

CHAPLAINCY IN PETERBOROUGH



light
project
peterborough

Revealing Jesus



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CHAPLAINCY

Welcome

Welcome to this introduction to chaplaincy in Peterborough.

Chaplaincy is an important aspect of the mission and ministry of the Church.

Often hidden and unrecognised, chaplaincy lies alongside and is interwoven with the ministry of the congregation or parish and with social concern. Its distinctive involvement is within the community, the place of work and commerce and their respective pressures and needs.

Here is a snapshot of some of the work chaplains do.

Bishop of Peterborough's Chaplaincy Advisor

Commendation from Rev'd Canon Helen Dearnley

Chaplaincy is a vibrant and dynamic missionary presence proclaiming the love of Christ. Lay and ordained chaplains from many Church traditions (full-time, part-time, paid, honorary) serve to share the love and welcome of Christ in a wide variety of contexts. Chaplains are serving in those places where you would traditionally expect, including hospitals/hospices, the military (Army, RAF), prisons, schools (primary and secondary) and university. However, they can also enthusiastically be found in the parks, in the town centres, amongst the homeless, on the waterways, in the city administration, alongside the police and fire brigade and within many organisations which have asked for chaplaincy support. Chaplains are there to share in the celebrations that life affords, but they are also there when life is difficult, when there is fear, grief and seemingly more questions in life than answers. Chaplains understand the context in which they serve by being present and giving of themselves to that community. Wherever chaplains serve they listen, they care, and they offer spiritual inspiration to all.

Here, in this booklet, is a glimpse of the chaplaincy work being done across Peterborough.



What is Chaplaincy?

Chaplaincy is a pattern of ministry outside the usual congregational structure of the churches. The essential purpose is to provide a Christian presence within and for the secular social structures of society.

There are, broadly, three patterns of chaplaincy.

1. Chaplains appointed within and as part of that secular organisation.
Examples: hospitals, schools or prisons.
2. Chaplains invited into places of work by invitation and negotiation, often part-time and sometimes as an extension to ministry in the congregation. This is the 'Industrial Mission' model.
Ministers in secular employment can also act as chaplains in the place of employment.
Examples: Businesses, offices, factories, sport.
3. Chaplains in the public square, often in collaboration with secular authorities, such as the police and local authority, and the local enterprises in the chosen area.
Examples: Street Chaplains.

Each of these is found in Peterborough.

Chaplains can be full or part time, ordained or lay, salaried or voluntary, determined by the particular circumstances.

Peterborough City Council Chaplaincy

Brian Henry

The City Council provides a lot of support to the staff for their well-being and chaplaincy forms part of that help. I have access to the lovely setting of Sand Martin House in Fletton Quays and to be available to talk to staff, whether or not they have a faith.

After the disruption caused by Covid, I now attend on different days and sit near the entrance so that anyone who wants to can have a chat. I had previously started to form links with Human Resources and Occupational Health staff but most contact come from simply being available. My experience in the Civil Service is very similar to local government so I can help with people facing similar situations as well as life experiences that affect everyone.

A listening ear is always welcome and each week is different as different people come to talk."



Mental Health Chaplain

Jane Pope

The role of a Mental Health Chaplain is varied and never dull. Fundamentally it is about relationship. Our strapline in the "Heart and Soul Team" (which is what we call ourselves) is "Being Human Together". We aim to get alongside people facing mental health challenges and help them reconnect with whatever gives them meaning and purpose – which might include religion, but is by no means limited to it. We use a recovery model approach to care, which means acknowledging that we are ALL on a spectrum with our mental health and have good times and bad. We are willing to share what helps us in our bad times and what keeps us well, whilst respecting that we are all different.

We work with people both in hospital and in the community; one-to-one and in groups; remotely and in person. We aim to provide safe spaces to meet and socialise with others who understand and accept mental health challenges as a normal part of human life.

Bereavement support plays a large part in our work: we offer groups for general bereavement within a mental health context and for those specifically bereaved by suicide.

We rely on a team of volunteers to help us provide these services and we are always looking for more, so please feel free to make contact if you think you have what it takes!

Right: The Cavell Centre – the mental health inpatient unit.



Further/Higher Education

Stephanie Pedlar - Joint Education Chaplaincy

The joint chaplaincy covers Peterborough College, University Centre, Peterborough, and Anglian Ruskin University, Peterborough Campus. There is a lead chaplain across all three sites and volunteer/part-time chaplains in each, offering support to students and staff for all faiths and none.

