



All Saints, Little Ca sterton



St Peter & St Paul, Great Ca sterton

Four Churches



Together

All Saints, Pickworth



St Peter's Tickencote



APRIL
2026

Calendar of Events for April 2026

Day	Time	Activity	Place
1	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
1	10.30	Community Coffee	Church Hall
2	9.00am	Parish Breakfast	Garden Centre
3	10.00am	Toddler Group	Church Hall
3	All Day	Good Friday - Church open for private prayer	Gt Casterton
5	10.30am	Easter Communion Rev Bob Mackrill	Great Casterton
8		No Celtic Prayers or Coffee	
10		No Toddler Group	
12	10.15am	Café Church	Church Hall
15	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
13	10.30am	Community Coffee	Church Hall
16	7.00pm	Home Group	Harvard
17		No Toddler Group	
18	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
18	10.30am	Community Coffee	Church Hall
21	12.00	Saturday Live - Bob's Handbell Ringers	Gt. Casterton
22	10.00	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
22	10.30	Community Coffee	Church Hall
24	10.00am	Toddler Group	Church Hall
26	10.30	Morning Praise	Great Casterton
27	2.00pm	Book Club	Mary Sproson's
29	7.30pm	Parish (Parson's) Pints All Welcome	The Crown

FOUR CHURCHES NEWS APRIL 2026

Easter is upon us and there are only a few more days of Lent left – that time of personal reflection, preparation and waiting. Soon chocolate will return to our diets, and we will celebrate once again the Good News of Easter Sunday. The clocks have already moved an hour forwards and Spring is well underway. Many of us are already enjoying the Easter holidays; a well-earned break from work or school.

When I was a teenager and attended my local church's youth group, we were invited on pilgrimage at Easter. The purpose was to bring into focus the end of Lent and the beginning of our own spiritual renewal. We walked 12 miles from Luton to St Albans to attend the Abbey service of thanksgiving and celebration. Looking back now, I sometimes wonder if part of the attraction of walking the Pilgrimage was the huge funfair on Harpenden Common, where we usually stopped for lunch and one or two of the most exciting rides. But of course, after lunch as we left Harpenden behind us and concentrated on getting to St Albans in good time – the enormity of what awaited us there began to register. Quietness descended as personal contemplation took hold – the culmination of which was an intensely moving and life-affirming service that deepened faith.

Here at Great Casterton, we play host to a Pilgrimage each year by offering refreshments and a toilet stop to a group from "Student Cross" on Palm Sunday as they make their way from Leicester to Walsingham. They walk, bearing witness to the events of Good Friday, shouldering a large and very heavy wooden cross on their shoulders. As I write this, it is still mid-March due to the newsletter copy deadline, and so we haven't had our visit from Student Cross yet, this year. But I am already looking forward to seeing them again to hear how they find peace, renewal and great joy from their journey and their time at Walsingham. They always say that ours is their favourite stop en-route, because of the home-made cakes and friendliness. I wonder if they say that to every stop-off?

Yesterday I heard that our newly installed Archbishop of Canterbury would also be undertaking a very personal and meaningful Pilgrimage over the next 6 days – walking from London to Canterbury a distance of 87 miles. We wish her God speed. And so, whether you are planning to be in church at Easter, or just planning a family get together, a visit to the coast, a pilgrimage of your own, or just a quiet contemplative time, have a Very Happy Easter from all of us here at Great Casterton and our benefice of churches.

Sue Cliffe

**The Church of England Parish of Great Casterton
and Tickencote**

Church of St Peter and St Paul, Great Casterton

Following the retirement of the Rev. Don McGarrigle our parish is now in a period of 'vacancy' (also known as an interregnum). During this time, all the life and worship of the Church continues under the oversight of our Churchwardens and the Rural Dean.

Churchwardens:

Peter Bryan: 07507 299436

Geoffrey Archer: 07803 423010

They are working closely with the Diocese to begin the process of finding our new priest.

Please direct any enquiries about the Church or services: Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals etc., directly to the Churchwardens.

Thank you.

