

***Materials for Virtual Worship
Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, 10 October 2021***

Living in Love and Faith

*Please use this material with the order of Virtual Service for the Linton Team of Churches
Ordinary Time*

Collects

O God, forasmuch as without you
we are not able to please you;
mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Faithful Lord,
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings

Matthew 7:24-29

Hearers and Doers

‘Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!’

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

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Reflection See separate document – Michael Wilcockson’s talk

May this place be one of nurture

1 May this place be one of nurture
where we all may come to know
how your endless love sustains us
as we live and move and grow.
May we work to build your kingdom
full of truth and light and grace,
living life in all its fullness
held in one divine embrace.

2 From our negligence and failures
you have called us to repent,
drawing energy for action
from the voices of lament.
As the secret hurts long hidden
may, at last, be brought to light,
may the truth unlock the freedom
that is every person’s right.

3 For you hold the broken-hearted
till they learn to live again,
and your justice stands like mountains,
while your mercy falls like rain.
When the smallest child is valued,
and the strong empower the weak
when each human life is hallowed
and the unheard voices speak:

4 So with humble thanks, we praise you
and we lift to you in prayer
all the people you are calling
to this ministry of care.

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Give us wisdom, grace and courage,
holding fast to all that's good,
seeing Christ in one another
we will love and serve our Lord.

Words: Ally Barrett

Inspired by love and anger

1 Inspired by love and anger,
disturbed by endless pain,
aware of God's own bias,
we ask him once again:
'How long must some folk suffer?
How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-int'rest
turn prayer and pity blind?'

2 From those for ever victims
of heartless human greed,
their cruel plight composes
a litany of need:
'Where are the fruits of justice?
Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when pris'ners
and dreams find their release?'

3 From those forever shackled
to what their wealth can buy,
the fear of lost advantage
provokes the bitter cry:
'Don't query our position!
Don't criticise our wealth!
Don't mention those exploited
by politics and stealth!'

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4 To God, who through the prophets
proclaimed a diff'rent age,
we offer earth's indiff'rence,
its agony and rage:
'When will the wronged be righted?
When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be gen'rous
to all instead of some?'

5 God asks: 'Who will go for me?
Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen,
will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome,
will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow,
will walk the road I show?'

6 Amused in someone's kitchen,
asleep in someone's boat,
attuned to what the ancients
exposed, proclaimed and wrote,
a Saviour without safety,
a tradesman without tools
has come to tip the balance
with fishermen and fools.

Lord Enthroned In Heavenly Splendour

1 Lord enthron'd in heav'nly splendour
First begotten from the dead
Thou alone our strong defender
Liftest up Thy people's head
Alleluia alleluia
Jesus true and living Bread

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2 Here our humblest homage pay we
Here in loving reverence bow
Here for faith's discernment pray we
Lest we fail to know Thee now
Alleluia alleluia
Thou art here we ask not how

3 Though the lowliest form doth veil Thee
As of old in Bethlehem
Here as there Thine angels hail Thee
Branch and Flower of Jesse's stem
Alleluia alleluia
We in worship join with them

4 Paschal Lamb Thine offering finished
Once for all when Thou was slain
In its fullness undiminished
Shall for evermore remain
Alleluia alleluia
Cleansing souls from every stain

5 Life-imparting heavenly Manna
Stricken Rock with streaming side
Heaven and earth with loud hosanna
Worship Thee the Lamb who died
Alleluia alleluia
Risen ascended glorified

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you;
allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu, alleluia.*

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2 You shall not live by bread alone,
but by ev'ry word
that proceeds out from the mouth of God;
allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu, alleluia.*

3 Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you;
allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu, alleluia.*

Praise, O praise our God and King

1 Praise, O praise our God and King;
hymns of adoration sing:

*Refrain: for his mercies still endure
ever faithful, ever sure.*

2 Praise Him that He made the sun
day by day his course to run:

3 And the silver moon by night,
shining with her gentle light:

4 Praise Him that he gave the rain
to mature the swelling grain:

5 And hath bid the fruitful field
crops of precious increase yield:

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6 Praise him for our harvest-store;
he hath filled the garner-floor:

7 And for richer food than this,
pledge of everlasting bliss:

8 Glory to our bounteous King;
glory let creation sing:
glory to the Father, Son
and blest Spirit, Three in One

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Closing Prayer

Holy and blessed God,
you have fed us with the body and blood of your Son
and filled us with your Holy Spirit:
may we honour you,
not only with our lips
but in lives dedicated to the service
of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.
Amen.

Today we are acknowledging Safeguarding Sunday, joining with hundreds of other churches across the country who together will be turning the spotlight on safeguarding this week.

Giving people their God created value is at the centre of a Christian community.

Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message. Safeguarding Sunday is all about creating an opportunity for churches to show their communities that they take this responsibility seriously. It is an opportunity to start conversations and raise awareness.

Ultimately it is everyone's responsibility to create a safe space and a safe culture and environment.

Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield, is the Church of England's lead Bishop for safeguarding. He has recorded a message which is available online. He has called for today to be an opportunity to raise awareness of safeguarding and safer places for all. So that all children and adults may know the fullness of life that Jesus intended.

