

Christmas Safeguarding Greetings – December 2025

As it's Christmas I'll try to keep this short as you are probably busy with the usual preparations!

In February, the district safeguarding arrangements are going to be audited by a team drawn from the Connexional Safeguarding Committee. They will review a good deal of paperwork relating to compliance with Church policy, and they will interview Angharad as Chair along with some ministers to gauge the extent to which a good safeguarding culture is embedded in district life. They will also meet with the District Safeguarding Group and speak with Howard Smedley who many of you will have known for some while. They will be keen to learn how leadership in safeguarding is exercised.

It's a real opportunity to showcase what we do in our various roles across the district to make our churches safer spaces. I believe there is a good story to tell in Lincolnshire, and I hope that if you are asked to make a contribution to this audit process, you will be able to supply some good examples of innovative practice that help our congregations appreciate the importance of safeguarding.

The word culture can mean many things, but here we are concerned to demonstrate that our commitment to safeguarding extends beyond form filling. The idea of our churches as safe places, physically and emotionally, is important and on a par with our commitment to well-maintained buildings, resilient finances and maintaining the 'common life of worship and service'. Can we show that there is a connection between all these aspects of church life and that our gospel calling is all about letting know they are loved by God and respected by the people in our church communities? Not all of us will have read the full Theology of Safeguarding Conference Report but we may be becoming familiar with the God Welcomes All learning material. Both publications help us to understand why the Methodist Church is so committed to promoting best safeguarding practice and the consequences if we don't pay full attention to the agenda.

Whoever you are as a reader of this blog, I'd ask you this Christmas to think about at least one thing you do in your church life to encourage safeguarding to flourish. A range of answers will provide some no small amount of evidence that our culture of what we do, being able to say why we do it and what the impact has been (or could be if we don't do the right thing), is strong and healthy.

This is always our story not just at Christmas but all year round. Let's tell it well.

With best wishes for a peaceful and blessed Christmas and a happy new year!

Grahame Snelling
DSG chair