this Autumn's announcement about social care funding and what that means for Pilgrims' Friend Society



The Prime Minister's announcement in September that funding for the NHS and the Social Care sector would be increased in the coming years is to be welcomed. There are arguments about the merit of doing this through increased national insurance 'taxes' but the increased money should mean better care for the weak and vulnerable, and as we have previously argued this is consistent with biblical values.

One of the major challenges though is that adult social care (older people and those with disabilities) will not see any increases for three years at best, and so it will be some time before a properly funded social care sector will be able to guarantee care to everyone who needs it and alleviate pressure on the NHS.

When funding is increased, we will also face the challenge that when it pays for care for people

who cannot afford it, according to its own figures, Government has historically paid 30% less than the full costs of care. This immediately leaves all care providers including Pilgrims' Friend Society with a deficit, and it means that some operators won't admit people who can't fund themselves.

But, for us here at Pilgrims' Friend Society, these challenges don't undermine our commitment to caring for older people, regardless of their ability to pay or be paid for by the Local Authority.

Our pledge to provide for those older people who need our care regardless of their ability to pay remains as strong as it always was.



One other aspect of the Government's proposals that we support is a new commitment to value people working in adult social care. That matters because our staff and others like them are incredible and without them and more like them other reforms will founder. Many of you will have been praying for those working in the social and health care sectors, especially during the pandemic, and will be well aware of how astonishingly wonderful they are. As readers of this magazine and supporters of Pilgrims' Friend Society, you'll know that supporting an older person well is much more than just providing physical care – it's about sharing a prayer together, putting on crafts or outings, leading devotions, or just sitting and offering quiet company. These are just some of the powerful ways that our care and support teams serve older people. As our Marketing & Communications Director Alexandra Davis wrote for Premier Christianity:

**“The cost of care isn't just about the person receiving care, it's also about the person giving it – it's about trying to make sure that our brilliant carers are also recognised as carriers of the Imago Dei, that they are precious, loved, and counted worthy by God by creating good working conditions and remunerating them appropriately.”**

I'm sure I'm not alone in hoping for a world where these brilliant people who give so much to older people at their most vulnerable times are recognised by a properly funded system which can honour them with good pay for wonderful work.

As you ponder the funding challenges to the care sector you may ask how we're able to remain committed to those who



are funded by the Local Authority. Part of the joy of being a family of homes and housing schemes is that where one home may struggle to bring in the full fees and cover their costs, we can meet that deficit from other incomes streams such as homes or schemes which are doing better financially.

The other contributor who helps is, of course, you. Every penny that you give towards our work goes towards making sure we're able to welcome those without lots of financial back-up into our homes when they need our care and community. Whether you're able to give through the occasional gift, a regular financial commitment, a legacy, or a gift in memory of someone you love, your contributions are a vital lifeline for us. With this copy of the magazine, you'll have received details of our Christmas Appeal – I would you to prayerfully consider whether you can support it:

[www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/appeal](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/appeal)



One last thing you can do is to help us hold the Government to account for their promises. We know that priorities can change and fade, but we need the Government to deliver on an increase in funding for social care in the coming years. We will be reminding the Government that they have committed to increase funding to social care in three years' time, and we expect them to deliver on that promise. Do join us in this by getting touch with your local MP and asking them how they will be encouraging our leaders to hold firm to this funding commitment.



## Why not consider a career in care?

**At Pilgrims' Friend Society we employ around 500 people. Here Josh Field, our Director of HR, shares why a career in care is a great way to serve**

A career in care is enormously rewarding and fulfilling! There are few jobs where those you work and care with almost become an extended member of your family – as one of our carers recently put it “you feel like you belong somewhere”. There are also lots of opportunities in the care sector. Those who can demonstrate their ability to take on responsibility can move into management positions if they wish, while others find that it can be flexible and fit round other commitments. We train our teams to deliver high quality person-centred care and invest in ongoing training for all our staff.

