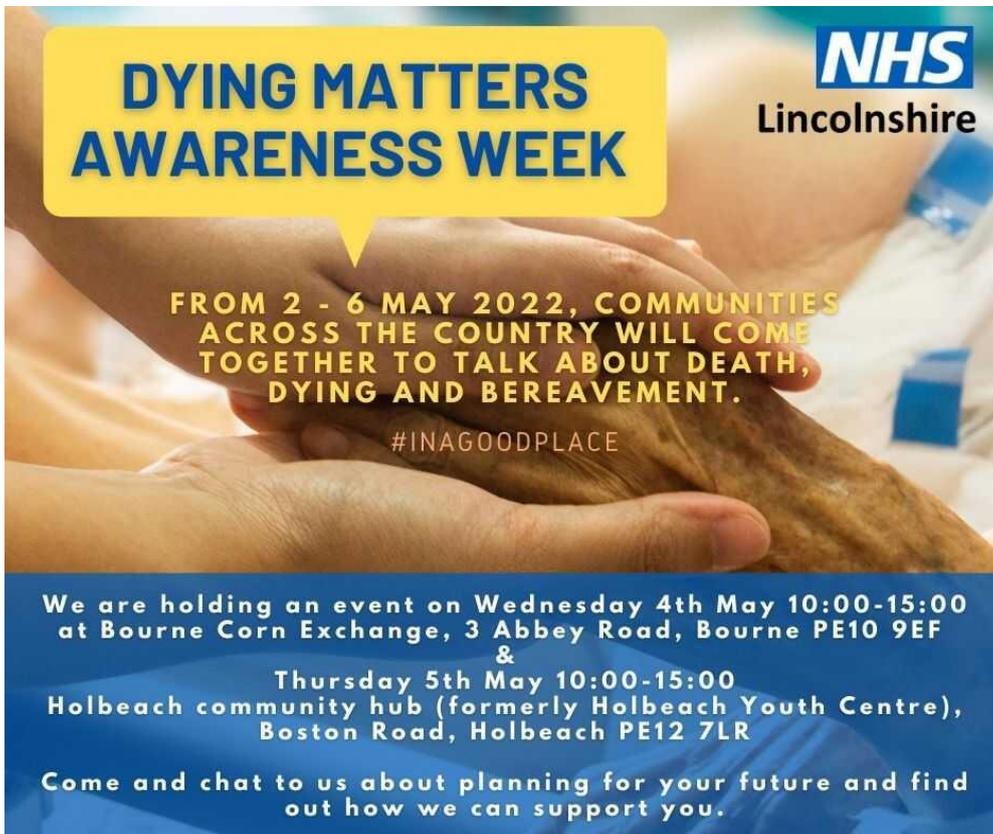


Dear all,

Yesterday I had a rather unusual post on my Facebook feed. Apparently, next week (2 – 6 May) is Dying Awareness Week. The post came from NHS Lincolnshire, who are holding a couple of events:

The poster features a background image of hands being held gently. A yellow speech bubble in the top left contains the text 'DYING MATTERS AWARENESS WEEK'. The NHS Lincolnshire logo is in the top right. The central text reads: 'FROM 2 - 6 MAY 2022, COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY WILL COME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT DEATH, DYING AND BEREAVEMENT. #INAGOODPLACE'. The bottom section, on a blue background, lists two events: 'Wednesday 4th May 10:00-15:00 at Bourne Corn Exchange, 3 Abbey Road, Bourne PE10 9EF' and 'Thursday 5th May 10:00-15:00 Holbeach community hub (formerly Holbeach Youth Centre), Boston Road, Holbeach PE12 7LR'. It concludes with the invitation: 'Come and chat to us about planning for your future and find out how we can support you.'

Death and dying is one of the great taboos of our time. We spend so much time trying to put it off, and avoid it. We don't expect it to happen, and many of us try to put off thinking about it for as long as we can – too long, in some cases. This is in contrast to previous generations, for whom death was a far more present occurrence.

There are many for whom it is very present – those who have terminal diagnoses, and their families; those who have lost loved ones suddenly and unexpectedly, especially during the pandemic, and who could not grieve properly due to the restrictions. This initiative can give much help to people who do not know where to turn to for help.

Of course, the church is there to help too. We are based on the fundamental premise that death is not the end. And this Easter season proclaims that most strongly. Our gospel this Sunday reminds us of one of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. The disciples thought him a ghost, but he barbecued a fish on the beach, as if to say "do ghosts eat breakfast?". Jesus is the first fruits, and we too will share that eternal life.

But practical matters do still remain, and I am going to suggest some very practical things we should all think about.

1. Make sure that you have a will, and that it is up-to-date. Some people think making a will is bad luck – it's worse if you don't, because all sorts of problems can follow, e.g. the people you want to benefit (and you might assume they will) do not necessarily. And make sure it is current. I know of more than one occasion when someone who had not updated their will after their spouse died, created significant complications when they died.

2. Make a plan for your funeral service. It can be very stressful for the next of kin trying to second-guess what music you like, what hymns and readings you might want. You are welcome to discuss it with me, and leave me a copy of your wishes.
3. Share your stories with your children and grandchildren. Not only will it help them when they are trying to put together a tribute, but it will be a great source of reminiscing, and sharing, a chance to come closer in the present.

Finally, if you ever want to discuss any of these issues – thoughts, concerns, worries – please don't hesitate to ask me to meet up and chat them through.

The lectionary readings for tomorrow are: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Acts 9:1-6 and John 21:1-19. The Psalm is Psalm 30.

The hymns for the service are an Easter version of 'Come and join the celebration, [Lord Of The Dance Hymn \(Contemporary Worship Song\) - YouTube](#), [The Spirit Lives to Set Us Free \(Walk in the Light\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#), [Make Me a Channel of Your Peace \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#) and [To God Be The Glory \(Royal Albert Hall, London\) - YouTube](#).

Anglican Chant [Psalm 30 "I Will Magnify Thee, O Lord" \(After H. Lawes\) - YouTube](#)

And a very interesting modern take [From Death \(Psalm 30\) | New Scottish Hymns Band - YouTube](#)

From the Psalms Project [Psalm 30 \(Mourning Into Dancing\) \(feat. Elizabeth Enalls\) - The Psalms Project - YouTube](#)

Anthems suggested for the lectionary readings include:

[Go forth into the world in peace - John Rutter, The Cambridge Singers, City of London Sinfonia - YouTube](#)

[Samuel Sebastian Wesley: Lead me, Lord | The Choir of Somerville College, Oxford - YouTube](#)

[Handel: 'Worthy Is The Lamb That Was Slain' from Messiah | AAM, VOCES8, Apollo5, Barnaby Smith - YouTube](#)

[Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem - Stanford - YouTube](#)

[Let all mortal flesh keep silence - Bairstow - YouTube](#)



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark