

2nd Sunday before Advent (C) SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2025

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God, we pray that this church may be a place of welcome, security and compassion. Keep us watchful yet caring, trusting yet ready to question, that all who worship here may do so in safety and in the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING James 1.19-27

A reading from the letter of James.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM from Psalm 16

R. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

1. O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **(R.)**

2. And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay. **(R.)**

3. You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever. **(R.)**

SECOND READING Ephesians 5:8-13

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians.

My dear brothers and sisters, you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible – and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL John 13. 33-34

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the disciples: My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: where I am going, you cannot come.

‘A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection for this Sunday

The setting for this passage is the Last Supper, the final meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion. After washing their feet in an act of humble service, Jesus gives them a ‘new commandment’. This commandment was not ‘new’ in the sense that love had never been taught before, but it set a new standard: to love one another as he had loved them, with humility and self-sacrifice. Often, when we think about safeguarding, it can feel like a list of restrictions, much like how we sometimes perceive the commandments of the Old Testament. Yet at its heart, safeguarding is about loving each other well – ensuring the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of every person. Far from being a burden, it is a vital way we can embody Christ’s command to love. By placing the safety and welfare of others at the centre of our community life, we show forth the love that Jesus calls us to live out.

Safeguarding Prayer

May the doors of this church be wide enough
to receive all who come seeking God
and fellowship.

May the doors of this church be narrow enough
to shut out pettiness and pride,
envy and enmity.

May the threshold of this church
be no stumbling block
to young or frail feet.

May the threshold of this church be too high
to admit complacency and self-seeking.

May this church be, for all who enter,
a safe place and the doorway to a richer life
in Christ Jesus.

All Souls Safeguarding Officer

Jean Lewis is the first person to speak to if you have any concerns around the welfare of a child or adult at risk. Tel: 0208 9652162

Children & Vulnerable Adults’ Champion

Ingrid Bruno-Snellings is the advocate for children and vulnerable adults, making sure their views are heard and their needs are thought of.

Tel: 0208 4531983

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS:

Father, you call us to be your servants; fill us with the courage and love of Jesus, that all the world may gather in joy at the table of your kingdom; we ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

COMMUNION SENTENCE:

Set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. (1 Peter 1.13)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope: bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**