Contact details for all enquiries regarding
All Saints Little Casterton and All Saints Pickworth
during the vacancy can be found on page 13



TITANOSAUR
13 APRIL - 31 MAY

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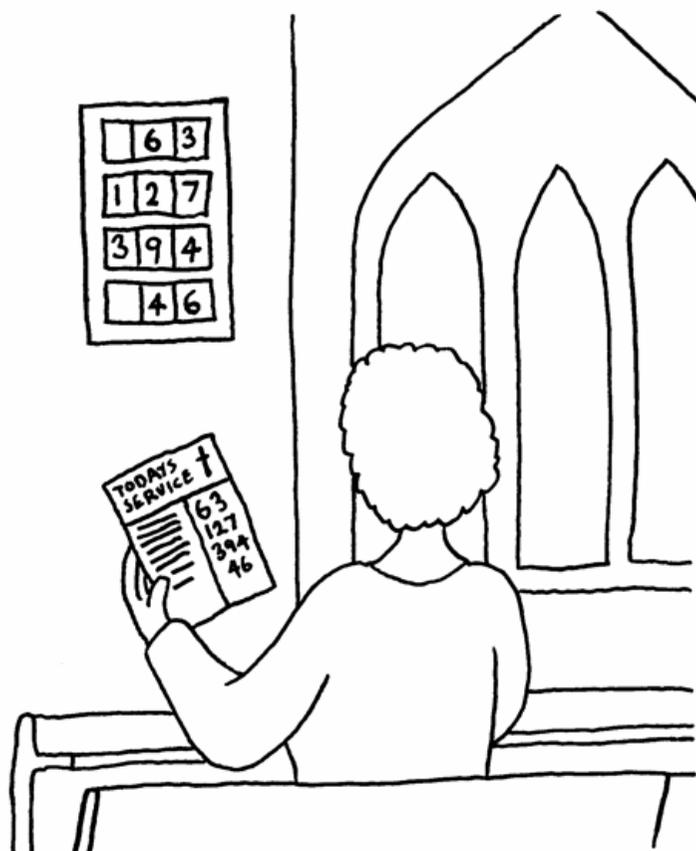
Please see website for booking details.

Natural History Museum
PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL
www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk

TITANOSAUR
AT PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL
APRIL 13TH - MAY 31ST 2024

PETERBOROUGH
100
YEARS

The poster features a large, detailed illustration of a dinosaur skull and neck, rendered in shades of red and purple. The background is dark with colorful geometric patterns on the sides. Logos for the Natural History Museum, Peterborough Cathedral, and Peterborough 100 Years are included.



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD
WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH

HAPPY EASTER



One Easter Sunday morning, as we reached 'The Peace' in our service, I said: "Today, instead of saying 'peace be with you' we will try something different. Turn to someone and say, 'The Lord is risen' and they will reply, 'He is risen indeed!'" Everyone nodded and smiled. So, I approached a tall man in the front row. "George, the Lord is risen!" I said with suitably uncontained enthusiasm. He replied, in a rather gruff and unimpressed voice, "I know."

Perhaps on Easter Day, I should have stuck with the usual response: "Peace be with you." Why? Because that is the way Jesus greeted his disciples after his resurrection. "Peace be with you."

A friend of mine was once leading Collective Worship in his local primary school and asked the children what Jesus said to his disciples on that first Easter morning. A forest of hands went up. "Yes," said my friend, pointing at an excited looking girl. "Happy Easter!" the girl replied. Well, not quite. "Peace be with you" was the answer he was looking for.

Before the world can experience a Happy Easter, there has to be a desire for that deep down, God-given peace. We watch the news on TV and there seems to be nothing we can do. Not true. We can start where we are – at work, at home or in the community.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God."

Happy Easter!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Ormston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

The Reverend Richard Ormston
Archdeacon of Northampton

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Tel: 01733 887000 Email: communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk
www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Please support the social team as they endeavour to provide a comprehensive range of social activities for your enjoyment - and to raise money. Your support in coming along is appreciate. Any help to organise or run the events will be warmly welcomed.

