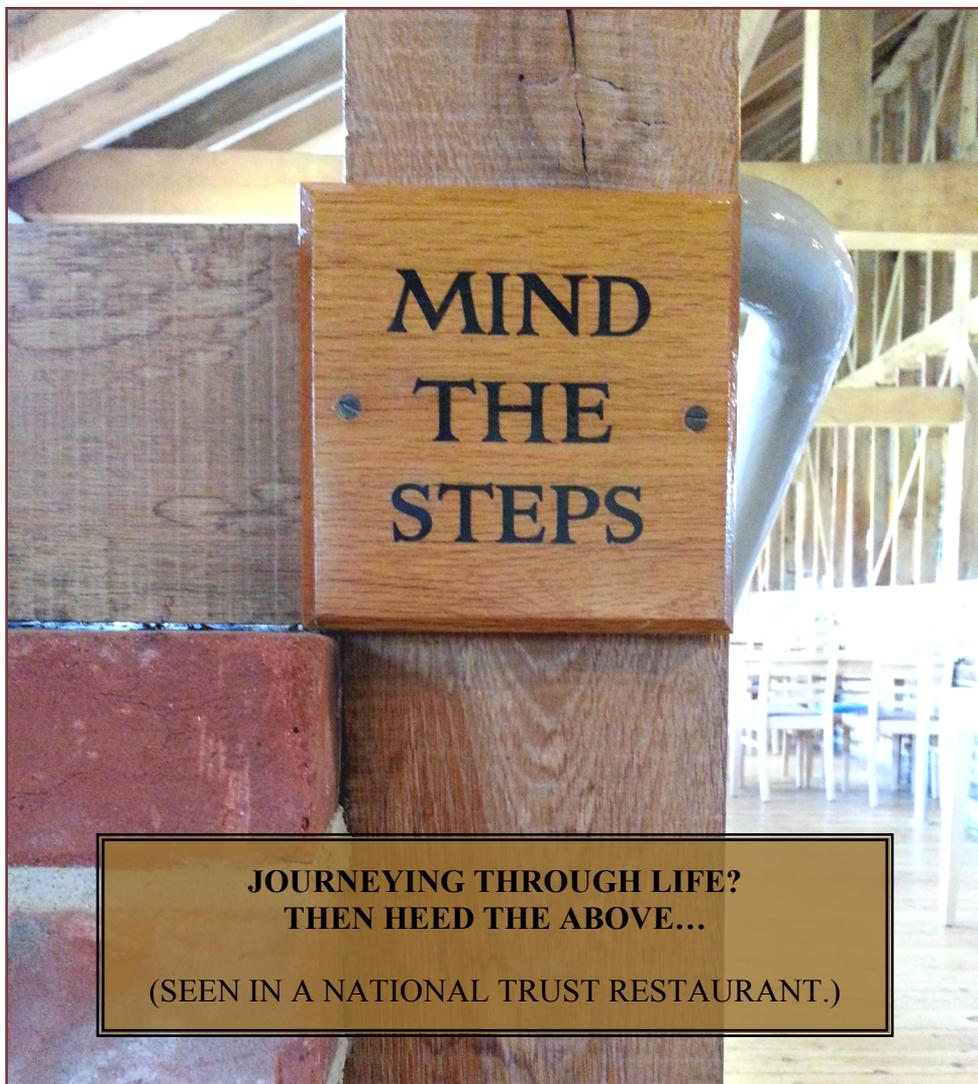


Being Alongside

the quarterly magazine of *Being Alongside*
a charity supporting those living with mental ill-health



**JOURNEYING THROUGH LIFE?
THEN HEED THE ABOVE...**

(SEEN IN A NATIONAL TRUST RESTAURANT.)

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Events rather over took us so *Being Alongside's* Silver Anniversary came and went before anyone really noticed.

Hopefully we can be prepared for our 'Pearl' (30th) Anniversary in 2016. Perhaps you have a significant memory of an event, meeting or person associated with *Being Alongside* / apcmh. Before it fades, make a note so that when the time gets nearer and the call goes out, you will be able to answer! If there's a particular way you think we should celebrate, do get in touch.

Front Page

with
Steve Press

Learning from the Day

It happened again today; it's happened before and I have every deep sense it will happen again - that strange dawning privilege of how apparently separately incidents can catalyse into significance.

