

SERVICE FOR SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2023

WELCOME:

Welcome to our Service. This Safeguarding Sunday Service has been prepared as part of the work of the Interdenominational Safeguarding Panel but safeguarding is also an important part of our work as a local Churches as we work with children and vulnerable adults.

OPENING PRAYER:

We echo the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero as we pray:

O Father, as we come to worship, our prayer is that we see the world as your love shows us:

A world where the weak are protected, no one is poor and no one is starving.

A world where the wealth of creation is fairly shared and everyone can enjoy it

A world where different nations live in harmony and respect.

A world where peace is founded on justice, and justice on love.

Give us the vision and courage to build it on these foundations, for the sake of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

HYMN 1: Father I place into your hands the things I cannot do Jenny Hewer 1975 Kingsway Music

Or Guide me O thou Great Jehovah William Williams (1771-91)

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY PRAYER: You can show the film of the [Safeguarding Prayer 2023](#) here or read it from the notes on page 6 if you do not have projection facilities

LEADER:

As well as providing resources like the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Handbook and this service, the Safeguarding Panel provides advice, support and training for those who work or volunteer with children and vulnerable adults in the local church. Perhaps we associate safeguarding mainly with the need to apply for a DBS check, but safeguarding is much more than filling out forms...

Today is 'Safeguarding Sunday', although that is somewhat misleading, because really, every Sunday should be a Safeguarding Sunday and every part of our service and activities as a Church should be safe where every member, from the youngest to the oldest, feels safe. Creating a Safer Church means that all of us involved in the Church ensure the safety of everyone within our activities and reassure each person attending that they are safe.

PRAYER:

We come to you in prayer, O God our Father, creator and sustainer, knowing that you are a sanctuary, a safe place and our strength in times of trouble.

Help us to open our eyes to see the beauty of your creation and teach us to be responsible citizens who respect that creation.

Help us to open our eyes to see the good and the truth in the acts of kindness of our fellow human beings.

Help us to open our ears to the truth of your Word and to hear the cry of the needy and lonely wherever they are.

Help us to open our hearts to experience the passion of your love in Jesus Christ and for our actions to be according to your will.

Amen

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LEADER 2:

The first chapter of the Bible is familiar to all of us - God bringing order to the chaos and life into the world. We are reminded four times in the beginning of the Old Testament that humanity was created in God's 'image and likeness'. Human beings are important. They are important to God and therefore should be important to us. The way we treat people shows how we treat God. Surely we want to treat God with the best way possible, so, shouldn't we also treat each person in the best way possible? We wouldn't want God to be hurt, so shouldn't we ensure that each person is also free from harm?

In **Matthew 25** Jesus tells his followers how they should consider the vulnerable. It says that as we help the most vulnerable, we come face to face with Christ. We won't see the 'image of God' of Genesis in every individual but Christ Himself. The more vulnerable a person is, the greater the risk that they will be abused or abused. In **Matthew 25** ³¹⁻⁴⁶ Jesus discusses eternal life. When 'the Son of Man in all his glory' comes, we will all be questioned whether we would have done the following:

- Did you give me food when I was hungry?
- Did you give me a drink when I was thirsty?
- Did you take me into your home when I was a stranger i.e 'knew no-one'?
- Did you clothe me when I was naked?
- Did you look after me when I was sick?
- Did you visit me when I was in prison?

Here are some of the situations that Jesus considered would make people vulnerable.
(*Matthew 25* ³¹⁻⁴⁶ *I can be read here*)

HYMN 2: I the Lord of Sea and Sky , I have heard my people cry (*Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?*) Daniel Shutte (c 1981 Daniel Shutte and New Dawn Music)

LEADER:

But what about the word vulnerable. It's a sensitive word, it's very difficult to tell someone that they're vulnerable. But aren't we all vulnerable at different times of our lives? Weren't we all vulnerable when we were born? We see children starting school for the first time – many of them are vulnerable – missing their parent or carer and moving into a whole new world. Aren't we vulnerable at times of illness or bereavement.? Or how about the dentist's chair and the needle looking twice its size in the bright light?

And if ever someone **was vulnerable, it was Jesus himself.** So vulnerable that his parents had to flee with him to Egypt, and then in the Garden of Gethsemane with sweat like drops of blood as he prayed for the bitter cup of suffering to be taken from Him. I wonder is there a more vulnerable situation than being crucified?

