



## “SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY”

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020 10:30 am

Rev'd Danny Wheadon & Anne Pryke

*This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use as you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.*

**1 What a fellowship,  
what a joy divine,**

Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
What a blessedness,  
what a peace is mine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Leaning, leaning,  
Safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

2 Oh, how sweet to walk  
in this pilgrim way,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
Oh, how bright the path  
grows from day to day,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

3 What have I to dread,  
what have I to fear,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms?;  
I have blessed peace  
with my Lord so near,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Elisha Albright Hoffman (1839-1929)  
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Acapeldridge Track 12 from  
CD "Whatever Is Noble"*

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

**Welcome**

**Candle Lighting**

**Call to Worship**

*God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit –  
calls us to set our sights on the goal  
of following and living in the way of  
Christ. God calls to us follow now.  
Amen.*

**StF 256 When I needed a Neighbour**

1 When I needed a neighbour  
were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a neighbour  
were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour  
and the name won't matter,  
Were you there?*

2 I was hungry and thirsty,  
were you there, were you there?  
I was hungry and thirsty,  
were you there?

3 I was cold, I was naked,  
were you there, were you there?  
I was cold, I was naked,  
were you there?

4 When I needed a shelter  
were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a shelter  
were you there?

- 5 When I needed a healer  
were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a healer  
were you there?
- 6 Wherever you travel I'll be there,  
I'll be there,  
Wherever you travel I'll be there.  
*And the creed and the colour  
and the name won't matter,  
I'll be there.*

*Sydney Carter (1915-2004) © 1965 Stainer &  
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284784 Songs of Praise March 2017  
Romsey Abbey Choir*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fExR7eOhJO0>

### Opening Prayer:

Caring God, Your heart goes out to those who suffer and we must reach out too. But it is not an easy thing to get alongside someone and feel their suffering with them. It takes endless patience and time and energy and we cannot always sustain the effort. Keep us loving beyond the limits that we believe are possible, for your care goes further than we can ever imagine, into the darkest places of suffering, grief and despair. Amen

Marjorie Dobson (from Multi-coloured Maze)

The **Methodist** Church 

## SAFEGUARDING



### READINGS:

#### Proverbs 31:8-9

<sup>8</sup>“Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. <sup>9</sup>Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.”

#### Matthew 18:3-5

<sup>3</sup>and (*Jesus*) said, “I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child. <sup>5</sup>And whoever welcomes in my name one such child as this, welcomes me.

### StF 655

#### We cannot measure how you heal

- 1 We cannot measure how you heal or answer every sufferer's prayer, yet we believe your grace responds where faith and doubt unite to care. Your hands,  
though bloodied on the cross,  
survive to hold and heal and warn,  
to carry all through death to life and cradle children yet unborn.
- 2 The pain that will not go away,  
the guilt that clings  
from things long past,  
the fear of what the future holds,  
are present as if meant to last.  
But present too is love which tends  
the hurt we never hoped to find,  
the private agonies inside,  
the memories that haunt the mind.

3 So some have come who need your help, - and some have come to make amends, - as hands which shaped and saved the world are present in the touch of friends. Lord, let your Spirit meet us here to mend the body, mind and soul, to disentangle peace from pain and make your broken people whole.

John L Bell (born 1949) and Graham Maule (1958-2019) © 1989, 1996 WGRG, c/o Iona Community Used By Permission. CCL Licence No. 284784

### **Reflection Part I**

For some people, there can be a feeling that safeguarding rules and guidelines restrict or distract us from our true calling to communicate the Gospel. Some may feel that it hinders rather than helps the work God calls us to do. So where does safeguarding come from? The word 'safeguarding' itself does not appear in the Bible. However, throughout its pages we're given hundreds of examples of God's heart for vulnerable people, and the expectations he places upon communities and societies in how we should respond to, and treat those that fall within that category.

There are many verses, passages, and themes that leave us in no doubt as to God's thoughts and feelings on the subject. One verse that sums this up for us clearly is Proverbs 31:8 that encourages us to 'speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable'. (CEB version). There is a clear expectation that there are certain rights to which all of us are entitled, including those who are vulnerable, those of security and

protection from harm, and that where power and authority is abused, we are all called to speak out, and to ensure a voice is given to those who are silenced. God's love is an overarching theme throughout the Bible and this is where a theology of safeguarding begins.