PROVISIONAL CALENDAR OF SOCIAL EVENTS FOR 2026

March 21st Saturday Lunchtime music - Mr McGoo band

March 29th Palm Sunday Pilgrims visiting - p.m.

April 25th - Barn Dance - £15pp with Sausage Supper and bar available.

Thursday April 2nd - Passover Supper £10pp

September 27th - Harvest Lunch - 12.00-2.30? - £10pp - BYO alcohol

November 14th - Quingo Quiz - light refreshments - Bar - £10pp

December 12th - Christmas Draw - coffee morning and prize giving

MEN'S COOK NIGHT - MARCH 7th 2026

The menfolk really did us proud on Saturday evening with a fantastic choice of main courses. We were invited to try Pasta Bolognese, Shepherd's Pie, Thai Green Curry, Lamb Tagine and Venison, Chicken and Sausage Casserole which were served with wholemeal rice or couscous.

The ladies were able to come up with a great selection of desserts, there being two kinds of Crumble, Lemon Meringue Pie, sugar free Jelly with Cherries and ice cream, and Pear Frangipane. An amazing meal for only £10pp.

A good selection of wine and beer was available with plenty of choices for soft drinks and an in-house raffle also provided an exciting end to the evening.

This fund raising event was an excellent opportunity for a social evening with friends and neighbours and raised a total of £428

EVENSONG SUNDAY MARCH 8th 2026.

All Saints Church Choir, Stamford offered to sing Evensong for us at Gt Casterton Church whilst their church was being decorated and refitted with new lights and heating system. The choir was led by Benedict Todd, their Director of Music, who actually enjoyed playing our church organ.

Singing Ebdon Responses, Walmsley Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, and an anthem by Ousley, 'From the Rising of the Sun,' completed the music with a Spring Theme.

We are most grateful to the clergy and choir of All Saints for a lovely service enjoyed by a congregation of over 40 from our parishes as well as All Saints congregation, for our church kitchen project.

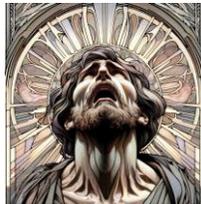
THE LAST WORD

All the gospels record that Jesus “cried out in a loud voice and gave up the ghost”. There are three things here to note. First that it was a loud cry. To have been suspended by his hands for some time a “loud cry” must have taken terrific effort, so the loudness must be important to be reported. It is only John that tells us what that cry was, he says it was tetelestai. The third thing is that the human body died. There is no question that death did occur. My affection for words now prompted me to look closely at that word tetelestai.

It is not in the dictionary. The nearest there is teleo which means “achieved, accomplished or finally finished”. The fact that the first syllable is reduplicated puts the word into the pluperfect tense, a tense often used in official announcements or orations. So lexicons out, concordance consulted and commentaries examined. Tetelestai is the pluperfect of teleo. The only rational conclusion is that this cry was not a sigh but a shout of victory. Alford puts it “The redemption of man is accomplished”. The Latin equivalent is “plus quam perfectum” or “man made perfect”. Here we must go back to the old sacrificial times when “without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin”. Blood had to be on the doorposts for the Passover or death occurred. Jesus is named as “The Lamb of God”. So his voluntary sacrifice gave him the right to forgive those who trust him. “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”.

The use of that pluperfect is unusual. It was as an official announcement. That cry of victory meant that all the old animal sacrifices were obsolete as Jesus had done it all himself for us. It is no wonder that the disciples, once persuaded by a fish breakfast and Pentecost, were confident to go preaching all over the known world.

Bob





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Week 1: Creation care

Week 2: Consumerism / Shopping challenge levels

Week 3: Money / Investments

Week 4: Food Waste / Meat & Dairy creation care

Week 5: Transport / Driving

Week 6: Energy / Electricity / Gas

For further information click on the link below. (It can be done at times other than Lent!)

<https://climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast-for-lent/>

HAIRY-FOOTED FLOWER BEE



Have you heard of the Hairy-footed Flower Bee? I hadn't until I received this from Caring for God's Acre. We have plenty of holes in the large north wall to the side of the path to the Hall and an increasing number of Primroses in the south churchyard so we may have some, keep your eyes peeled!!!