Being a great care sector worker is all about embodying the spirit of Philippians 2:3 and putting others needs first. Care is a job where you must prioritise the person's need at that moment over the need to finish your to do list! It means you need to be patient, skilful, and have a genuine love and care for people. Since arriving at Pilgrims' Friend Society earlier this year I have been blown away by stories of people who have put themselves out to make some of the most challenging, difficult, and important moments of life special and memorable for all the right reasons. The impact that the right person can make is impossible to overstate, and it has been wonderful to hear how those who have sacrificed their time and comfort, have felt hugely privileged and rewarded as they have done that.

I can't overstate how wonderful a job working in care can be but it's difficult to find and keep people in such demanding roles. We're also looking at how we can give our teams and prospective new employees a much-deserved salary increase, while navigating significant funding challenges. Please pray that great people would continue to come and work with us. If care isn't for you, is there anyone that you know who might be a perfect fit for one of our teams?



Find out more about working with us at [jobs.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk](http://jobs.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk)

PULL OUT AND KEEP

# DAILY PRAYER Guide

‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’

John 1:5

Winter 2021  
How you can pray for our work

PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY



# Welcome

to this edition of the Pilgrims' Friend Society Prayer Guide. Thank you for all your prayers during 2021 and we hope this continues to guide you in prayer as we enter 2022.



As we pray during these Winter months, let's remember that the light of the world is come! In Jesus we have God's rescue plan, the solution to the pain and evil of sin and the hope of eternal life through His death and resurrection.

As we pray together, let's reflect on these wonderful words

**"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."** John 8:12

Here's how you can be praying to support our work each day. We've listed our homes and housing schemes and their managers, as well as the other teams and projects that make up the work of Pilgrims' Friend Society.

## Sundays



**Bethany Christian Home, Plymouth** – Tracey Ikerd  
**Emmaus House, Harrogate** – Christina Medway-Steel  
**Carey Gardens, Kirby Muxloe** – Mandy Smith



**Those living in our homes and schemes**  
Thank God for those who live with us and who we call "family members". Ask Him to be the light of every day in our homes and schemes.



**Care teams**  
Thank God for our incredible care teams as they support, comfort, encourage and care for our family members every day.

## Mondays



**Evington Home, Leicester** – Jeanette Davis and Richard Cowlshaw  
**Dorothea Court, Bedford** – Evelyn Bissell  
**Finborough Court Housing, Great Finborough** – Sylvia Humm



**Our catering, maintenance, and administration teams**  
Thank God for the incredible teams who provide such great support to our family members through the skills and gifts God has given them.



**Our resources** (see more on pp.24-25)  
Pray that our new devotional jigsaws would encourage many older people in their faith, and be useful to those ministering to older people.

## Tuesdays



**Finborough Court, Great Finborough** – Rachel Fishburne and Jonathan Dorrington then Karen Bley  
**Pilgrim Gardens, Leicester** – Georgina Lansdell



**Activities and Community Engagement Facilitators**  
Thank God for our ACE Programme. Pray that they would make many connections in their communities to increase ministry and support to older people.



**Renewal Programme** (see more on pp.6-7)  
Pray that the South Coast project would find a location soon and that we would be able to proceed with building our next new home.

## Wednesdays



**Florence House, Peterborough** – Yasamine Watts  
**Royd Court, Mirfield** – Vicki Miller



**The Operations Team overseeing our homes and schemes**  
Praise God for our Operations Managers. Pray for safety as they travel to our homes and schemes offering help and support.





**Church and community engagement**  
Pray for more opportunities to connect with local churches near our homes and schemes, and for increasing ministries to older people to flourish.




# Thursdays




 **Framland, Wantage** – Beth Kneale  
**Pilgrim Care at Royd Court, Mirfield**  
 – Abi Jessop


 **Our Finance, HR, and Communications teams**  
 Thank God for our support teams. Pray that they would continue to help our homes and schemes in the work that they do.

 **Our IT project**  
 Pray for our ongoing technology project and that it would help us to do our work even more effectively.

# Fridays


 **Middlefields House, Chippenham** – Chris Boyes and Emma Hughes then Rali Ivanova  
**Strathclyde House, Skelmorlie** – Jenny Long


 **Volunteers**  
 Thank God for all our volunteers. Pray that more volunteers would join us in providing friendship and support to those who live with us.

