

Worshipping with the Frail and Forgetful



*Offering a Dementia Friendly Worship Space
in a Rest Home Context*

Revd. Amy Houben – 18 February 2017



WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

- Dementia is not a disease but an umbrella term used to describe a group of conditions that affect how well our brains work
- The most common dementia symptoms include changes in memory, thinking, behaviour, personality and emotions
- Dementia can affect anyone, and as people get older the chances of developing dementia increase
- Dementia is progressive, which means that for most people the changes gradually spread through the brain and lead to the symptoms getting worse
- Dementia is different for everyone – what people experience, and how quickly they are affected is unique to them. What they can do, remember and understand may change from day to day.
- 60,000 Kiwis have dementia and that number is expected to almost triple by 2050

STORY



W.H. Vanstone '*The Stature of Waiting*' (Church Publishing Inc, Harrisburg, US, 2006).

When we visit a rest home to take a chapel service,
What is it we are actually providing?

A space and opportunity to worship





Søren Kierkegaard's Metaphor of the Theatre with Worship

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden;
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may truly love you
and worthily praise your holy name;
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.



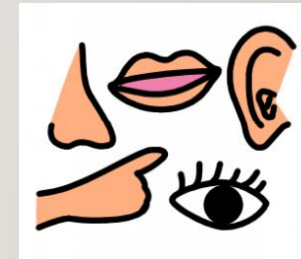
A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY WORSHIP SPACE CAN ASSIST PEOPLE TO:

- Approach God
- Feel a sense of belonging to the Community of Faith
- Spark a response to God
- Worship God and feel God's caring presence
- Come to God with their pain, sorrows, joy, thanksgiving and praise
- Find in it an oasis of peace and refreshment
- Partake in the Holy Eucharist
- Pray

Remember *Whose* they are

UNDERSTAND HOW COMMUNICATION HAS CHANGED FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

- There can be difficulty finding the right words
- Describing familiar objects is easier than calling them by name
- Familiar objects, rituals, words, and patterns are easier to comprehend
- A person can easily lose their train of thought
- A person may rely more on gestures than on speech
- There is increased need for space to think and respond
- Non-verbal and sensory communication can be easier to follow: facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, eye contact, posture, sight, sound, smell, and touch
- Feelings may be easier to express than thoughts
- Too many-questions-or-a-jumble-of-stimuli-can-be-distracting-and-aggravating



UNDERSTANDING A LITTLE OF HOW COMMUNICATION HAS CHANGED FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

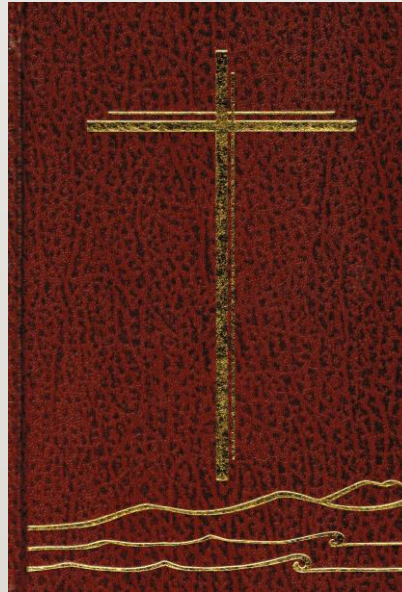
WHAT THINGS CAN WE DO, OR CHANGE, WHEN
LEADING A SERVICE THAT MAY BETTER ASSIST PEOPLE TO
MEET THE LIVING GOD?



Brainstorm ideas in small groups

Our Prayer Book (NZ Prayer Book) can be both a blessing and a hindrance when planning dementia-friendly worship.

How might this be?



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO AVOID

- Using endearments such as 'dear' and 'darling' so that the person with dementia feels loved and cared for
- Continue to prompt the person with dementia so that they eventually remember
- Fill in the missing words when the person with dementia can not find the correct thing to say in order to save them further embarrassment
- Talk about the person in front of them as if they couldn't hear or understand you



THE SERVICE ITSELF

Getting the environment right, service sheets, greeting at the door

Welcome and opening prayer

Opening hymn or song

Confession and forgiveness

Bible reading

Message/homily

Hymn

Holy Communion

Prayers

Final hymn

Notices, birthdays, anniversaries, good news sharing

Blessing



SAFETY

- Know the position of emergency and call bells
- Ask staff about emergency procedures
- A staff member really should be present - enquire
- Handling in-service disruptions:
 - Stay calm. Speak in a calm, reassuring voice
 - Distraction can often settle disruptions: *“Thank you John, please sit down. Let us sing now ‘Amazing Grace’ and ill call someone to assist Joan (press call bell).*
 - Do not engage in an argument
 - Don’t try to forcibly restrain the person unless there is absolutely no choice
 - Seek assistance from staff - **PRESS THE CALL or EMERGENCY BELL**



Ideas for Easter