March can be a cold month and not one we associate with insects, the majority of which will emerge a little later in the year. Bumblebees are amongst the first to appear as their hairy bodies give them some insulation against the changeable weather of March; but have a look for another bee, which looks at first glance like a small bumblebee, but which is actually the delightfully named Hairy-footed Flower Bee. The males emerge first and can be found from late February onwards. The male is a rusty brown with a yellow face and long hairs on the middle pair of its six legs. It is these long hairs that give the bee the name of 'hairy footed'. About two weeks later the females emerge, looking completely different. Females are mainly black with orange hairs on their back pair of legs which act like little brushes, collecting pollen as they visit flowers. Hairy-footed flower bees have a long tongue which they use to probe into flask-shaped spring flowers such as primrose and lungwort (or pulmonaria). It is worth checking primroses and lungworts for this little bee, they have a faster, more zippy flight than a bumblebee and also a shrill buzz.

As spring progresses, have a look at the walls of your church or churchyard if they are lime mortared or cobb. The female will nest within the mortar of an old wall, making a small hole in which to lay eggs. These are 'solitary' bees, so they do not nest in a colony like honey bees and bumblebees.

Hairy-footed flower bees are a good example of the need to provide a range of flowers for pollinators, including both spring and autumn blooms. This bee is active until June and relies on early pollen to give them energy for their brief breeding season. Most churchyards contain primroses and perhaps you can include lungwort and comfrey in flower beds or planters as well. Please let us know if you see a hairy-footed flower bee, for those who love a phone or computer app, take a look at iNaturalist (uk.inaturalist.org) to confirm your identification and make a record of your spot. PB

Male Hairy Footed Flower Bee – spot the long hairs!



Quote of the Month

Answer from last month - Queen Elizabeth 1st said " I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king."

This month's quote: Who said this? "In War: Resolution. In Defeat: Defiance. In Victory: Magnanimity. In Peace: Goodwill.

April Around the World

Starting on April 1st, we have April Fools' Day. Towards the end of the month we have St George's day on 23rd. The middle of the month April 12th sees a full moon - known as the Full Pink Moon, that is the furthest (and thus smallest) full moon of the year. Passover, and Easter, both generally fall within April. The birthstone associated with the month is Diamond, and the flower most associated with April is the daisy. April sees the conclusion of Ramadan, the Thai New Year celebration of Songkran, King's Day in the Netherlands, and World Art Day. A sobering thought - April 25th reminds us that not all countries are safe from disease - World Malaria Day.

Word Challenge

How many words can you make of 3 letters or more from the letters COUNTRIFIED?

Have You Ever Visited?

Blue John Cavern in the Peak District? At Mam Tor, Castleton in the Hope Valley, this set of limestone caves from which the highly prized semi-precious purple mineral was extracted from Roman times, is open daily with guided tours. Tickets are available only at the site. Adults £19.00 pp, children £13.00

The Blue John Cavern experience is a walk through informative guided tour, sharing with you the wonders of this natural and unique stone within the cave system, which lasts approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour, dependent on tour group size. The first tour leaves at approximately 10:00 am and the last tour at 3:00pm. There are 245 steps within the cavern, not all in one go but the most in one flight is 96 so it is therefore not accessible to wheelchairs, prams or buggies. Anyone with respiratory problems or heart conditions should also be very mindful of this! Also, wear warm clothes. After your tour (or indeed before it) you will find a welcoming cafe for drinks and snacks, and also a wonderful gift shop from which to buy your souvenir Blue John.

COFFEE MORNINGS DURING EASTER

Coffee Mornings will take an Easter break as follows:

No Coffee Morning on April 1st or April 8th.

With best wishes,
Sue and the Coffee Morning Team

CELTIC PRAYERS

We will not be holding Celtic Prayers on Wednesday 8th April.

With best wishes,
Sue and the Celtic Prayers Team

THE EVERGREEN CARE TRUST



Because growing older should never mean growing alone

People experience loneliness for many reasons. They may have moved to a new home, lost a loved one, feel isolated or suffer from deteriorating health. At Stamford-based charity Evergreen Care Trust, we aim to beat loneliness through a wide range of practical, volunteer-led services.