Some of the most direct and challenging references to the safeguarding of children in the Bible are in the interaction between Jesus and his disciples concerning the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 18:3-5, Jesus warns of the dangers of "causing one of these little ones who believe in me to sin". By using the term "Little ones", Jesus may not just mean children, but all who are vulnerable, and it is significant that here Jesus uses violent language when talking about the consequences on those that seek to do them harm. Jesus clearly cannot abide such behaviour.

Jesus taught that what we do when nobody is looking is as important to God as what we do when people are looking. We are called to care and be merciful in all our dealings, but especially with those that may need extra care or protection. As Christians, we are motivated by more than a just moral or social conscience, but by a desire to demonstrate God's heart and care for people who are vulnerable and oppressed. Rather than being an add on to the gospel, protecting vulnerable people, is central to it. However, what we also see in the Bible, is that safeguarding is not always culturally popular. Jesus' heart is always to care and speak truth, but the pursuit of the wellbeing of others, particularly those in vulnerable positions in society, such as children, often costs, and is not

always an easy route. But it is a pursuit that bears much fruit.

Video: *Safeguarding Sunday Sam's Story*.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRQ-UPGaTIE&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRQ-UPGaTIE&feature=emb_logo)



## **Reflection Part II**

Jesus' attitude towards children was revolutionary, affectionate and respectful in a culture that devalued children. In Matthew 18 he uses a child as an example to his disciples that: 'Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.' Jesus uses children as examples of those who are dependent, trustful, simple, open, teachable and excitable. But Jesus' view of children was not sentimental or romanticised. He had brothers and sisters. He no doubt encountered the Nazareth school bully. He had to learn obedience through being subject to his earthly parents. However, the way we treat children is very revealing and Jesus tells us that the way we enter the Kingdom is by becoming like a little child again.

In Matthew 19 children are brought to Jesus for him to pray for them, but the

disciples rebuke them. Jesus replies by saying, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

How does Jesus want us to treat and welcome children in today's culture? Are there ways in which we hinder children from coming to Jesus?

How does he want us to change in that we become more like children in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?

- ➔ The Kingdom of God is a paradox that can look strange to people outside church.
- ➔ The Kingdom is not for the strong, it's for the weak.
- ➔ The Kingdom is not for the rich, it's for the poor.
- ➔ The Kingdom is not for the powerful, it's for the powerless.
- ➔ The Kingdom is not for the proud, it's for the meek.
- ➔ The Kingdom is not for adults, it's for children.

Jesus encourages us to protect children, involve children, listen to children, and cultivate a childlike faith.

Video: *Safeguarding Sunday 2019*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jgG15L1fa8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jgG15L1fa8&feature=emb_logo)



### **Reflection Part III**

Family is God's idea and being in relationships and community is part of the image of God. It is not good for a person to be alone. The creation mandate states: 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves over the ground.' In Genesis 1-2 we see a picture of a family in paradise. However, in Genesis 3-4 we see an example of a family falling into trouble. Paradise is lost as Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden. Relationships become distorted and harmony is broken. Family is torn by conflict, jealousy, rage and murder. We see Cain ejected from the family and sent to live in exile. There is nothing new about broken families because all families are made up of broken people.

However, we can be encouraged because God cares about families and he cares about people. Isaiah 49:15-16 says: 'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.' God sees the difficulties families face in life. How can we encourage families who are struggling in our communities? How can the church look to provide a place for families to come together and support each other?

There are no perfect families and what children need are 'good enough families'.

God intends families to be:

- ➔ Places of unconditional love.
- ➔ Places of safety and security.
- ➔ Places of growth and development.
- ➔ Places of forgiveness and healing.

These are families where children's needs come first. Christian faith can help to build resilience to cope with adversity. Churches, ideally, can provide a rich network of wrap around care for children along with practical, emotional and spiritual support for parents and carers. Can you/we be participants of that Christ Centred church today?

### **Sing Your Faith 036**

- 1 For everyone born,  
a place at the table,  
for everyone born,  
clean water and bread,  
a shelter, a space,  
a safe place for growing,  
for everyone born , a star overhead.  
  
*And God will delight- when we  
are creators of justice and joy,  
yes, God will delight when we are  
creators of justice, justice and joy!*
- 2 For woman and man,  
a place at the table,  
revising the roles, deciding the share,  
with wisdom and grace,  
dividing the power,  
for woman and man,  
a system that's fair.
- 3 For young and for old,  
a place at the table,  
a voice to be heard,  
a part in the song,  
the hands of a child  
in hands kind and wrinkled,  
for young and for old,  
the right to belong.