The church has been on a huge journey as far as Safeguarding is concerned and many people have taken on new responsibilities, learning new ways of doing things and have invested a huge amount of time, work and effort in making churches safer places.

Safeguarding failures can be uncomfortable to listen to, but we continue to learn from the mistakes made in the past.

The prominent issue is - looking out for the needs of the vulnerable. The needs must be met with love and compassion. Promoting healing and justice so that we keep people safe from harm.

Safeguarding is so much more than rules, checks, regulations and procedures. It is at the heart of the gospel; we are called to care for

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one another. Jesus placed children at the heart of the kingdom of God. 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 people who are vulnerable or voiceless. If we want our places of worship to be safe places then it's vital that this is talked about, especially from 'the front'.

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. Values such as security and protection from harm. 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.

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

Proverbs 31 v 8 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹ Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

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31:8 is the name of a new Christian safeguarding charity, formerly known as CCPAS.

As a consequence, they have a renewed vision – protecting, advising, equipping, empowering and encouraging churches and Safeguarding officers. They want to prevent harm, keep people safe and make the world not only feel better but be a better place. They aim to make a positive difference and address past and current failures in the church.

I only have to mention Victoria Climbié, James Bulger, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman at Soham, Baby P, Jimmy Saville, Rolf Harris all these hit the headlines and there are many, many more.

Every school, nursery, hospital, care home etc in the country must have a Safeguarding lead with regular inspections. Any failings in safeguarding arrangements during an Ofsted inspection will automatically result in the school failing the entire inspection. Safeguarding duties must be carried out effectively, dotting every i and crossing every t.

Safeguarding is embedded into many places including churches now and we must aim to be the best we can be in creating that safe place where everyone feels safe and protected.

While teaching in leafy Hertfordshire in a prep school I was the DSL, designated safeguarding lead. We were not immune. We referred cases to social services, we had the police involved. These were children of prosperous parents.

I'm reading a book at present called 'Bleeding for Jesus' You may remember the John Smyth scandal in the media and Church Times. He led a double life. A prominent Christian QC working with Mary Whitehouse in the late 70s and early 80s. He was the go-to barrister for cases where public morality was an issue. At the same time he was befriending boys and beating them until they bled. It was spiritual abuse, 'if Jesus bled for you then you must bleed for Jesus', he would tell them. Many of the young men he abused went on to

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prominent roles in the C of E. I'm reading it because his right-hand man, was the curate at the church where David and I grew up, he ran the youth group. The book mentions not only him but our vicar, who actually reported him. Other people mentioned include John Stott, David Watson, Justin Welby. It makes for harrowing reading, but I looked up to our curate, he was intelligent, knowledgeable had a heart for the gospel and many of our friends were led to Christ because of him. But he too was leading a double life.

Church leaders turned a blind eye to Smyth's history of abuse, that lasted for decades. It was a cover up. A secret that lasted for so long. Smyth escaped justice, yet his victims still live with the nightmares, scars and memories.

Safeguarding, like H & S is everyone's responsibility. But as the PSO I will continue to attend the training, carry out the various DBS checks that need to be undertaken, listen to you and with you continue to raise the awareness and create a safer space for everyone.

All members of the PCC have had enhanced DBS checks as they are trustees of a charity and must undertake 2 modules of safeguarding training.

At this point I would just like to thank Sue Filby who has been the PSO in the past and also the Link governor for Safeguarding at the infant school and for all the hard work she has done. Thanks to, to Michael Younger who is the current Governor in charge of Safeguarding at our Church school, and to DPS who has been the Safeguarding officer for the Royal school of music in Ely area. So many working behind the scenes to ensure as much as possible a safer place for all.

If you think this doesn't apply to you, why should I have a DBS check, it is only a piece of paper. I've always done it this way, and I've been fine.

I say these things...

1. When the new incumbent comes, they will expect a secure culture of safeguarding.

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2. Remember Proverbs 31 v 8 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,

for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹ Speak up and judge fairly;

defend the rights of the poor and needy.

3. The guiding rule for Safeguarding is not what is I'm wrong, but what if I'm right.

4. The final hymn has been written especially for today, please absorb the words and pray them as it is sung. (Words below).

5. And finally, someone with connections to St Marys was arrested and jailed this week as a paedophile. It is real. We live in a dangerous and deceitful world. We must protect. Please take safeguarding seriously. Please will you talk to me if you see or hear anything that is a concern. Will you help and support me in my role as your Parish Safeguarding officer? So that all may know the fullness of life that Jesus came to give.

Let's pray ...Heavenly Father, give us your heart for the vulnerable, the oppressed, the voiceless and the forgotten. Help us as a church 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

Listen to the song that will be sung...the words written especially for Safeguarding Sunday)

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/news-and-events/safeguarding-sunday/resource-pack/hymn-songs/>

Hymn words – May this place be one of nurture – see above.

Cathy Watts

If you have any concerns about any matters raised in this sermon, please contact Michael Wilcockson curate@stmaryslinton.org.uk
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