One such initiative is our Befriending Service. This involves a volunteer befriender visiting an older person in their home, perhaps for a cup of tea and a chat. Or they might accompany them to an activity such as a trip to a café or a garden centre. As little as half an hour a week can make such a difference to an older person struggling with loneliness.

Evergreen befrienders come from a variety of backgrounds but, above all, they are warm, caring and compassionate. As well as offering our volunteers training and support, we also take great care when matching them with those seeking companionship in order to ensure that successful and lasting friendships are made.

To learn more about how you can become a befriender, please email Helen at befriending@evergreencare.org.uk or call her on 01780 765900 for an informal chat.

To explore our wider range of free, volunteer-led services, please visit www.evergreencare.org.uk or just call the above number.

Let's end loneliness together.

Registered Charity No. 1158271

PRAYER BOARD IN CHURCH

Did you know that every week the names that have been placed on our prayer board in church are prayed out loud on Wednesday mornings? Please date each prayer that is placed on the board, to help the team keep up with how recently they were placed there.

Thank you

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Priest in Charge	Vacant	
Great Casterton Hall Bookings	Steve Cunningham	07810 404748
Benefice Safeguarding Officer	Carol Maynard	01780 755687.
Newsletter Distribution	Mary Sproson	01780 762933
Churchwardens:		
Great Casterton	Geoffrey Archer	07803 423010
	Peter Bryan	07507 299436
Little Casterton	Tony Dolby	01780 766897
Pickworth	Charles Gilman	01780 411017
	Goldie Bardwell	01780 410272

FOR HIRE

Great Casterton Church Hall is available for hire for children's parties and/or other events. For more details contact Steve Cunningham
Email: stephenmichaelcunningham@gmail.com
Phone: 07810 404748

Church Projects

Moving on from our heating project we are now fund-raising to renew the kitchen in the Church Hall, which is in dire need of being updated to meet current standards. You can help by coming along to and supporting our social events, where all monies raised will go towards church projects, or you can make a one off or regular donation by using our QR code. We are very grateful for any support you can give us.



THOMAS, SEEING IS BELIEVING ?

The sincere melancholic. Thomas is recorded in the first three gospels as being chosen by Jesus to be one of the disciples. It is however John's one that gives us four incidents about Thomas illustrating his character and so what we might learn from his behaviour. Maybe that was because John, the academic, had sympathy for Thomas, the despondent pessimist. The first record is just before the crucifixion when Jesus and the group had left Jerusalem and went and hid in the countryside when they realised that the then church leaders were so jealous that they determined to do away with Jesus. The group was safe for the moment, but then Jesus tells them that he is going back. Thomas resignedly says "Let us also go that we may die with him". Is this bravery or suicidal? This is just after Lazarus had died and dramatically come alive out of a sealed tomb. So he must have been feeling confused. The fact that Lazarus is brought to life again and they all say they had seen him does not seem to cheer Thomas as it did the others.

Muddled Not long after this the group did set out to go back to Jerusalem for the Passover feast where rumours that Jesus was on his way caused quite a crowd of people to gather to welcome him. The crowd were excited about Lazarus and really thought Jesus must be the promised one. They sang praises. But the church leaders were resentful saying "This is getting us nowhere, look how the whole world has gone after him". That too must have made Thomas even more confused. Were the church leaders wrong? Then comes the last supper and Jesus talks about going away to prepare a place for them. Dear Thomas blurts out "Lord, we do not know where you are going so how can we know the way?" This prompts Jesus to give a straight answer when he says "I am the way the truth and the life". The word he uses for "way" (odos) has two meanings which may not be obvious in English. They are "the entrance" and "the journey". This must have muddled poor Thomas even more after the celebrations of the crowds, the threats of the church leaders and the secret venue for their meal. Entrance yes, but a journey can go on for a long time perhaps, he thinks.