- 4 For just and unjust  
a place at the table,  
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,  
in anger, in hurt, a mind-set of mercy,  
for just and unjust, a new way to live.
  
- 5 For everyone born,  
a place at the table,  
to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out,  
to witness and worship,  
for everyone born,  
the right to be free.

*Shirley E Murray (1931-2020) © 1998  
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akF3oWZ0lXE>

### **Prayers for others:**

Loving Father God,  
We come to you in the knowledge  
that you hold all your children in  
unconditional love.

We lift to you those who are  
vulnerable and in need of protection.  
Give them your safety, comfort and  
peace.

We cry to you for those who are  
hurting and whose trust has been  
broken.

**Give them your healing,  
restoration and justice.**

We bring to you those who seek to  
forgive others who have hurt them.  
Give them your strength, courage  
and hope.

For those who have caused your  
children to stumble,  
lead them to seek your forgiveness  
and to enter into true repentance.

Thank you for all who give their time,  
knowledge, and skills to make our  
communities safer.

**Give them your wisdom,  
guidance and grace.**

For ourselves, we ask you to give us  
your heart for the vulnerable, the  
oppressed, the voiceless and the  
forgotten.

Help us to see them as you see them;  
to value them as you value them,  
and to nurture and protect them as  
you desire.

**Help each one of us play our  
part in creating safer places  
for all your people. In your  
name we pray, Amen.**



## As Jesus taught his disciples to pray:

*Our Father ...*



Our

### Commitment to Safeguarding:

- We commit to each other to share responsibility for creating an environment that is safe for all
- We commit to pray for our safeguarding lead(s) and those working with children and adults
- We commit to respect the boundaries that are in place to protect others
- We commit to support those in our church who have been hurt or abused
- We commit to provide on-going safeguarding training for all our workers
- We commit to allow sufficient time and resources to make our recruitment of workers safer
- We commit to maintaining an open culture where people are encouraged to share concerns

- We commit to not take offence when challenged about our presence or behaviour

### StF 531 What a Friend we have in Jess

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!  
what a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry  
everything to God in prayer!
- 2 Have we trials and temptations,  
is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged:  
take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness:  
take it to the Lord in prayer.
- 3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge—  
take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
in his arms he'll take and shield thee,  
thou wilt find a solace there.

*Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819-1886)  
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*Calamus Licence No. A-734967 Acapeldridge  
What a friend we have in Jesus  
Track 17 from CD "Whatever Is Noble"*

The Methodist Church values every human being as part of God's creation. Everyone has the right to fair treatment and protection from harm.

## A personal prayer

*I do not always know who I am or what I want, Lord. I am sometimes happy in my skin and sometimes I just want to leave it all behind. Sometimes I want to be 'out there' and noticed and other times I want to be alone and obscure. Sometimes, Lord, my tears are of joy and sometimes of sorrow and anguish. But always, Lord, you know my innermost thoughts, even those I do not understand myself – help me to rest always in you. Amen.*



## A sending out prayer

We go our separate ways, Lord – perhaps with smiles or frowns; with our hopes and with fears; with answers but also questions; maybe crying and with heavy hearts; or with anxieties, or relief. We go our separate ways, Lord, but we never go alone. With thankful hearts, we share the journey of life with each other and with you. Be with us as we go.

**Amen.**

And the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and all whom you love and all whom you are called to love and care for, now and forever. **Amen**

## Songs of Fellowship 2860 “Simplicity”

1 I come in simplicity  
longing for purity  
to worship You in Spirit and truth,  
only You.  
Lord, strip it all away  
'til only You remain.  
I'm coming back to my first love,  
only You.  
*You're the reason I sing,  
the reason I sing.  
Yes, my heart will sing  
how I love You.  
And forever I'll sing,  
forever I'll sing.  
Yes, my heart will sing  
how I love You.*

2 I come with my broken song  
to You, the perfect One,  
to worship You in spirit and truth,  
only You.  
Give me a childlike heart,  
lead me to where You are.  
I'm coming back to my first love,  
only You

How I love You, how I love You,  
how I love You, my first love.  
How I love You, how I love You,  
how I love You, my first love.

Gareth Gilkeson and Chris Llewellyn  
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Sung by Rend Collective

