



Life Events

Our services for significant occasions (weddings, funerals and baptisms) are cared for under the new role of our Life Events Co-ordinator. Through this role we continue to explore and grow our ministries in this area in the lead up to these occasions, during the services offered, and in follow-up with families afterwards.

That means that this part of the Action Plan is sparsely populated – not because we are not already doing and planning for more, but recognises the work and thought being put into this currently by our Coordinator (Lizzie) and the ministry team.

What we could do next:

How?:

Weddings

Providing support and encouragement to our couples in shaping services that are personal to them both weddings and blessings. Continuing the work of our Marriage Reflections course and growing the team with new couples for the future. Robust administration of the legal requirements for these services, and sincere celebration with couples at their weddings. Through banns and special occasions giving couples multiple opportunities to engage with the worship of the community. Sending out anniversary cards to our wedding couples (made by the MU) with flyers and details of upcoming services.

Baptisms

Engaging with families through baptism preparation sessions (online). Exploration of how this process might include additional faces from the Church community (e.g. buddy systems). Include in our meetings good advertising for our AllAge services and additional groups e.g. Dads and Kids. Continuing creative and new ways to hold services in and outdoors with involvement of all children and families present. Annual pattern of services to include Muddy Praise, Refresh!, indoor and outdoor options.

Funerals

Anniversary card follow-up to be reintroduced (2025) with advertising for upcoming services included.

Care and support for families helped and supported by Lizzie in her role as Life Events Co-ordinator and as a Licensed Lay Minister for funerals. Her role means quick and efficient communication with families in need and our local funeral directors.

To explore new and further training opportunities (e.g. Acorn courses) for pastoral visitors and bereavement team members (Autumn 2024).

Services are made as personal as possible, including using our audio/visual equipment and offering space for refreshments following services when appropriate.

Follow up from these services to include invitations to our annual service of bereavement for 3 years. Cards sent to families as follow-up to services in the weeks following (currently in process).

Pastoral Care

Further training to be explored for the wider benefice and community to care for those in need in other ways.

Next steps:

- Training new members of our Marriage Reflections team including at the next date to be booked (Autumn 2024)
- Outdoor Eco-themed baptisms continued Summer 2024 including baptisms at Oldbury in June
- Planning for the annual bereavement service October/November

Dreams and visions:

For a Church that is open for the whole community and recognises its significance in the meaningful moments of people's lives. A Church that builds upon and grows relationships through these services that lasts into the future and makes people aware and helps them engage with the regular worshipping life of the community.