

CHAPLAINCY EVERYWHERE

The **Methodist** Church
Network for Chaplaincy

The **Methodist** Church

Chaplaincy Stories and Articles, No 111

For more information contact:
Chaplaincies@methodist.org.uk

A challenging thought

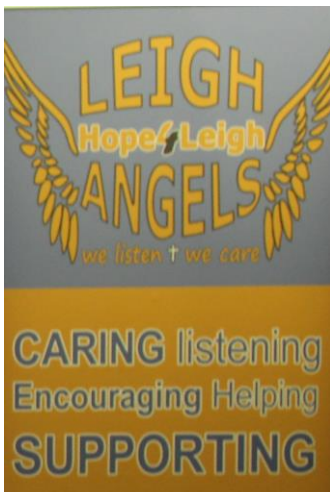
Daphne Gibbs

In November 2017 our lovely, new, beautifully uniformed, Retail Chaplaincy Leigh Angels took flight. Serving Leigh, Lancashire, we are thrilled to be reaching out to over 50 shops and our town centre Market Hall. Team members have all faced various challenges as we have put our training and our calling into practice.

I faced a new challenge recently.

Whenever I greet retailers and their staff they always ask me how I am, and I reply positively and turn the chat back to their needs. However, recently, I was pulled up short by the often-voiced query “and how are **you**”.

The back-story was that having recently been diagnosed with M.E., I had struggled through the earlier part of the week health wise. A split-second quandary: should I reply with true British stiff upper lip “I’m fine”, or be honest. And if the latter, how to do that without dumping **my** stuff on the people I wished to support. I opted to answer; “actually I wasn’t well at the beginning of the week, but today I’m fine thank you. Now last week you said...”



Reflecting on my practice later in the day, I felt satisfied with my answer. To always respond in the affirmative to always ‘be fine’ surely denies others the permission/encouragement to share the reality of their ups and downs. This means being willing to be vulnerable and admit to my weakness.

Good to know that in all my weaknesses lies God’s strength.

Daphne Gibbs is Coordinator of Leigh Angels, an ecumenical team offering retail chaplaincy in Leigh, Greater Manchester

 **METHODIST**
chaplaincies

The Methodist Church

Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR

Helpdesk 020 7486 5502 | www.methodist.org.uk

Registered charity number 1132208

 **The Methodist Church**
Discipleship & Evangelism