# Web Page Article April 2026

In my family and friends April is a busy time for birthdays, which also means it's a month of parties, getting together and filled with lots of laughter; and since Covid it is something I don't take for granted. Most of my family and friends are spread out across the East Midlands and further afield, like so many other families it does mean there are times when we are all on our own, with many times when we might feel lonely. Loneliness can be defined as an unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. There are two different types of loneliness: 'Emotional loneliness' is felt when we miss the companionship of one particular person; often a spouse, sibling or best friend; and 'Social loneliness' is experienced when we lack a wider social network or group of friends.

I've learnt how loneliness can be a feeling that comes and goes. It can be situational; for example only occurring at certain times like Sundays, bank holidays or Christmas. Or loneliness can be chronic; this means someone feels lonely all or most of the time. Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health: loneliness increases the risk of high blood pressure and individuals at greater risk of cognitive decline. I was flabbergasted to learn a few years ago how research showed that loneliness is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

Being lonely isn't something to feel embarrassed about, society has changed, families live further afield, people move away for work and also when retiring. And there are things happening to combat isolation in our villages – please do read the monthly parish magazines.

Volunteering is also a great way to get involved in the community, most churches would welcome a few willing hands to help with the more practical side of things. And did you know that going to church is good for your health; your mental health to be precise. A variety of research has highlighted that religious involvement has a positive impact on mental health. So whether it's for worship or for fellowship – come along to your parish church – it's here for you.