Proof needed Now to add to Thomas' confusion Jesus has just said he is the journey and gets killed most unpleasantly. We do not know if Thomas witnessed the death, but he had no doubts at all that it was final. His melancholia returns and, although he had seen Lazarus come back to life after four days, he feels he cannot share the rest of the group's excitement when they say they have "seen the Lord". He wants visual proofs of scars. "Unless I have touched him and seen his hands, I cannot believe". John, who records this in his gospel, is also keen on proofs as he says in his epistle "things we have heard and seen with our eyes and touched we declare unto you". John has gone from belief to knowing. He had no doubts. A week later Jesus appears again, exactly knows Thomas' doubts and in an act of sympathy and love tells Thomas to put his finger on the nail holes in his hands and shows him his side where the spear went. I can imagine the grin on Jesus' face as he said that. Jesus knew. Thomas does not put out his finger but obeys Jesus' command "stop doubting and believe". His reaction was immediate "My Lord and my God". Not "you are God", it was "my God". Jesus then

comes out with that wonderful promise “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”.

Proof got At Jesus’ first meeting with the group they thought they had seen a ghost. Jesus actually says “touch me and see, a ghost does not have flesh and bones”. He asks for something to eat and has some broiled fish. Ghosts don’t eat food. A week or so later, just to confirm that he was not an apparition, Jesus is recorded as showing himself to Thomas and the rest of the group who had got depressed again. They had decided to go fishing and saw someone on the shore cooking who asked whether they had caught anything and got that silly advice to try the other side of the boat where there probably was not the equipment for lifting a net. “We always put the net out on this side”. You can imagine the exclamations when they had counted one hundred and fifty three fish. They all breakfasted on fish and bread. Then the ascension and “a cloud took him out of their sight”.

Contemporary records tell us that the group of disciples, faced with the impending persecution of Christians and destruction of most of Jerusalem, divided up the known world between them. Thomas was allocated the East to India. The records tell us that he was captured and sold as a slave to a merchant going to India. That got him there for free where he started telling people about Jesus and then founded the Syrian Christian community for which there is still some evidence.

Questions. Why is all this recorded for us in the Bible? What can we learn from it? Sometimes it cannot be wrong to admit to doubts or lacks of understanding. Jesus himself prayed “Why have you forsaken me?”. Any man born blind who is told about the difference between red and blue cannot understand. He has to accept and trust. Thomas needed tactile evidence. Even then he was not ashamed to ask “show me the way”. Is that a fair prayer for us? What evidence should we need to convince other people? Thomas needed several thumps before he said “My God”.

References: Greek lexicon, English NIV. Commentaries. Google Josephus .

Bob



PILGRIM CROSS 2026

Palm Sunday afternoon will see us welcome the Midlands Leg of the Student Cross Pilgrimage once again. This will be on Sunday 29th March from 3.00 pm in the hall. The students - some are international visitors - are walking from Leicester to Walsingham, and enjoy a stop for tea, cakes, toilets and reflection in our hall and church which is en route from Oakham to Stamford. In other years, we have welcomed them in deep snow, in hot sunshine and in heavy rain !

If you are free for an hour or two, on Palm Sunday afternoon, and would like to offer some help, then please contact one of the Great Casterton social team members. We are also in need of home-baked cakes. Let us know. Thanks.

AN UPDATE FROM MONTGOMERY HEIGHTS

Hello everyone,

We have exciting news to share with you!

Taffy has been to the Italian Embassy today to sort out his medical visa and all being well he will fly to Italy on Monday 30th March in the company of an Italian cardiologist who will be returning there after a trip here. His return flight is booked for Saturday 16th May, so it appears he will be there for 6 weeks.

We understand that he will be staying in a family set up while there. He is nervous but increasingly excited.

Please pray that all will go well...preparation for the trip, the flights, the medical tests and of course the procedure itself....that this will be a life-changing experience for our son in every possible way!

We will update you further as and when we can.

Lesley

Lesley J. Marshall
Director Montgomery Heights Christian Care Centre
Box 75, Concession
Zimbabwe
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- To promote healthy ageing and attitudes towards older people, seeking relevant ways to honour old age and if needed, to serve through advocacy, friendship and practical support.