 **Giving**  
 Thank God for His provision. Pray that people would be prompted to give to the cause of supporting and caring for older people.

# Saturdays

 **Luff House, Walton-on-the-Naze** – Timothy Agbenike and Sharon Rowley  
**Milward House, Tunbridge Wells** – Annabelle Purdie  
**Shottermill House, Haslemere** – Babi Dixon and Mike Beere

 **Directors and trustees**  
 Pray for our Executive Team and trustees, that they would clearly sense God's leading as they seek the direction of the charity this year.

 **Families and relatives**  
 Pray for those whose loved ones live with us. Pray that they would be confident in the knowledge that their loved one is treasured in their home.



# Louise ANSWERS

Louise Morse is a writer and speaker for Pilgrims' Friend Society. She is also a Christian counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist. Each issue, she offers advice on how to approach a challenging issue

**Q** “My 90-year-old mother lives independently and we would like to bring her to stay with us over Christmas. There would be six of us. She is still wary about COVID, so how can we help her feel safe and enjoy the spirit of Christmas?”

**A** It's not surprising that your 90-year-old mother is still wary about COVID as we've been deluged with warnings for so many months. I'm assuming that she's had her vaccinations, and if you have had yours as well part of helping her feel safe will be to tell her this. She will be reassured by knowing you take this seriously: you could show her your NHS 'passport' letters.

She may be anxious about being touched, or hugged, so follow her lead on this and give her space. She will also be reassured by your complying with Government advice, for instance, keeping a window or a door open to let in fresh air, if that's possible. Having said that, 90-year-olds need warmth and are sensitive to draughts, so take care that she's in a warm place and not in a draught. Perhaps you could wrap her in a 'slanket', or snuggle blanket with arms. and give her a comfortable chair with a little side table for holding cups of tea and mince pies. You could put a small bottle of hand gel on it too, and let her see that you are using gel yourselves.

I've assumed that 'living independently' means that she lives alone, and while she will love being with you all for Christmas, she may just be happy to have the conversation flow around her, joining in now and then. I saw how well this worked when a friend, Maria, was in hospital after major surgery. When her six children came to visit they collected some chairs and sat around her bed, mainly talking to each other but including their mother now and then. They didn't draw on her energy reserve, and she was happy just having her family around her. It was lovely to see.

Bring the generations together by reminiscing about Christmases past, and talking about your favourite Christmas hymns and carols. And remember to emphasise the real meaning of Christmas. Older people love hearing the 'old, old story,' and it blesses everyone else, too. It's an opportunity to have family prayers, and read the Christmas story again in the Bible. Your mother may be wary about going to church, but you can bring the glory of Christmas to her.



**MORE WAYS TO PRAY:** Our monthly Family News email contains all our latest prayer updates, plus details of happenings from across the organisation. Sign up online at: [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/keepintouch](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/keepintouch)



Find out more about Louise's work and publications on our website: [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/louise-morse](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/louise-morse)



Robinah, my house helper, getting some help from Kayesu our youngest family member

## Life story... Marian, Pilgrim Gardens

Marian, 77, spent 15 years in Uganda working as a missionary at a children's centre with New Hope Uganda. She now lives at Pilgrims Gardens, our housing scheme in Leicester. We caught up with Marian to find out about her life in the mission field

Friday night at Marian's house was always a busy time. A group of older girls would arrive early to prepare a batch of cookies ready for the Cookies and Juice Night she'd set up for children from the Kasana Children's Centre, located just outside the village of Kasana, north-west of Kampala, in the Luweero Triangle. 'No-bake' cookies went down well, made by boiling butter and sugar together, then adding peanut butter, cocoa and oats. The mixture was dropped in heaps onto a cookie sheet and left to harden, often with the help of a refrigerator. It was a delicate art, if the butter/sugar mix was not boiled for the correct length of time, the cookies would either remain runny or set rock hard.

As well as enjoying cookies and juice, the children had a chance to play and relax. Eager hands dived for Lego or K'nex. Some children might gather round a board game, others would read. "I wanted to give them a time in the week they could have to themselves," says

Marian. "The children's lives were generally hard. When they were not at school, they were doing homework, or fetching water, or building an open fire to cook over. Every single hour of their day was accounted for."

