



## Transforming Worship conference

### **Pastoral focus: Leading Worship with Elderly People (including people in Residential Care)**

*Cate Baker (Chaplain, Resthaven), Cil Hein (Chaplain, Resthaven), and Paul Turley (Minister, Clayton-Wesley).*

#### *Cate:*

She has an 'intergenerational' congregation, with ages from about 60 to 106.

She seeks to help residents to find meaning in life. She believes that worship can help create meaning.

She also uses craft activities to help create meaning.

When residents have deficits in their senses, she tries to offer multi-sensory activities / situations. When discussing the Last Supper, she placed 13 goblets on a table, with 13 pieces of bread. This enabled residents to see and/or touch and/or hear ...

#### *Cate recommended:*

- that when a lay preacher will be leading worship at a site (in common practice, only once every few months), the preacher could consider letting the staff know in advance what the theme will be; then the staff may perhaps be able to make some advance preparation for the occasion.

- that the 'sermon' needs to try to relate to the wider church, to the world and to the nursing home (etc.) itself.

#### *Paul:*

Paul suggested that, to the worship leader, there is no such thing as old people - just people. He said that many elderly people take on themselves society's stereotype, that they are 'in the way', that they are lesser people.

He suggested that 'eat, drink and be merry ...' should apply to all ages - that elderly people need to be encouraged and inspired to live the moment.

'... for tomorrow we die.' - do talk about death, don't shy from that conversation.

#### *Cil*

The '3-hymn sandwich' can sometimes be a good thing: hymns that people know can be life-giving. [Indeed, music is often the one element remaining when cognitive systems fail.]

Cil also recommended the inclusion sometimes of 'pockets of silence'.