Firstly at Mass this morning I happened upon a small booklet from the Bruderhof Community. (www.bruderkhof.com). In it was a diagram central to their thinking, that of a low circular wall, much like an animal pen, except there is a gap, a gateway, a get out, a let in. The circular wall provides the boundary, the security, the confidence building demarcation between 'us' and 'them', the life line drawn between known and unknown, the boundary that enfolds the comfort zone... And yet, the gap indicates newcomers are welcome and 'inmates' can depart briefly for respite or even permanently.

This seems to me to a beautiful model for a healthy being alongside. Each difference is tolerated and hopefully encouraged in so far as it is constructive, whilst there is simultaneously a call to live in response to others: this balancing act of Self and Community, the One and the Many. .

Later in the day I was watching families enjoy football or frisbee on the beach. Suddenly, a dad and his young son sped by on bikes. Dad called out 'I bet we can get there faster than Mum and your sister!' Common enough, but I hope not 'natural' enough. An example of a competitive spirit all too prevalent today and very probably across times and cultures. But such an attitude can only make losers of most of us, as paralled in Gandhi's epithet how the notion of 'an eye for an eye' will render us all blind. How wonderful it would have been had 'dad' said something like 'I bet we enjoy the ride more than Mum and your sister'. This would have flagged up that we are all different in the way we perceive things, that we need to be honest with ourselves and with each other in our conversations if we are to enjoy the best in our relationships. The son might have begun to learn the lesson that competition can only stratify, whereas assessing and sharing experience helps strengthen each individual.

A little later on something similar occurred. A family were playing football and 'mum' after a successive run of goals by the 'girls' against the 'boys', shrieked that 'We kicked a***!' So, not so much a celebration of skill, or rejoicing at luck, but an abusive dismissal and disregard for the players of the other team. What sort of disrespectful attitude will build up in a growing child's mind when exposed to this sort of comment? But truth to tell, it's common.

So what did I learn from the day? Nothing particularly new I guess, just a reminding that the need to feel secure in many people is often satisfied by criticism of others, that seeing others as separate makes that criticism easier to invoke, and that mainstream culture does little to provide alternative models of relating. And of course in times of recession, rather than take pains to ensure the broadest backs take the load, we find that it is easier to apply policies which hit the vulnerable disproportionately harder.

This makes it all the more important that those living with mental health issues and those wanting to support and care for those who suffer. do try to live out the calling of *Being Alongside*. Yes it is true we are all different - and let us not try to diminish such idiosyncrasies - it also true we are all interdependent. We need each other for fulfilment and even survival. To categorise in order to stratify, to asses in order to grade, is the beginning of a differentiation that is destructive and the slippery slope to Last Man Standing.

Steve Press

Thank You for Donating!

These are difficult days especially for those having to manage on benefits that are, in real terms, being cut.

So it with some reluctance that we, on p 17, invite Members and Subscribers to make a contribution to the work of *B.A.* Your precious donations, apart from subsidising this newsletter, supports Branches, Affiliated Groups and others eg: Befriending work at Battersea and Acorn's in new training initiative for dementia sufferers and their carers.

With your help, that's what *Being Alongside* can mean.

Thank You!

Music to Your Ears?

As populations of developed nations age, so the number of cases of dementia increases. As a way of helping care for and support people with dementia, music has been shown to often have a dramatic effect.

Whether it's 60s soul, operatic arias or songs from the shows, music can soothe, stimulate and bring to mind long-forgotten memories. Nick Smurthwaite investigates...

Dementia is rapidly becoming the health and social care challenge of the 21st century. Numbers affected are set to soar because of an expanding older population.

The total number of people with dementia in the UK is predicted to be in excess of 1m by 2021. So, while there are no long-term cures, ways of alleviating symptoms are becoming more available and accessible.

The power of music, especially singing, to unlock memories and kickstart the grey matter is an increasingly key feature of dementia care. It seems to reach parts of the damaged brain in ways other forms of communication cannot.

'We tend to remain contactable as musical beings on some level right up to the very end of life,' says Professor Paul Robertson, a concert violinist and academic who has made a study of music in dementia care. 'We know that the auditory system of the brain is the first to fully function at 16 weeks, which means that you are musically receptive long before anything else. So it's a case of first in, last out when it comes to a dementia-type breakdown of memory.'

Many music students throughout the UK, as well as more experienced musicians, now regard care home visits as part of their learning experience. As well as being enormously beneficial to those with various forms of dementia and their carers, they can also be helpful and rewarding for the musicians themselves.