Marian first went to Uganda in January 1998 on a three-month mission trip, after hearing about the centre through the King's Bible College (now King's School of Theology), Whitchester House, Duns in Scotland. Originally from Stockton-on-Tees, Marian had applied to study at the Bible college at the age of 50, after her three children (twins Sharon and Peter, and David) had all left home.

"Life was not always easy when the children were growing up, especially after my husband left," says Marian. "However, I always had the sense that the Lord held me and kept me. Deuteronomy 1:31 is precious to me, it contains these words, 'the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.' I felt that over the



Hope Family little people on their daily walk

years He had been carrying me and preparing me for this time in my life. In my heart, I felt drawn to Uganda."

The Kasana Children's Centre was set up by New Hope Uganda, led by an American couple Jay and Vicki Dangers, to look after children who were orphaned during the Ugandan Civil War (1980-1986). By the time Marian went, early 1998, the centre had also started caring for children who had lost one or both parents to AIDS or other illnesses.

"Often children came to the centre if they had lost their father to AIDS," says Marian. "Their mother might be at home and struggling to look after several children, or she might be unwell herself. The people were desperately poor, living from subsistence farming. Education was meant to be free but in reality there were often charges. There was a huge list of children waiting to come to us where they would receive food, a place to live, an education and learn about a Father God who loves them, thanks to the organisation's sponsorship programme, whose mission statement was, 'Bringing the Fatherhood of God to the Fatherless.'"

Marian vividly remembers her arrival in Uganda and the drive through the countryside to the village. It had just rained heavily and

the people were hard at work, brushing water out of their homes and shops, putting everything back to normal. In some places, the elephant grass towered so high either side of the car that it almost covered it.

This initial trip affirmed Marian's sense that Uganda was a place where she should be, and she returned in October 1998 on a more long-term basis, supported by her church. "I felt the call to go and be a mother to the motherless," says Marian. "It was a very special time in my life when I felt the assurance that God had put me exactly where I was supposed to be."

One of Marian's first jobs was to supervise the building of her own house. Another was to sort out the child-care filing system, which was a little chaotic. She was eventually given the responsibility of heading up the Kasana Children's Centre sponsorship programme. This included making sure the children wrote regular monthly letters to their sponsors.



With my colleague Jill, when our office was my dining room table



“When I started, children were writing letters that went something like, ‘Dear My Sponsor, How are you? I am fine. Your loving son/daughter;’ she recalls. “It was understandable – they didn’t have any experience of letters and letter-writing. But some of the sponsors were complaining that they weren’t getting any news. So I came up with some bullet points and wrote them up on the blackboard as a guide:

- 1) Greet your sponsor by name,
- 2) Tell them one piece of news from school,
- 3) Tell them one piece of news from home,
- 4) Tell them about something you have learnt in church,
- 5) Sign-off.

Things went better after I introduced that!”

As part of their education, some of the girls learnt vocational skills like tailoring. Marian was a keen cross-stitcher and when they found themselves with a gap in the timetable she ended up teaching the girls how to cross-stitch. She also started a Bible study group with this group of cross-stitchers and got to know some of the girls very well.

There was one girl in particular, Namatah, who she got to know over a number of years. After finishing at the school, Namatah went to study at teacher training college and led the Christian Union. “She came and told me she had been very blessed by me. The things she’d learnt from Bible study she was able to pass on to others at the college. She then came back and taught in the Kasana Children’s Centre school herself,” says Marian.

As part of her role, Marian also worked at Hope House, also known as ‘the baby house’. Here were very young children who had lost their mothers. “Those were good months,” says Marian. “The idea was we’d care for them until they were old enough to go back to their biological families.”

Friday fun night in my house

Initially, Marian had planned to stay for six years. But six years came and went. She wondered if she might stay for ten years, but when that came and went too she had a sense that she wasn’t done yet. After 15 years, she finally felt it was time to return home.

