



Archbishop Justin visited MHA Bradbury Grange for his New Year Message. It is a residential care home in Whitstable, in his own Canterbury diocese.

The Archbishop's New Year Message ties in with a report to be published on 24th January called Care and Support Reimagined. It has been commissioned by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and offers a new vision for social care in which everyone can flourish, regardless of age or ability.

Dr Anna Dixon MBE, Chair of the Archbishops' Commission said: "I am delighted that Archbishop Justin has used his New Year Message to emphasise the need for action on social care. Our report will seek to address some of the long-standing challenges affecting social care and set out a hopeful vision of what care and support could and should be like.

"We cannot simply tinker around the edges of the existing social care system. We need a new settlement that gives choice and control to people who draw on care and support, equips and empowers communities, and offers far greater support and recognition to unpaid carers."

The Co-Chair of the Commission, the Rt Revd James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle, said: "At the heart of our work is a belief that all human beings are gifts in the eyes of God.

"We are making the case, rooted deeply in our Christian convictions and values, that our whole understanding of social care should reflect the aspirations of people who draw on care and support, paid and unpaid carers, and wider society.

"Faith communities have a huge role to play in ensuring that people are able to participate in worship and community life, regardless of their age or ability, and are supported to live well."

Sam Monaghan, Chief Executive of Methodist Homes (MHA) said: "We were so happy to welcome Archbishop Justin to MHA Bradbury Grange and to share a typical day with him. Our residents loved having the opportunity to meet and talk with him. And he also spent time talking to our care team, including Ann Campbell who's worked there 42 years. Staff shared with him how they support everyone living at the home and what it involves to provide good quality care. The visit meant so much to us."







*Read the full message here:*

This past year, we came together to mourn and celebrate, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

I met many people from all over the world who queued to pay their respects. People looked out for each other day and night.

It's one thing to do that for a few hours, another when we need to give or receive care day after day. Then we all need help.

Like many I rejoice that elderly relatives like my mother are still around. Their memories, their presence, their independence, are precious. Caring for them, loving them, is a privilege after what we have received from them.

Whitstable, in the Diocese of Canterbury which I serve, is a wonderful town. Like many coastal areas it has a high proportion of elderly people.

People here – like everywhere– are dealing with rising costs.

Care homes are struggling too. Bills have risen; hiring and keeping staff is a challenge.

Why work as a carer when you might get paid more in less demanding jobs?

Caring's not easy. Good carers are wonderful people to be valued.

Like Anne: who has worked as a carer at this care home for over 42 years.

We know our care system is broken: but it doesn't have to be. We can rise to the challenge of fixing it. That means action from all of us; you, me, families, communities and government.

In a few weeks' time, the Archbishop of York and I will publish a significant report on social care. It will offer a hopeful vision of our society. One where no one is held back, over-looked or treated as a burden – where families and unpaid carers get support too.

Caring goes to the heart of what it means to be human. It's hard, but it can also be the most life-giving thing we ever do. It comes back to that essential lesson: we need each other.

Jesus reminds us of the value of every single person, young or old. He challenges me to love everyone as I know he loves me.

For love alone, Jesus came into our difficult world. I pray that in the hard times and the good, you find yourself loved and cared for.

And I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

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