Organisations like *Singing for the Brain*, *Music for Life*, *Lost Chord*, *Golden Oldies* and *Live Music Now* have made it possible for every care home in the country to have access to live musicians, both professional and amateur, most of them trained to deal with the special needs of an elderly, memory-impaired audience.

Lost Chord

'We aim to reach every person in the room,' says Helena Muller, founder-director of the Yorkshire-based *Lost Chord*. 'What we don't want is musicians going into a room and standing behind a music stand. They have to be

proactive and stimulating in order to keep the attention of this audience. We have one flautist who dances round the room like the Pied Piper.'

Lost Chord regularly visits 75 homes in South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, London, Cardiff, Coventry, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, providing more than 100 live music sessions a month. Helena says it's essential to make regular visits to the same homes, so the musicians can build a relationship with the residents, and get to know their names.

'It's usually a singer and an accompanist,' says Helena. 'I encourage them to use a wide cross-section of music so there is something for everyone. It is important that they are flexible and adapt their repertoire to the needs of the residents and their carers.'

Singing for the Brain

Singing for the Brain, which is run by the Alzheimer's Society in 30 different locations nationwide, aims to boost confidence, self esteem and quality of life by involving people with dementia and their carers in interactive sing-song sessions.

It started when founder Chreanne Montgomery-Smith, while working in a nursing home, noticed how many residents responded positively to music. 'One of the activities I did with them was a quiz which involved playing familiar tunes. The first week I did it nobody sang, the second week a few people joined in. By the third week everybody was singing along. One lady who didn't know her own name knew every song in the quiz and sang them all. 'It made me realise that people with dementia had a special ability to remember songs. Even if people with dementia can't talk, they may be able to sing, whistle, clap or tap their feet. It helps them, and their carers, to feel life is worthwhile.'

Amazing results

Paul Robertson recalls playing for a former church organist with advanced dementia. 'She was very far gone, no language, no recognition. Someone started singing a hymn and this woman sat down at the piano, found the right key and accompanied the singer in perfect order.'

Cellist Claire Garabedian, who is studying the effects of live and recorded music on people with dementia at the University of Stirling, has also seen for herself the transformation of people who may appear to be in a vegetative state. 'Even when someone can no longer talk,' she says, 'music becomes an avenue for communication and engagement. It seems to access parts of the brain that remain unaffected by the ravages of dementia.'

Claire believes more could be done to harness music therapies for end-of-life palliative care. 'This is a growing population and there is a real need now for non-pharmaceutical solutions.'

Pasted from:

<http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/dementia-and-music/>

Onwards and Upwards...

The following is an excerpt from a recently received letter; I publish it as 'name and address supplied' because I was not able to secure permission to include before having to go to print.

I have been receiving your magazine for some time. I used to go to the group at Rossmore Road and also the one at St Marylebone, both of which I found helpful. I was suffering from depression. I no longer have depression; I am one of the fortunate ones. .

I no longer live in London and recently received a copy of your magazine via the Post Office's re-direction service. I find it so interesting I wonder if you could begin to send it to my new address?

Throughout my life, in times of crisis, I have always found that someone 'turned up' - seemingly 'out of the blue' - to help me on. It seems that is how Christ worked for me. I have always loved his humanity and firmly believe in the 'divine in the human', and that Christ works through human beings. Thus Befrienders allow the 'divinity' in them to come through to the people they befriend. How healing this can be!

Name and Address Supplied

It is always good to hear real stories of real people, especially if there is a silver lining or happy ending. If you have a tale to tell, do please get in touch - cue that tarnished phrase: 'we are all in this together'...

The acquisition of knowledge never changes anyone;

but the letting go of attitudes does, it threatens everything untrue.

Simon Parke from The Beautiful Life

Being Alongside

... is the name of our organisation and newsletter, and sometimes we get a deep, moving and true story of what that can mean for sufferer and carer. This offering is from Pam Freeman, long time friend, supporter and activist in the cause. From its realism it will bring a solid encouragement and maybe comfort to those who find themselves in the never ending struggle with the exhausting and often seeming hopelessness of mental illness and handicap. As she says towards the end, telling others can help, so please feel free to share your story too.

I have been very impressed with the work Maggie Curtis and Acorn did with the setting up of this project *Staying in Touch*, (see p 15 & 16) which was partly funded by B.A. I think it is a very important course that many people would benefit from as Dementia is an illness that can strike suddenly and progress before family and friends are fully aware and are able to understand the implications.