At her farewell party, some of the children whom she had looked after came to say goodbye. Many of them mentioned how much the Cookies and Juice Night had meant to them. It’s an idea that caught on, and to this day Friday night is Cookies and Juice Night at the homes of missionaries across the Kasana Children’s Centre.

On her return, Marian came to live at Redbourn Missionary Trust, part of Pilgrims’ Friend Society’s housing. When that closed in early 2021, she found a place at Pilgrim Gardens in Leicester. “Moving was tiring but everyone has been very friendly and helpful,” she says.

In more recent months, as lockdown has eased, community life has got going again. The devotional times have started taking place every week and so has the tea and coffee time on Wednesday afternoons.

“It’s another big adjustment for me but I’m getting there,” says Marian. “It’s starting to feel like home.”

# Pilgrim Biscuits

*Our charity’s official biscuit*

**These delicious little biscuits are perfect for the Christmas season, with the sweet zing of ginger wafting through the kitchen**

We discovered this lovely recipe when chatting to Fay, a family member at our Evington Home in Leicester. Fay’s mother came to stay at the old home which stood on this site for some respite and fell in love with these biscuits. When she left she asked the cook for the recipe and then handed it on to Fay. Earlier this year, Fay and other family members at the home enjoyed an afternoon making a batch of these special biscuits, and now it’s our turn to try them in time for Christmas.

## Ingredients

- ★ 225g (8oz) soft margarine
- ★ 225g (8oz) granulated sugar
- ★ 225g (8oz) golden syrup
- ★ 450g (16oz) self-raising flour
- ★ 2 level teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda
- ★ 4 level teaspoons of ginger

## What to do:

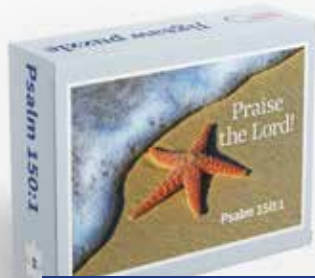
- 1) Cream together the margarine, sugar and syrup
- 2) Add all the dry ingredients and knead together
- 3) Roll into small, walnut-sized balls and add to a greased baking sheet
- 4) Bake for about 20 minutes at 170°. Don’t over-cook as they become very hard!



These biscuits sounded too good to miss so Alexandra, our Director of Marketing and Communications, whipped up a batch to share with her friends and family this Christmas!

*Here’s Fay and her friends enjoying a biscuit-making session together*





## God's Word in God's World jigsaws

Our new large piece jigsaws with a biblical theme are specially designed for older people and make a lovely gift for Christmas. Ruth Ranger explains the story behind them

During the Government's COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on visiting residents in care homes, I was keen to find ways to help my dad and his fellow Pilgrims' Friend Society care home residents to engage with God and His Word in a relaxed yet significant manner. Dad's Alzheimer's disease means that eye-catching images and familiar words from the Bible help him to respond more easily to God.

I created a photobook of images from nature matched to Bible verses, which Pilgrims' Friend Society then officially designed and published as God's Word in God's World. It has been well-received by all sorts of people and is available to buy online.

As Dad also enjoys doing jigsaw puzzles, I thought I'd try creating a few of my own on the same theme as the photobook. Using online companies, I formatted the jigsaws with smaller numbers of large pieces to make carefully

selected pictures combined with giant print Bible verses. These were designed so that there were plenty of visual clues on each puzzle piece, including parts of the familiar biblical text.

Dad really enjoyed doing the jigsaws and I'm delighted to say that Pilgrims' Friend Society has now launched official versions of these too. There are two A3 sized 48-piece jigsaws based on pages from the original photobook, with large, easy-to-handle pieces.

The aim isn't to make the puzzles challenging – more to pique people's interest by attracting their attention. They are designed to help people use all kinds of cognitive skills and memory to complete a fairly simple and satisfying task. The clear picture of the jigsaw design on the lid ensures that there are ample clues. Completed, the puzzles are attractive and provide a sense of interest and achievement.

As the puzzles are relatively easy and brightly coloured, they make an ideal intergenerational activity for older people to share with children of most ages. If the puzzle is shared with others, it gives the opportunity for relaxed conversation, possibly with a focus on spiritual matters. I'm very much looking forward to helping Dad do these new jigsaws.