The chaplaincy team offer spiritual, practical and emotional support as people live within a changing world. In our spiritual support we conduct services and offer bereavement support to all who need it.

There are prayer rooms dedicated to all faiths and none, together with male and female Muslim prayer spaces in the College and ARU.

Chaplaincy is about accepting people as they are and working with them in their time of need, taking time to listen. Coffee mornings are run to provide contact and a safe space in time of need. The team really feel privileged to work alongside students and staff and love chatting to people.



Prisons Chaplain

Michael Page (retired prison chaplain)

For some people, prisons represent the dark side of life. And whilst it is true that those serving prison sentences may well have done some very bad things and are being punished for those actions, it is also true to say that, for others, time in prison provides an opportunity for them to rethink their lives. The role of the prison chaplain is to walk alongside all those who are part of the prison community and to provide an alternative perspective on life.

In larger prisons there will be a team of full and part-time chaplains, representing the religious profile of the population. In smaller prisons there may be just a couple of chaplains. But in nearly all prisons there will also be chaplaincy volunteers – people from the local area who assist the chaplains with religious services and other social activities.

Chaplains are also often the people called on to deliver difficult news to prisoners, such as the death of a family member. In the confines of often shared prison cells, it can be hard to grieve over such news, and so the chaplain may well become closely involved in helping people process the news. But there are positive times as well, especially when people experience life-changing faith experiences.

The work of the chaplain in a prison is not the same as engaging in religious ministry in the community.



The chaplain has to be aware of the power imbalance that exists between them and the prisoner, and allow prisoners the dignity of holding on to their own view of life. Nevertheless, prison chaplaincy can be immensely rewarding. In my fifteen years working in prisons, I think it is true to say that there was never a dull day.

Some stories...

His head hung low as he sat on the step. We told him, 'You are seen, not forgotten'. Yesterday had been the funeral of his partner of fifteen years, who had died, unexpectedly, under surgery. He was grieving all alone. So we comforted him and were able to respond gladly to his request for prayer.

A man struggling to breathe, a widower of ten years, waiting for treatment. The immediate need was to get him a sandwich and a drink. A look in his eyes prompted a question about what he was thinking; his late wife. Was he afraid of death? This led to a discussion and the gift of a small, hand-held cross, pointing to Jesus. He was left smiling and with gratitude in his eyes.

A lady with dementia was disturbing the ward, trying to leave. Having been quietened down, she talked about her former life as a skilled craft worker in leather, a satisfying creative life that had now all disappeared. Half an hour later the whole process had to be repeated. But this time she fell asleep and all was quiet.

A very frail lady, nearing the end of her life, was willing to tell of her active professional career. She was assured that God sees her and holds her. She started to cry. Permission was given to pray for her. Joy came into her eyes, as though that was a moment she never expected or would forget.

...and a few more

A devout Catholic man from Mauritius made an appointment. A recent anniversary had re-triggered his grief for his wife who had died some years before. Having sorted out his medical needs, it was possible, on request, to pray. Following up, two weeks later, he was a changed man, in a different place.

A lady, having sat and watched us, asked what we stood for. A Christian herself, she was visiting family, but her town did not have any such ministry. It obviously meant a lot to her to see us at our chaplaincy work. So she asked if she could pray for us. A precious moment.

To talk to a young lady who was planning to kill herself that night required some 'heavy lifting', drawing on all the resources skills available. But there was change and eventually it was possible to introduce her to the supportive fellowship of a local church and to see her life reawaken.

One day in the park, talking to a lady who was walking her enormous dog, though still only a puppy. Suddenly the animal launched itself in its enthusiasm. Luckily the hedge next to us was able to withstand the sudden impact. Looking back it is easy to smile at what could have been something of an incident!

Schools Chaplaincy

Jenny Paddison – The King’s School Peterborough

I am an ordained chaplain, working in a Church of England secondary school in the centre of Peterborough. The school is diverse, drawing students from the local area and from places as far as Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Norfolk. My role in the school focuses on collective worship, enabling and facilitating assemblies and Cathedral services. I also offer pastoral care to all staff and students of all faiths and none, with a particular interest in bereavement support. There are two faith groups running in the school; an Islamic Society and a Christian Union. We also run confirmation classes once a year.



The picture is of some of the students confirmed in 2021 – hence the face masks. I am on the far right.

