



St Paul's Church



Dear all

Last week we enjoyed a Celtic service at St. Paul's, largely put together by Jenny C who did a great job of crafting a very soulful and spiritual act of worship. One of the themes we focused on was care for one another, and we tied this into a slot at the end on Modern Slavery as it was 'Safeguarding Sunday'. I'm pleased to say that this seems to have prompted some of you to begin to think in greater detail about the issue of safeguarding, so I thought I'd say a bit more about it this week.

The fact is, it's all too easy for us to see our safeguarding obligations as a bit of a chore. Certainly, the training many of us have to undertake in this regard can seem a little protracted, and some of the requirements can feel, at times, like an onerous burden. I also sit on the board of governors for a local school and it's the same there: completing safeguarding training online takes up a whole load of our 'free' time, and we seem to spend a large proportion of the governors' meetings discussing safeguarding one way or another. (In church, it's always an agenda item at PCC too.) BUT both in church and in our schools, keeping people safe, especially children and vulnerable adults is a hugely important moral imperative. For Christians, it goes hand-in-hand with our mission of spreading love, compassion and faith, and reflects the essence of our Christ-centred community.

Good safeguarding practice in church lays the groundwork for an environment of trust and transparency so that we can fully engage in worship, fellowship, and spiritual growth. When we feel safe in church, we are more likely to open our hearts to God and to the transformation that relationship with the divine makes possible. At its best, the Church is committed to justice and accountability, and its safeguarding policies empower church leaders and volunteers to be vigilant, able to recognise and respond to signs of abuse or harm. We are all too aware of circumstances in the past where the wider Church has failed in its duty to protect the vulnerable and we all feel a profound sense of shock when we hear of these cases. It's worth remembering that we *all* have a sacred duty to protect and nurture every member of the body of Christ whether members of our church, our family, or people we come across in our daily lives.

For more information on the training available or to report confidentially on any safeguarding concern you may have, please get in touch with Ann Lewis. You can do this in person at church or click the link on the St. Paul's website marked 'Safeguarding' to take you to a dedicated email address.

Rev Anthea

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 26th NOVEMBER – Sunday next before Advent - Christ the King (ZOOM)

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Robin Williamson & Gwyn

SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER – Advent Sunday

10 am Café Worship – Café Team

SUNDAY 10th DECEMBER – Advent 2 (ZOOM)

10 am All-Age Worship – Rev Anthea & Rev John Richardson

SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER – Advent 3 (ZOOM)

10 am Experimental Worship - Gwyn

SUNDAY 24th DECEMBER – Advent 3 (ZOOM)

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 24th DECEMBER – Christmas Eve (ZOOM)

4 pm Crib/Christingle Service – Rev Anthea & Robin F

SUNDAY 25th DECEMBER – Christmas Day (ZOOM)

10 am All-Age Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 31st DECEMBER – First Sunday of Christmas (ZOOM)

10 am All-Age Communion – Rev Anthea

EVENTS

SATURDAY 2nd DECEMBER

2.30 pm - Afternoon Tea (large hall)

FOOD BANK

The next collection will be on Friday 8th December.

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 26th November 2023

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.'

This week we give thanks for:

- The small but important steps on measures to tackle climate change agreed by the US and China in a joint statement prepared for the meeting in California; pray for more measures to be taken by all nations to tackle the climate crisis.
- Local churches around the world, and pray for encouragement, protection and resources for them to bring transformation in the lives of the communities they serve.

Please pray for:

- A pause in the fighting in Gaza to allow for the release of hostages and for aid to safely enter the strip.
- The people of Somalia and neighbouring countries in East Africa experiencing heavy rain and exceptional flooding which has displaced thousands of people.
- Aid agencies and churches in some of the most painful situations who are providing shelter and support for many who have lost loved ones, their homes and livelihoods.
- Our Church family and especially for all who are struggling: Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth, Helen and Meaghan.
- Our need to care deeply for the suffering of others in a way that enables us to mourn with them, to express the kind of deep grief that cannot be hidden and to support and pray for them.

You may like to use this prayer during the week:

Loving Lord, shelter all who are suffering from the storms that alarm them; shepherd them and safely enfold them; shine your light on the path that you show them and give them peace . Amen.