**£12.99**  
each or  
**2 for**  
**£20**

Available to buy online or by phone now...

## Resources

We're committed to helping Christians better understand the issues that affect older people. This issue we're recommending:



### God's Word in God's World

£8.99

The original book that inspired our new jigsaw puzzles! Presented in an A5 format, this hardback glossy photobook brings together Bible verses and photos from nature. Designed with older people in mind, it reminds the reader of the world they have experienced and of God's creativity and faithfulness, supporting them as they continue in their journey of faith. Large print, thick pages and a landscape format make it easy to read and handle.



### Frank and Linda's Story

Louise Morse, £8.50

Written with a clear Christian perspective, this book provides a new understanding of dementia, as well as suggesting new approaches. It follows the story of an older couple, Frank and Linda, when Frank develops dementia. Beginning with the first, early signs, the story follows the development of the disease, the couple's struggle to manage and find help, Linda's failing health, the search for a suitable care home, and life after Frank goes to live in the home.



### Worshipping Together

Louise Morse, £8

This devotional resource has been created specially for older people. Instead of listening passively, seniors are invited to share their thoughts and experiences. This not only stimulates interests but tells participants that their thoughts matter. The resource has been created with those living in care homes in mind, but they would work equally well with older people in small fellowship groups or even one-to-one with family at home.



For our full list of resources and to order online, visit:

[www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/resources](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/resources)

Alternatively, ☎ 0300 303 1403

## Meet our team, ACE Facilitator Susan Schibli, Milward House

Susan has been working at Milward House, Tunbridge Wells since November 2020. We spoke to Susan about what drew her to become an Activities and Community Engagement (ACE) Facilitator and her previous experience of caring for others

**WORDS:** Kaela Dutton

**Tell us a little about you...** I was born and brought up in Geneva, Switzerland, I'm half Swiss and came to the UK in 1989. I've always loved to care for all of God's great creations, specifically His people and animals.

For 28 years I worked as a vet, caring for animals with a holistic approach, looking at their environment and behaviour to ensure they could have the best and most comfortable life possible.

I then became a foster parent for five years,

which was rewarding and challenging, then moved onto a teaching assistant role for people with special needs, which is where I found my joy for activities.

I live with my lovely 11-year-old rescued cat, Oliver, in Tunbridge Wells.

**What do you do day-to-day?** As ACE Facilitator, I organise and coordinate activities across the home for groups and individuals, to enhance their spiritual, social, mental and physical wellbeing. I manage a team of volunteers that I recruit and train. The main thing is to bring fun and fulfilment to our family members. I really love when we are having fun and enjoying ourselves as a family.

**What previous experience helps you in your role?** I worked as a hospital chaplain for 13 years, supporting the women's and children's wards, but on occasion when on call I'd visit older people, including those near to end of life. This gave me the Christian pastoral care that I apply daily at Milward House. In the past I've helped at the winter shelter at my church St James, Tunbridge Wells. I also took part in the



**Favourite Bible verse:** 'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.'  
Philippians 4:8

**Favourite worship song:**  
It has to be either  
'Blessed Be Your Name'  
by Matt Redman or  
'Is He Worthy?' by  
Chris Tomlin.

**How do you encourage each other as a staff team?** At Milward House everyone has a great set of skills. I love being an encourager and cheering my fellow colleagues on, I especially love it when we pray for one another.

pastoral care for people who are part of the congregation, focusing on befriending.

**Why do you like working with older people?** Older people have so much experience. I have so much to learn from them, I look up to them. It's an amazing experience, I also love being part of a family.

**What do you like about working in a Christian care home?** I love being able to talk about Jesus every day, all day! It's amazing to pray, encourage, gather for Bible studies, and bring in the hope and love of Jesus all the time. And of course, serving others to make their lives a little bit easier.

**Any memorable moments to share?** I love sharing my life with Milward House family members. Previously I was involved in missionary work in Gabon, before completing a BA in Biblical and Cultural studies at All Nations Christian College. I then travelled to a Nepal community development project where I helped people with leprosy. I wanted to share this experience with Milward House, so I arranged an activity. I wore traditional dress, talked about their religion, a wedding ceremony, and even performed a Nepalese dance. It was a great conversation-starter and got people smiling and engaged.