Most Church related schools, especially primary schools, have a chaplain or visiting clergy, usually part-time, and often the local parish incumbent.

A couple of these examples are:

Peterborough School (Woodard Schools)

St John Fisher Catholic High School

Peterborough Street Chaplains

Drawn from volunteers from churches across the region, Light Project Peterborough Street Chaplains aim to be a visible and accessible Christian presence in the city centre; Jesus’ representatives in all the hustle and bustle. Not to ‘preach’ but to be there for others, to meet the stranger on their ground, taking them seriously, without judgement or agenda. Of course, sharing one’s faith is sometimes appropriate; as is praying with someone if specifically asked to do so, though always praying for them at the end of the session.

The chaplains work in pairs, out of St. John’s, on a Friday, in Cathedral Square and the adjacent shopping area. As the chaplains become a familiar presence they find themselves being greeted in the street and welcomed into certain shops and cafés. But equally they may gently attract attention through some activity, such as offering a gift or a hug or a place to sit and chat. The Street Chaplains also work in Central Park and have active sessions at night time supporting people and organisations in the night-life culture.

To be a Street Chaplain is a challenge. However, being part of a team that offers support and training is really rewarding.



Street Chaplains in action...



Peterborough United Chaplain

Richard Longfoot – Peterborough United Football Club

I have been Peterborough United Chaplain for a number of years, operating under the help, training and guidance of Sports Chaplaincy UK.

The value of Football Club Chaplaincy is shown in the appointment of myself as full time Pastoral Director, funded by the Premier league, Football league and the Player's Association. They encourage an involvement of half a day per week.

My usual pattern is to attend all home matches making contact with as many staff and non staff as possible. This has also included some ceremonies like Remembrance day and Christmas Carols.

Each week, usually on a Thursday, I visit the stadium offices and other departments. I then go to the training ground to take opportunities to chat with people there. Sometimes most people are busy, so I tactfully say hello and move on. On other occasions there are good opportunities to chat and share. Those 'being in the right place at the right time' moments!

Every season I have been given the opportunity to provide a page in the programme at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance day.

Over the years there have been both sad and happy occasions where I have been able to officiate formally.

Overall I see it as doing my best to get to know people and to be known with the aim of being available when required.



Hospital Chaplaincy

NHS hospitals provide a chaplaincy service, representing the main religious faiths. The chaplaincy service is an integral part of the NHS. Chaplains are appointed through the local trust.

The North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust mission statement states that chaplaincy is there to:

'enable and facilitate the provision of spiritual, religious and pastoral care, in confidence, to patients, relatives, volunteers, staff and students, with compassion and sensitivity within the local NHS Trust, irrespective of faith, belief, culture or nationality, and to minister, when asked, to the spiritual, ethical and wider needs of the Trust.'

The Chaplaincy in the Peterborough City Hospital is based in the Faith Centre, which provides a place of welcome, peace and quiet. There are regular Christian ecumenical and Catholic services, Muslim Friday Prayers and open quiet times. Chaplains are also present on the wards as well as on call on request for special emergencies.

The work of the chaplains, whether full and part-time, is supported by volunteers, helping, for example, by providing a greeting service at the Centre, bringing patients to services from the wards or visiting on request.



How you can respond!

Become informed:

If the idea of chaplaincy is new to you, discover what may be happening nearby or being done by chaplains in your congregation or the community.

Pray:

Supporting those in chaplaincy in prayer is of vital importance. It can be a difficult job, though one with its highlights and joys.

Participate:

There are many opportunities to become involved as volunteer chaplains including examples described here such as with the hospital or prison chaplaincies or as a member of the Street Chaplains.

Further information

Cambridgeshire Workplace Chaplaincy (CWC)

This is a county-wide support contact for chaplains. It provides a regular on-line bulletin of information and reflection and a open, on-line, forum through which chaplains can share common concerns.

Contact details:

info@cambsworkplacechaplaincy.org.uk

www.cambsworkplacechaplaincy.org.uk

Peterborough Chaplaincy Forum

This meets three times a year for chaplains to support each other and to reflect on their experiences. There is usually a focal topic for discussion as well as time to exchange good news.

Contact details:

info@lightprojectpeterborough.org.uk

Across Peterborough

Across Peterborough is a communication tool managed by Light Project Peterborough. It is in place to share the good news of Christian and community work and activities, and by building bridges across different communities.

Contact details:

ap@lightprojectpeterborough.org.uk

www.acrosspeterborough.org.uk



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