READING:

In the Gospel of Luke 10 ²⁵⁻³⁷ we have the very familiar parable of **the Good Samaritan.**

Luke 10 ²⁵⁻³⁷ **The Good Samaritan. (NIV)**

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

27 He answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

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29But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.31A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.32So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.33But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.34He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.35The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."
Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

MEDITATION:

This parable tells us a lot about how we should behave. Let's look at the parable from a slightly different angle for a minute. This is a service that discusses being safe and being caring, but let us look at some of the characteristics of someone who is the opposite of caring. **Un-caring** might be the word.

(ad25) an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus...Not just a lawyer but a Hebrew / Old Testament Law Expert. Their work was to analyze the Law of Moses and make it relevant to the people. But who was this man? Is it a Priest, one of the Scribes? One of the Saducees (who did not believe in eternal life)? We don't know.

Stood up to test Jesus... He wasn't interested in Jesus' teaching, he was just trying to trip him up. But Jesus doesn't get caught out so easily. In the gospels there are many examples of people trying to catch him out and test him.

Teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life? This wasn't a man wanting to know the truth, or on a faith pilgrimage journey, but a man playing with words, a man setting a snare. i.e. 'If you believe the things you have alleged, tell me how to have life in all its fullness, how can I have happiness now and for eternity?' Wanting to know what Jesus' answer would be, to keep playing the game.

Jesus answers by turning the question back to the man who was trying to trip him up.

(verse 26) What is written in Law. How did you read it? Jesus knows what was written in the Law but he asks: **What do you read, How do you (as a law expert) interpret it?**

What does it mean to you? Of course the man couldn't give a different answer to what he had already given. The man replied without elaborating as one who knew the Law thoroughly.

Verse 29 shows how tenacious this man was in trying to trip Jesus up. You could almost tell he was having fun with this. He asks with confidence '**And who is my neighbour?**' and perhaps we hear some sarcasm in his voice. Now he thinks he's got the best of Jesus BUT... Jesus'parable completely floors him.

The road from Jerusalem to Jerico is about 20 winding, lonely miles. A long, winding and deserted road frequented by thieves. The Greek word is probably *lēstēs* which are bandits who are much more dangerous than *kleptēs* who are 'ordinary' thieves, according to Paula Gooder in her book 'The Parables', the vindication of these bandits was often that they attacked because they opposed Roman oppression. These were anti-Rome extremists who

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attacked anyone they thought was friends with Rome. Any mention of the *lēstēs* would therefore send shivers of fear through the Jews – and we are somewhat able to understand the urgency and the fear of the Priest when he saw the wounded man and hastily went past the other side.

And then the Levite –one who helped in the temple – the stewards of the temple or those who were in charge of the temple music (organists if you like, or the door guards or those making the announcements!).

These two – the Priest and the Levite didn't want to hang around. They didn't **care enough** about the man who was beaten and left half dead (or dead as far as they knew). **That's what people who are un-caring do. Pretend they haven't seen or heard a cry for help whether on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, or on one of the streets of our country.**

What then are some of the **characteristics of people who don't care** for others.

Aren't they people who are too selfish, thinking of no one but themselves?

- No doubt the Priest and the Levite are busy and important people. Possibly they were too busy to think about anything but their work. If the two went up from Jericho to Jerusalem, it could be argued that they were sticking to the rules and requirements of their roles, and didn't want to be contaminated by touching a body. But Luke stresses that they were going **down** from Jerusalem to Jericho. So they were on their **way home**.
- These two may be **tired** and eager to get home. After all, they had probably served a few hundred people in the temple in Jerusalem.
- We see, when we reflect on the parable, that these two were **isolated from what was going on around them**. What happened around them wasn't important to them. They themselves and their own world was what mattered, not a man lying on that lonely road.
- No doubt they were **scared**. Fear of attack by the *lēstēs*. Perhaps the man on the ground trying to trick them ? Isn't this one of the main tricks of these bandits - pretending they needed help, and when someone comes to assist, a band of thieves would come and attack and steal and leave them half dead.

Lets ask ourselves the question, **how much of the Priest and the Levite is in us?**

- I wonder, do we miss seeing people's needs at times because we're thinking about something else, or we're too busy running from one place to another, or isolated in our own little world too much to offer support, whether its a word an action or a gift of money?
- Are we afraid sometimes– afraid to do the wrong thing, afraid to choose the wrong option?