**Tell us about your proudest achievement so far at Milward House...**

I love working on the Milward House Facebook page. It's a great opportunity to share the joy that we have on a daily basis with our friends, family and supporters:  
[www.facebook.com/PFsmilwardhouse](http://www.facebook.com/PFsmilwardhouse)



Could you be an ACE Facilitator with us? See our latest jobs roles:



[www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/jobs](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/jobs)





## The Ministry of Coloured Envelopes

Sarah Finnie is a Church Champion with our sister charity Faith in Later Life (FiLL). She explains how God inspired her to reach older people during the pandemic

For many Christians, Romans 8:28 offers great assurance: 'And we know that in all things God works for the good for those who love him...' When Sarah Finnie reflects on how the Lord brought together the threads of her life during the pandemic, she has reason to rejoice in just how true this is.

As a small child, she loved nothing more than to sit on her kitchen floor and post envelopes into her own homemade postbox, fashioned from an old cornflakes packet. Many years later when both her parents passed away, Sarah and her



brother were clearing out their home and came across a stash of unused coloured envelopes. Like her parents, Sarah decided they were just too good to throw away.

When the lockdown was introduced in March 2020, the Monday Meet – the meeting she led for older people at her church (Enfield Town Community Church) – had to stop. Many of the older people had no access to IT and found themselves cut-off from online services and Zoom meetings. Sarah herself was advised to shield for clinical reasons. And so she had the idea of putting those coloured envelopes to good use...

"The short Bible talk for the Monday Meet was already planned so I thought, 'why not post it out instead?'" she says. In another marker of God's provision, Sarah's nearest postbox is just a few footsteps from her front door. 'The Ministry of Coloured Envelopes' was born.

That first dispatch proved to be the first of many, with the whole church getting involved. Pastors produced a 200-word Bible talk each week. A teenage boy

devised wordsearches using words from that week's passage. Church members contributed quizzes. Her husband pitched in with IT. Children wrapped up 'testimonies and tea', comprising a book of testimonies and teabag.

As a child, Sarah herself enjoyed visiting older people at Luff House in Frinton, now part of Pilgrims' Friend Society. However, it was not until 2013 when she was newly retired from her career as a midwife and health visitor that she got involved with her church's ministry to older people. "I asked if there was anything I could do to help," she says. "When I was asked to support the weekly Ladies Fellowship, I was taken aback. It had never occurred to me to work with older people."

However, in the first meeting, Sarah found herself profoundly moved. "Looking around I realised how much I had to learn from these ladies. They really loved the Lord Jesus and knew Him deeply. It was second nature for them to speak of Him in conversation and even pray as they did so."

Over the years, the church's ministry to older people grew. The weekly Monday Meet was established, regularly attended by 70 people, with a special monthly Soup and Sweet attended by 120. Around a third were members of the church, another third were

from other churches, and the rest were from the local community. "Many older people are just looking for something to do. We had a real opportunity to share the gospel," says Sarah.

She joined Faith in Later Life's Church Champion network just before lockdown and has found it invaluable.

"One of the main encouragements is knowing that I'm not alone," she says. "The monthly online meetings have been great – to hear from a guest-speaker, such as Louise Morse on the value of older people or Professor Keith Brown on loneliness, and to see a whole screen of faces nodding along."

As the pandemic continued, word of The Ministry of Coloured Envelopes spread far and wide, with Sarah's list growing to some 160 people. At Christmas and Easter Sarah sent Bible-verse postcards she received as a Church Champion from FiLL to her mailing list.

Since September, the Monday Meet has been able to come together again. One of their first activities was a quiz themed around colours. Encouragingly, there are some new faces of older people who had been reached during lockdown. "We'll take it slowly and find our way through the winter months together. For now, it's such a joy just to be together."



