

HOW TO...

HOST A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY SERVICE

Music
for Dementia



give it a go

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In spring 2024, Music for Dementia was delighted to be part of a dementia friendly service at Lichfield Cathedral led by Rev David Primrose. Singing legend Tony Christie took part as Ambassador for Music for Dementia, along with children from the choir and local primary schools, parishioners and local care homes.

David and the Lichfield team have been working to build a dementia friendly church across the diocese for many years. It was a joy to be there for Songs of Praise and to witness just some of the ways they have found to keep people affected by dementia at the heart of their community.

This short pamphlet tries to capture some hints and tips to help you get started if you want to hold a dementia friendly service in your own church. You can also visit the Lichfield diocese to find out more about their dementia friendly church programme - just google Lichfield Dementia Friendly Church.



ETHOS

Aiming to be a service designed for both those living with dementia and also for those who are caring for those living with dementia.

PLANNING

- Consider a day other than a Sunday so that it does not impact on normal church going routine for those attending.
- The time of day should suit those living with dementia – fitting in with the daily rhythms of any care homes.
- The service should last no more than 45 minutes, but with doors open ahead of time so people can get settled and time for tea and a chat afterwards in the hall.
- Promote the service widely, including to local residential care homes. The relatives of residents may wish to come also, and perhaps local schools.
- Encourage family members to attend – children are particularly welcome.

PREPARING THE BUILDING

- Any service sheet printed should use a dementia friendly font, with large print versions available. Using coloured paper (such as yellow) can increase legibility for those with visual impairments. Some pictures/illustrations help those for whom the written text can be overwhelming.
- Check that any loop system is working properly.
- If possible, arrange for the church to be spacious, warm and well lit, again with a traditional feel to it that brings an air of familiarity to it.

CREATING AN ORDER OF SERVICE

- Structure the service to last 45 mins with a simple flow through it.
- Chose hymns which are familiar to a wide range of church traditions and maybe can be recalled from memory, especially with well-known tunes. Where possible, choose versions with a lower pitch.
- It is important that those living with dementia have a voice in the service and therefore, if possible, include personal testimony in the service.

ON THE DAY

- A small team of 'welcomers', wearing large name badges, can help everyone settle in. Volunteers can also help any-one arriving late join in the service.
- The service will have a relaxed feel about it with an air of informality throughout. The congregation can be encouraged to either sit or stand for the hymns, and, should people wish, they can move around during the service.
- Good signage is important and this can be as simple as sticking up A4 notices. Where possible you should think about 'dual coding'. This is where a sign gives the same information in more than one way eg the word Toilets and a picture of a toilet. This assists people with different types of dementia, including those for whom reading has become difficult.
- Ensure that toilets are accessible and well-signed.
- Refreshments can be served after the service.

FIND OUT MORE

Google Dementia Friendly Church Lichfield to learn more about what the diocese has been doing and visit the Professionals section of the Music for Dementia website for more resources from the Songs of Praise service.

