

Chaplaincy *Times*



A Cameo of Care

Recently a grateful relative sent us a thank you card with a donation of £15 for our funds.

The patient's son had visited the Chapel in August and was supported by Marion, who has just returned to the team as a bank chaplain. We then visited him and his family daily on Coleridge Ward. The Marie Curie Companions were also involved in the evenings.

Just before the patient was about to be discharged to Bridgwater hospital - which was closer to home - the son returned to thank us once again. Hearing the plans, Martyn, one of newest volunteers and a retired minister from the North Petherton Parish, visited the family and felt prompted to offer follow up support in Bridgwater Hospital.

The widow writes: "My sincere thanks to you all for your visits to my husband. After we contacted you, for

your prayers with him, and for the support and prayers for my family and me.

He went home to the Lord in the early hours of 2nd Sept and 2 days ago we had two lovely uplifting services for him: first at the Sedgemoor Crematorium and then a Thanksgiving for his life and ministry at St Georges Wembdon in the afternoon."

I was aware that her husband, a retired minister, and their family had much appreciated our visits as he neared the end of life with us. However this little anecdote is an example of the way we work together as one team, within the hospital and with community partners, plus the value that some families place on the emotional and spiritual support we give.

Chaplaincy Support in Baby Loss

For each baby loss there are many shattered lives and dreams; it is not just the parents, the siblings, the grandparents, but the friends; who gave support throughout pregnancy. The sense of loss and grief ripples outwards, the future is altered beyond comprehension. The support of the Chaplaincy team can be a helpful step, encouraging mothers to talk openly about their loss, to always remember those babies who lit up their lives even for such a short time. There has been little time to know the baby and to create cherished memories - there is a feeling of emptiness.

The Chaplaincy team have time to listen. They promote an understanding of the impact of baby loss, in practical, emotional and spiritual ways. The support they offer can help parents to progress through their grief, encouraging them to seek support in the future. It sometimes takes the form which the British Medical Journal has described complicated grief. This is "the persistent and disruptive yearning, pining and longing for the deceased" which makes it difficult to accept death, especially when it is not anticipated. Sometimes there is an inability for parents to move on.

Support is available on a one to one basis to focus on individual needs. Contact can be made at any time by a mother, as there may be thoughts and questions they wish to share with someone outside the family, someone to listen to how they feel. **Anne Sworn**

Angel Tree Service—as we remember our babies—see overleaf



The Angel Tree Service

The Angel Tree Service on Sunday 23rd November was well attended this year - 180 people came including 31 children. This annual service gives grieving parents and their families an opportunity to pause to reflect on baby loss, whether the loss was recent or 30 years ago. Some of the original local baby loss group from over 20 years ago still attend, but they are joined by others that Musgrove Park Hospital Chaplaincy have had contact with more recently. This year it was a delight to meet quite a number of 'rainbow children', who were born since their siblings were lost.

The service was led by members of the chaplaincy team at Musgrove: among the congregation were maternity staff and providers of community baby loss support. In Ecclesia, a local choir, expertly led the singing and provided music for reflection .

A retiring collection for the Genesis Research Trust raised £110

Chaplaincy is alive and well!

Indeed 'listening ears' to support patients, their relatives, their friends and staff are needed more than ever in a hospital that is full to capacity on a weekly basis and struggling to keep up with demand.

We are therefore very grateful for all who give up their time to volunteer with us. The hugely valuable contribution from our volunteers enriches not only my day but also the Chaplaincy service we provide. Nevertheless, we too struggle to have sufficient people to provide the service we aspire to provide.

If you can encourage others to consider helping us; only a couple of hours a week can make a huge difference. This can be weekday, Saturday or Sunday help. There are many different opportunities; listening to patients, portering or stewarding at Sunday services, even administration

If you are keen to contribute to this wonderful hospital's wellbeing, or know others who feel the same way, **please contact Judith Lawrence for a chat on 01823 342515.**



Bishop Peter preaches in hospital Chapel

Bishop Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath & Wells, visited the Chaplaincy team at Musgrove Park Hospital recently. He was the preacher in the hospital chapel at a service which celebrated the beginning of Rev Susie Parson's new ministry as a Team Chaplain. She had previously been curate in the Polden Hills Benefice.

The service also celebrated the addition of five new volunteers to the team, who assist the paid staff in pastoral care during the week and on Sunday mornings. Bishop Peter enthusiastically affirmed the work of the Chaplaincy Team at Musgrove in supporting patients, relatives, visitors and staff of all faiths and none. He also took the opportunity to walk through the new concourse leading into the new Jubilee building.

Christmas Carols in the Concourse

The new location for this year's Carol Service for patients, family and staff is to be the newly built concourse.

Our guest Choir this year will be West Somerset Singers.

The service is on Saturday 13th at 3.00pm. It will be broadcast on Apple FM on the 21st at noon and then on Christmas Day at 10.30am.



Staff Prayers

Staff meet for prayers on Tuesdays at 1.00pm in the Chapel. Weekday prayers are also said in the chapel each morning at 8.45am.