Could you be a Faith in Later Life Church Champion at your local church? To find out more, visit: [www.faithinlaterlife.org/get-involved/church-champions/](http://www.faithinlaterlife.org/get-involved/church-champions/)

# Residents' stories: JACK

Jack, 93, lives at Framland, our home in Wantage. He is a structural engineer who built his life on The Rock



Jack was born in 1928 in Coatbridge, an industrial town between Glasgow and Edinburgh in the country of Lanarkshire. In those days the main industries were steelworks and mining. His father worked in the steel mills, and his mother, who had been in service, became a homemaker when their children, Betty and Jack, arrived.

Jack began training as a structural engineer in his early twenties, initially working in an office in Glasgow, then, a few years after qualifying, joining the Civil Service and moving to Edinburgh to become one of a team responsible for public buildings and works in the region. His parents were religious, and regularly attended a Church of Scotland church, but Jack noticed that his strength of faith and conviction was not as strong as that of one of his young colleagues. They talked about it and Jack was converted, making a full Christian commitment. He wrote his testimony and his daughter Elspeth found it years later.

He joined Coatbridge Baptist Church, where he met May. "This was 1953 and the Queen's Coronation service was going to be televised," says Elspeth. "Televisions were a new thing and not everybody had one. But Dad's family had one and he invited Mum to come and watch the Coronation at his house with the family." Jack and May were married in 1955.

In their late thirties they felt God calling them to full time Christian service, and in 1966 they left Edinburgh to join the Birmingham Bible Institute (BBI). It was a huge adjustment because it meant leaving most of their relatives and friends. It was also a step of faith. The Institute offered accommodation for families but no grant for Jack's studies. Elspeth recalls, "Dad said that God would supply all we needed. And God did supply all our needs! We kept the



car going and Mum and Dad, who were very hospitable, would invite seven or eight people for Sunday lunch, despite their restricted income. That was always a mark of my parents. We knew that God was never going to let us down."

After Bible College, Jack and May were called to join SIM (which formerly stood for Sudanese Interior Mission and now stands for Serving In Mission), with workers in many countries. In 1970 Jack became General Secretary looking after the missionaries and others, such as African pastors, retiring in 1995. May's health declined, and they moved to Wantage in 2006. Elspeth's husband's job had taken them to Wantage in 1989, where they went to Wantage Baptist Church. She says, "Most people knew about Framland, so when Mum's health became a concern we helped them move into Framland's Coach House, where they lived independently with our support. Being close to the home they

would go in for the morning praise service, and Dad used to take prayers. Mum died in 2010, and Dad was quite lost for a while afterwards." In 2015 her father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and he moved into the residential home at the end of October 2019.

"He loves being in Framland," says Elspeth. "His Alzheimer's has progressed considerably, and sometimes I'll find him quite detached and hard to engage. When I visit staff tell him, your daughter Elspeth is here to visit you! They'll take him to prayers in the morning, and once a month they'll have communion. Dad has two favourite hymns: Horatio Spafford's 'It Is Well With My Soul,' and Martin Luther's, 'A Mighty Fortress Is Our God'.

**“Staff are wonderful: they show family members such love and respect.”**



In our new film about *The Way We Care*, Jack's daughter Elspeth explains more about why Jack feels so at home at Framland. Watch it here: [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/thewaywecare](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/thewaywecare)

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PMDEC21



# Could you help us support older people like *Jack*?



Your donations help us keep our homes open to everyone who needs Christian care and support.

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 You can make a donation via our website [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/give](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/give) or fill in the forms below:

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I would like to make a **REGULAR DONATION** by Standing Order

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Please pay LLOYDS BANK PLC, Law Courts (Sort Code: 30-00-04) for the credit of PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY (Account Number: 00117804) the sum of

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Commencing from (date) ...../...../..... and thereafter every month/quarter/year (delete as appropriate) until further notice.

Signed ..... Date ...../...../.....

## One-off gift

I would like to make a **ONE-OFF DONATION** of:

£..... Amount in words:.....

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Please charge my debit/credit card as follows:  Visa  Mastercard

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**Finborough Court, GREAT FINBOROUGH**  
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**Pilgrim Care (Home care services at Royd Court)**  
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**Florence House, PETERBOROUGH**  
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**Bethany Christian Home, PLYMOUTH**  
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