

Carter House Aged Care Facility Chaplaincy Report

Much of the work of a chaplain is the same year after year. Being a listening ear, a friendly smile, a welcome to new residents, a hand to hold when they feel sad or lonely or are near the end of their life, and sometimes giving their family members a hug when they have died. Being the one who helps them re-member their faith as they take communion each week. Sometimes it is just being the helper who pushes their chair to the lounge for a service or helps them into a chair or collects the dirty cups after afternoon tea so that they can prepare for the service to come.

Being a chaplain doesn't mean that you must be serious all the time. Every so often the residents see another side of their chaplain as she dances with them to the music playing in the lounge or has a laugh with them when they say they are "Not behaving themselves" with a twinkle in their eyes.

However, the biggest joy over the past year has been the introduction of "Messy Vintage" into the Dementia Wing once a month. This involves the preparation of an activity that the residents can do with as little assistance as possible and often involves thinking 'outside the square' to create something simple yet appropriate for their age. The sessions last one hour at the most and contains a hymn, the Lord's Prayer, a connection into their lives and story or reading from the bible and the activity. Then we join with them for their afternoon tea.

Messy Vintage has been something that the parish has come on board with and I am usually joined by up to four parishioners who sit with the residents and help them.

We have blown bubbles for Pentecost (breath), explored what was inside eggs for Easter, made Christmas decorations, created a poster reminding them that they are loved and cherished by God using pastels, made poppy crosses for Remembrance Day, played with playdough, made leaf window decorations for autumn, and blossom covered trees for spring. Many of the craft works are displayed in the common areas of the wing or in their individual rooms. Messy Vintage is welcomed enthusiastically by the staff and they often stay and help. What we have found is that as we connect with them, the conversations flow about their past and we (the parish) and the staff learn more about the residents past lives and what makes them 'tick'.

Messy Vintage is more structured than Messy Church and is shorter in duration as there is only one activity offered. The celebration time is much shorter and sometimes is very short... we go with the flow of what is happening and how the residents are responding.

At times the Diversional Therapists borrow our activity ideas to use with the Resthome and Hospital Wing residents, yet Messy Vintage is going to remain in the Dementia Wing as something that is special for them.

It is with great joy that I present this report to Synod.

**Rev'd Ruth
Dewdney Chaplain**