I have been through the process with a close friend whose brother has been her main carer, and a family relative whose husband has cared for her often in very difficult circumstances. Now sadly, the carers are no longer able to cope and both have been advised that a Care Home is the only option. This has resulted in a lot of anguish and guilt and soul searching on the carers' part, and distress and trauma for the sufferers. They really want to be at home surrounded by familiar things, familiar places, and above all, their carer.

Sufferers are sadly not aware of the strain it has put on their loved ones. My friend's brother has just put his life on hold, having not had a holiday for several years; he has been advised that he could have a breakdown if he continues as he has been. My relative's husband nearly died after an operation that went wrong two years ago and, he too, is on the edge. But the guilt remains, so strong and so traumatic for both.

I have been in the middle of both the sufferer and the carer in both situations and I have tried to be understanding and sympathetic and even firm on occasions. It has been far from easy and I have often thought long and hard as to how I can best help. I visit my friend regularly in the home she is in and find her outlook changes on a daily basis. Her brother and I hope she will settle down in a routine. As a practising Catholic she is able to go to Mass each day which is of some comfort. We hope that going home will soon become a forgotten aspiration.

My relative's husband is in the process of finding a suitable Care Home - there are many to choose from in the area - but identifying the right one is proving difficult. He finds leaving his wife in the hospital ward almost breaks his heart. Barry, (my husband), and I find it hard to think that we won't be able to go out as a family unit as we have previously done over the years; there are times - we know - when she wants to join us in a trip out, but that would be impracticable.

We hope and pray that the situation will be resolved sooner rather than later, but inevitably much careful thought needs to go into the finding of the right place for her.

Both situations have crept up on us in the last few months and we realise how hard it is for all concerned. If any readers have had similar experiences, please get in touch. Sometimes a thought or word from others can make all the difference.

Pam Freeman

I have not failed, just found 10,000 ways that haven't worked yet.

Thomas Edison

Fancy Dropping In?

This is a brief summary of a leaflet doing the rounds in Westminster. If you know and can recommend other facilities where people are *Being Alongside*, do let the Editor know.

Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP

Bus: 134; Tube: Tottenham Court Road

020 7240 0544 / church@bloomsbury.org.uk

www.bloomsbury.org.uk

Weekday drop-in for tea, coffee and biscuits Mon-Frid 10am-4pm.

Sunday lunch Sunday lunch from 1pm - 2.30pm at the Friendship Centre. Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis from 10.15am on Sunday.

Methodist Central Hall Westminster

Buses: 11, 24, 148, 211

Tube: St James's Park, Westminster

In conjunction with the Mental Health Chaplain of the Westminster Diocese, for the last year the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster has been offering a "Drop In" on the 2nd and 4th Fridays in the month 2.30pm-4pm.

In consultation with professionals, users and volunteers it was decided to provide a safe space for people who were mentally unwell to meet. It is an informal drop in, with lots of tea, coffee and biscuits, and we just let the conversation flow. We are happy to provide the service even if only one person comes and we do not really want a large number as this would change the dynamics. We are blessed with the Chaplain's commitment to come, volunteers from the church and a comfy room to meet in.

For further information please contact Sister Denise on
02076 543871 / denise.creed@mchw.org.uk;

Saint Marylebone Church, Marylebone

17 Marylebone Rd, NW1 5LT

Buses: 18, 27, 30, 205, 453

Tube: Baker St, Regents Park

020 7935 5066 / healing@stmarylebone.org

Mental Health Support Group Meeting with Coffee

on the 1st and 3rd Fridays in the month, 11 - 12.30.

Emmanuel Church

389E Harrow Road, London, W9 3NA(opposite Iceland)

Buses: 18, 28, 288

Tube: Westbourne Park

020 8960 4195

Coffee Most Wednesdays 10.30 - 12.30

(If you know and can recommend other facilities where people are *Being Alongside*, do let the Editor know and we can include in a later issue.)

Journeying Together

Are you curious about the meaning of life? Are you looking for something a bit different?

'No Change, No Butterflies'



Tuesday 24th Sept, 7:30-8:45pm, **St Peter & John***

Wednesday 25th Sept, 1:00-2:15pm, High Cross

SJG: Journeying Together offers a safe place with facilitated conversation around a theme. It's an open group and you're warmly invited to come and join in, to talk about the things that give meaning and purpose to our life, and to be supportive and affirming of others in the group. It's a place to be heard, be real, be accepted. The group is fully inclusive for all people whatever their beliefs although it is run by Christians from different denominations.

