

# PSALM

TAKING AGEING AND FAITH SERIOUSLY

NEWSLETTER TWO – JULY 2018



## UPCOMING WORKSHOP:

‘Songs for the Road’

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September

Cost £10

(£8 for PSALM members).

Please email

[psalm@stpancraschurch.org](mailto:psalm@stpancraschurch.org)

if interested.

Alternatively we can be

contacted on:

020 7388 1461

St Pancras Church

Euston Road

London

NW1 2BA



## DECLUTTERING WORKSHOP – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018

I had just completed 18 months of decluttering. My move from Sheffield to London, into a much smaller property, had given me a great feeling of freedom but, my goodness, it had been hard work. So I was delighted to be asked by Ann Morisy to pass on some of my own experience. Twenty people attended: some I am told, were new faces.

There was lots of discussion and lots of laughter. Astonishingly the majority of participants had lived in their current home for 40 years or more. We agreed that the hardest things to give up are those with sentimental value. But we also noted that knowing something ‘has found a good home’ is half the battle! I drew on a book to which I had taken a fierce dislike, but which had continued to haunt me! (*Marie Kondo: The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying*).

We finished with a more serious look at how we might organise our affairs as we get older including practical tips particularly for those who live alone.

*Eileen Turner*

## DID YOU KNOW.....

A recent analysis of 1600 American local newspaper obituaries carried out by the Ohio State University concluded that of those who had recently passed away, those with a religious affiliation typically lived six and a half years longer than those without. These findings were published in the *Journal Social Psychological and Personality Science*. The faithful tended to smoke less, drink less and have a healthy social network in old age.

## A WORD ON ... HOLIDAY AT HOME

During the summer some activities and groups stop and it can seem a long time for those who are unable to go away on holiday. It can be a lonely and isolating time when family and friends are enjoying a time away. So churches all over the country offer activities which bring people together to experience the fun of a holiday with others whilst getting home to your own bed every night! These activities happen up and down the country. For example, a quote from a church in Leeds:

*"We know that God will have been at work this week, through the new relationships formed, old relationships that have been strengthened, and just the time spent together as a community." (St George's, Leeds)*

Similar events have also been run closer to home. Last summer, **Immanuel and St Andrew, Streatham** ran a successful event. This first Holiday at Home programme started with two days at Gracefield Gardens including a taster exercise class, a talk on the history of Streatham, a quiz, and craft and games sessions. There was also a day trip to the Horniman Museum and the grand finale was a celebration tea with musical entertainment at St Peter's Church. The programme was great fun and was very well supported by volunteers from local churches: there were also delicious home cooked lunches from the Home Cooks project, and use of the Gracefield Garden Centre premises and St Peter's crypt.

North of the river...this summer will be **Holiday in Hampstead's** fourth year. This week long event, held from Monday 13 to Friday 17 August, promises to be full of interesting and informative talks, amusing entertainments, music, quizzes, and much more. Delicious lunches, proper coffee, tea and cake at the end of the day are all part of the week. There are two big "tea events". Firstly Hampstead will join their friends at Henderson Court for "Tea at the Ritz" mid week (with popular songs led by members of the Community Choir) and follow this with Tea at the Vicarage the following day. If you are a member of the retired community and are not planning to fight your way abroad for a foreign holiday, this is somewhere to meet both friends and new people, to relax and enjoy yourself. Places are limited and must be booked (cost £10 per day and reduction for half days).

Contact Diana Finning, Rosemary Loyd or Sue Kwok for more information via the parish office at St John, Hampstead. Tel 020 7794 5808.

We would love to hear of similar events happening at your church this summer.

*Photo Streatham 2017*



## PSALM TRAINING DAY FOR ORDINANDS

PSALM was asked to provide a full day's training for students at St Augustine's College of Theology – three cheers to a training college that recognises the importance of work with older people! The hope is that PSALM will be able to make this contribution every year. Below are some examples of topics that were discussed:

### **Life expectancy**

In 2016 life expectancy at birth reached 79.5 years for men and 83.1 years for women.

The latest data on healthy life expectancy (the number of years lived in self-assessed good health) show that it is now 63.4 for men and 64.1 for women.

Although women still live longer than men the gap between the sexes has decreased over time and is now 3.6 years. However, the majority of these extra years of life for women are spent in poor health.

### **Life expectancy significantly worse in deprived areas**

In England the increase in life expectancy is slower paced in more deprived areas, and the net gap between rich and poor is slowly worsening. Men tend to be more adversely impacted by deprivation than women. Men are 4.4 times more likely to die by the age of 44 in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods.

Two thirds of those over the age of 75 are women and two thirds of these women live alone. We are growing old in the context of low fertility. There are, therefore fewer blood relatives (with a sense of obligation) to look after us in our long old age. This begs the question - what role can the church play to fill this gap?

(Ann Morisy)

## BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP GIFT OF YEARS PROJECT

The Gift of Years is linked to *The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF)* and resources the spiritual journey of older people. The Gift of Years aims to inspire, equip and enable every church across the UK to meet the spiritual needs of older people wherever they may be - in residential care, congregations, in their own homes and in the community. They try to:

- increase the provision of spiritual care services for older people
- raise awareness of older people's spiritual needs
- improve skills, knowledge and confidence within communities in addressing these needs

'A life lived deeply and well is a crowning achievement. Faced with the fact we are living longer, The Gift of Years celebrates the blessings of long life but does not underestimate the challenges either. It is time for churches across the denominations to recognise fully the needs and the potential of older people, both in churches and in wider communities.' ([thegiftofyears.org.uk](http://thegiftofyears.org.uk))

## **Book Review: THE FREEDOM OF YEARS: AGEING IN PERSPECTIVE**

This book by Harriet and Donald Mowat is a thought-provoking read for people of all ages (as is pointed out – we are all ageing). The authors use the example of Angus and Josephine and their differing experience of old age to illustrate the importance of community, carers and a spiritual connection. There is a suggestion that old age should be, if not embraced, accepted and cherished as an opportunity to re-evaluate and deepen our spiritual lives. The ‘second half of life’ provides a chance to simply be who we are with the confidence that only maturity can provide. That, in turn provides its own particular type of freedom. The point made about declining church attendance but a rise in spirituality amongst the elderly leaves a gap for organisations such as PSALM to make a real difference to the accessibility (physically and spiritually) of the church’s message.

Published by BRF, 2018. £8.99. <https://www.thegiftofyears.org.uk/resources>

Kindle version also available <https://www.brfonline.org.uk/ebooks/#TheFreedomofYears>

### CONTACT US:

PSALM

*Taking ageing and faith seriously*

Registered Charity no:  
1103130

020 7388 1461

[PSALM@stpancraschurch.org](mailto:PSALM@stpancraschurch.org)

St Pancras Church  
Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2BA

[www.PSALM.org.uk](http://www.PSALM.org.uk)

*Almighty Father*

*Be with us during these hot summer months.*

*Protect and guide those for whom the holidays are a struggle and help us all to work together to stave off sadness and loneliness.*

*With your help we can build a considerate and inclusive community for all.*

*Amen*

### **A FINAL THOUGHT...**

Spirituality strengthens the mind. **When your mind becomes strong, your body will follow suit.**

Spirituality provides hope, and hope will strengthen your spirit and faith.

*(Spiritual Healing for You)*