Perhaps there is some truth in that. Yet isn't the purpose of the parable to show that there are Samaritans out there who are willing to help, willing to offer comfort, and willing to make decisions that are sometimes unpopular.

HYMN 3: From Heaven you came helpless Babe Graham Kendrick 1983 Kingsway/Thank you music

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PRAYER:

Father God, thank you for your care for us at all times You showed in your life that you have a concerns for every person. You accepted the children and gave them attention when the disciples tried to drive them away from you. You accepted the blind and the leper, you accepted Zacheus the despised tax collector. You showed that you had time to listen, time to discuss and time to reprimand if necessary, and you showed that you had time for the thief on the cross, even when in terrible agony and pain yourself. Teach us, Lord, to be willing to wait and listen to complaints and fears and distress and not to pass by on the the other side. Sometimes, we confess that we are impatient and ignore the cries of people we don't think much of. Forgive us for our arrogance and help us remember that you have taught us that every single person matters in your sight. Help us realise that it our privilege to try to follow what you have taught us as we relate to each other. Help us to be worthy of these words from the Gospel of Matthew:

*When I was hungry you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was a stranger and you took me in to your home
I was naked and you clothed me,
I was a sick and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me.
Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.
Amen*

HYMN 4: Lord make me a channel of your peace St Francis of Assisi (*Sebastian Temple 1967*)

THE BLESSING

Our sincere thanks to Ifan Alun Puw, Llanuwchllyn for preparing this Service

Notes, Videos and further information:

Please see the Safeguarding Sunday page of our website for more information and further resources.

<https://panel.cymru/en/safeguarding-sunday>

This service can be led by one person but would also work well with a number of people taking part and reading the prayers and hymns, and sharing the leader's parts.

We have produced a [film of the Safeguarding Sunday prayer](#) that you could use at the beginning of the service. If you do not have projection facilities you can read the prayer which has been printed on Page 6. *Many thanks to the Reverend Robin Samuel for writing the prayer and Rhodri Darcy for producing a film in such a sensitive manner. And of course a big thank you to everyone who contributed, including a number of the Panels's volunteer safeguarding trainers. It is available to download here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buU5ieawokw>*

You can also download our film from 2022 [SAFEGUARDING in our chapels - YouTube](#) if you haven't already used this in a service

If you would like to include some **child friendly elements** in your service we recommend that you visit <https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-involved/safeguarding-sunday/> where you can access a wider range of resources children's activities and further ideas for safeguarding Sunday.

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The Interdenominational Safeguarding Panel supports and advises the the Union of Welsh Independents, Baptist Union of Wales and Presbyterian Church of Wales in relation to safeguarding practice in their work with children and young people and vulnerable adults.

For more information on safeguarding matters, safeguarding training or DBS forms, and details of how to respond to concerns contact the Interdenominational Safeguarding Panel office: post@panel.cymru 01745 817584 or visit the Website <https://panel.cymru/en>

PRAYER FOR SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buU5ieawokw>

by Robin Samuel

LET US PRAY
God of love and justice,
you have said,
"whoever trusts in the Lord is safe. "

On Safeguarding Sunday
We come together
As congregations of your people,
from all over Wales,
to commit
to make your church a place
where everyone can feel safe.

Help us to be
communities that are
open
welcoming
inclusive
loving;
communities
where people can live together
and prosper,
free from fear
and harm.

It is with shame that we acknowledge
that this was not always the case,
and we bring before you again
those whose experience
of the church is one of pain and hurt.
We give thanks for the courage of those
who have disclosed the darkness they have
suffered,

who have spoken out and called for
accountability.
Forgive us,
and help your church
to work to change for the better
so that it may be a refuge of peace and safety
for everyone.

Today, with one voice,
we ask for strength to be a church that will
always be ready,
to listen and to learn,
to value others and to care,
to love and to serve,
to protect and to be a safe haven.

Challenge us anew:
To protect the weak and vulnerable,
to speak up for those
whose voices are not heard,
to walk in the footsteps of Jesus,
and to hunger and thirst for justice.

God of love and justice
hear our prayer.
Have mercy on us,
heal us,
inspire us,
lead us,
in the name of the one who promised
to keep all of the flock safe,
Jesus the Good Shepherd
Amen