Why not give it a try?

Evenings

7:30-8:45pm

St Peter & John*

Caesar's Camp Road, Camberley

GU15 4ED

24th Sep

22nd Oct

26th Nov

No Change, No Butterflies

Title to be decided

Title to be decided

Afternoons

1:00-2:15pm

High Cross

Knoll Road, Camberley

GU15 3SY

25th Sep

23rd Oct

27th Nov

If you have any questions, please contact Jennine on 07505 477457 or email jennine@spiritualjourneying.org.uk

Supported by:

Surrey and Borders Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust



*Please note we have moved our evening sessions to a new venue on the Old Dean.

www.spiritualjourneying.org.uk

Just Sayin'...

In our digital age, there is so much communication that I, for one, get spoilt for choice; the sheer volume of apps, programs, mp3s, mp4s, books, downloads etc is overwhelming. This before the task of discerning chaff from wheat, hence I have a reluctance to recommend anything. Have I the right, the expertise and the experience? And yet to allow this plethora of material to slip by regardless seems approaching the irresponsible. I think it was the St Thomas Aquinas who lamented that theology was such an inadequate a process, yet it had to be done for fear of saying nothing.

So it is with trepidation that offer a relaxation meditation available as a 10 minute freebie on YouTube:

<http://youtu.be/F5CAAdgiMAKg>.

It is part of the Ron Cruickshank site

www.roncruickshank.com,

a therapist in Tasmania. It is a body relaxation in a calm, non woo-woo Aussie voice over a soundtrack of birdsong and tumbling water. Being free, don't expect home cinema HD or surround sound quality. A fine wine it is not, but as a pick me up, I have found it one of the most helpful of the genre. Give it a go. And if you come across anything you've found helpful, do tell.



Meanwhile, here is an image that might reflect something of our journey through life. I can't decide whether the rider is smug in maintaining, albeit briefly (!), a 'No Hands' posture, or has given up trying to control the dragon. Perhaps you'll see other things in it ...

If this were a pub sign, what would the pub be called? No prizes apart from the satisfaction of engagement - and there probably isn't any better affirmation...

Steve Press



BLESSED are you who take the time to listen to difficult speech,



for you help me to know that if I persevere I can be understood.



BLESSED are you who never bid me to “hurry-up” and take my tasks from me and do them for me,



for often I need time rather than help



BLESSED are you who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures,



for my failures will be outweighed by the time I surprise myself.



BLESSED are you who ask for my help, *for my greatest need is to be needed.*



BLESSED are you who with a smile encourage me to try once more



BLESSED are you who never remind me that today I asked the same question twice



BLESSED are you who respect me and love me as I am, just as I am, and not like you wish I were.



The Good Life for All...

This is a verbatim clip (apart from capitals and apostrophes) from *Spiritual Intelligence* by Brian Draper (Lion Hudson publishing 2009, isbn: 978 0 7459 5321 2). It alludes to a sort of *Being Alongside* we all need to aspire to.

This is no longer the time (as if it ever were the time), for the 'me first' attitude that has become so prevalent in our culture of rampant consumerism. It is not the time to pull up the drawbridge and cut ourselves off from those who are different, or who are poor, or who are opposed to our way of life. It is not the time to hoard what we have for ourselves, but instead to orient ourselves in the direction of 'Generous Living'.

The 'Good Life', so often interpreted selfishly to mean the comfortable life, must now be replaced by the 'Generous Life' if we are to rise to the enormous challenges that face us in today's world, both as individuals and as a society.

The 'Generous Life' implies sharing, but it's not just about sharing material riches. If we are truly to 'Live Generously' then we must take the opportunity to share any good news that we awaken to, about how life really can be lived in our fast forward, frenzied and frenetic culture. As we tap into our innate 'Spiritual Intelligence', sharing will become a way of life: sharing wisdom for the journey, sharing stories, sharing life. Passing on the benefits, if you like.

As mentioned, it's not about trying to change other people, but exemplifying the 'Positive Transformation' in me. If my world is beginning to change for the better, then I will begin to make the world around me better for those who come into my orbit. I will welcome them instead of shun them; I will embrace them instead of ignore them. I will become hospitable, arms outstretched, and share the riches of life I begin to gain.

Brian Draper

Meanwhile, are you being plagued by Mindfulness mailings too?

Wish they'd just sit up and shut down...

The Editor

Staying in Touch *Listening to people affected by dementia*

New tutor led resource for churches coming soon!



Dementia often causes isolation for both the person with the condition and their family. Learning to communicate well with someone who is living with dementia is one way we can re-establish relationships, so that their isolation is less devastating.

Those who care for family members with dementia say that being listened to really does make a difference to their lives.

This course will help your church and community reduce this isolation - helping people to stay in touch. We can do more collectively if we have a common understanding and look for creative ways to respond to those affected by dementia living in our community.



There's a lot of it about - there will be more. It is vital we all have more knowledge and skills on how to minimise dementia's cruel effects. [more >](#)

How does it work?

Run by specially trained tutors in two half-day (or evening) sessions, it provides an appreciation of the impact of dementia.

Part one looks at the difficult issues facing those caring for people living with dementia and how we might give appropriate support. In part two the emphasis is on how we can effectively listen to and communicate with a person living with the condition.



Special introductory offer to churches:

£250 for the course including 10 handbooks.

Handbooks for additional attendees £3 or £25 for 10 inc. P&P.

For more details and to arrange a course for your church contact us at:

info@acornchristian.org

01420 478121

www.acornchristian.org

Could your community / group / church sign up for a course? Feel proud, B.A.! You seriously helped this course be born!

Being Alongside (apcmh)

Registered E & W charity: 1081642
UK limited liability company: 3957730

Membership / Subscription Form

Please complete this form and return to:

The Treasurer / Membership Secretary
St Paul's Church Centre, 5 Rossmore Road, NW1 6NJ

Title & Name:

Address:.....

.....

..... Postcode:.....

Tel: Day: Eve: Mobile:

I enclose fee for the year of: please write year in:

Please Tick the Membership category you'd like:

(one) Standard £12

(one) Concession £5

(one) Group (5 copies) £25

Donation to funds - please write amount in:

Total (please make cheques out to 'apcmh')

Gift Aid Declaration (for Tax Payers):

I am a tax payer and would like BA / apcmh to treat this, & all future payments, as a Gift Aid Donation. (In any tax year you must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax in excess of, or equal to, the tax that we reclaim on your payment which is currently 25p for every £1 you give.)

Please Sign & Date:

Help is at Hand

Samaritans: 08457 909090

(national number which will put you through to your nearest branch)

Saneline: (6 - 11pm each night) 08457 678000

Rethink Advisory Service: 08454 560455

Young Minds Parents' Helpline: 08088 025544

(9.30 - 4 weekdays, free from mobiles and landlines)

Carers in the Community: 01642 818332

(led by Edna Hunneysett. This is her home number)

MIND: (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) 08457 660163

Maytree: (24 / 7 + answerphone) 020 7263 7070

If you have found a help resource, please advise so we can share.

The Barnabas Drop - In Sessions

*'Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas
(which means Son of Encouragement)' ...Acts 4:36*

St. Paul's Community Project in partnership with *Being Alongside*

Mondays 2pm - 5pm

Plus various activities: Table tennis, dominoes, scrabble, art / craft,
poetry reading, tea / sandwiches / cakes and chat.

Wednesday 10am - 12pm

A more reflective discussion time with tea and biscuits, an opportunity to all
to share concerns or to receive one-to-one support (by appointment).

Free. All Welcome.

Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, 3 Rossmore Rd, NW1 6NJ
(5 mins walk from Marylebone Station; buses 139 & 189 stop outside)

call: Sister Theresa: 020 7724 8517

*When he arrived & saw the wonderful things God was doing, he was filled with excitement & joy,
and encouraged the believers to stay close to The Lord whatever the cost. Barnabas was a kindly
person, full of the Holy Spirit & strong in faith. As a result large numbers of people were added to
the Lord.*

(Acts 11:19-24)

The Who & What of B. A.

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'Being Alongside' is the operational name for the 'Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health', (apcmh), a Christian based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. It has a network of supporters throughout the United Kingdom and it welcomes and encourages people whatever their own faith or belief system. Governed by its National Committee, BA / apcmh is primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress.

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BE • STILL •
LISTEN • TO • THE •
SILENCE
AND • LET • YOUR •
SOUL • CATCH • UP •

