



# The Methodist Church

Serving locally, connecting the county

[Safeguarding in Lincolnshire District](#)

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## The church and the community – the church in the community

**On the 16.03.2021, the District held as part of a 2 week safeguarding fortnight a session on responding well to the church and community.**

**The following are some of the headlines to provoke thought and further discussion.**

The Eden Project led the session – more details from John Lawson contact via email: [john.lawson@eden-network.org](mailto:john.lawson@eden-network.org)

- Rowan Williams book *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life*  
*Being where Jesus is means being in the company of the people whose company Jesus seeks and keeps. Jesus chooses the company of the excluded, the disreputable, the wretched, the self-hating, the poor, the diseased; so that is where you are going to find yourself ...*
- A video of Rowan Williams talking about his book is here  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zt2XKFAmzw>
- Most important freedom is to be ourselves and to grow, not asserting what we want, but discover deep rhythms of our life and that of others, and find a context in which we can continue to grow.
- Love is not just 'day love' – it is deep contemplation.
- The church needs to be a safe place.
- Community engagement is about working in partnership with God and others for common good.
- Prayerful foundation

Luke 10 - bring workers to the harvest

Rhythm of prayer - core piece of scripture all membership of church prays into

Q Can you identify provisions in community which you could join?

We need to have intimate knowledge of context to aid community engagement.

Q What already exists? (Luncheon groups, drop in café, toddler groups, night shelter, activities)

- We are part of the jigsaw – just a piece that adds to the larger picture.
- Listening to community needs means knowing assets in the community and in your church so that you can respond appropriately.
- We can signpost to other agencies and professionals.
- Be aware of how to signpost re debt management, domestic abuse support, bereavement – have posters or resources available so people can access themselves or be prompted to aid one another.
- Pastoral care within the church can continue even if someone is referred or signposted elsewhere.

Examples of Community Engagement:

Community Larder - need increased. Food but also an ear

Vouchers for utilities

Free for All - clothes

Uniforms

Liaise with other shops and businesses to help support with uniforms

A 'Swap Shop' - bring an item and swap it

A 'Free for All' - other items eg crib

Board Game Cafe

Breakfast, luncheon club, meals on wheels,

People are more likely to chat when shared activity – hospitality available will aid this too.

Meeting physical needs may open up other needs being seen and then addressed.

Q What level of support should the church provide for its community?

Church should be active in community

General discussion: knit bombing - hearts near church inviting others to take, buildings display joy, 'Orientation Project' new clergy researches the community and brought to Church Council for discussion.

Building relationships, find where interests over-lap and can get involved.

Q If a safeguarding issue arises during non-church community event do church have any mandate to get involved?

We need to make aware of our safe-guarding policy, and check that groups using the building have their own.

Showing concern may be 'enough' reaching out and acknowledging  
Safe-guarding issues need to be acknowledged - to know or be aware that things are happening - better to know than not - adds to the bigger picture  
Church - what experience, skills can we offer? What would Jesus do? What already happening?

- 'Contextual Evangelism.' Age demographic, everyone can pray regardless!  
Do we know what groups and societies are running? Who makes our community up?  
Situation outside of church premises - we may give advice, but they will have own safe-guarding policy.

Q How could inter-agency working best help your relationship with the community?  
Positive inter-agency, ecumenically, more people, opportunity for relationship and witness  
Churches have joined together to offer community support.  
Village hand-deliver food, craft items and other items house to house.  
Signposting for aid in response to hearing news – food items, where to get or getting utility advice from, work opportunity.  
Practical and tangible - love at work.  
Enabling others to serve, allowing them to join in, is important –we all need to be needed – those in need have gift/talent/skill or presence too. We do things with people, not just too, or for, them.

## Resources

Sam Wells, books *Incarnational Mission*, *God's Companions* and Richard Carter *The City is My Monastery* helpful books on 'being with'

*"Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary use words."* Francis of Assisi

*Slow Down, Show Up, and Pray* book by Ruth Rice - advice about shared habits and interests to renew wellbeing in our communities.  
<https://www.renewwellbeing.org.uk/>

Heartedge is ecumenical and offers sessions similar to these with speakers - several on post-covid community  
<https://www.heartedge.org/>

Check out Heartedge Facebook for numerous videos of past sessions

- Building relationships -ecumenical, educational systems, agencies, police force...  
There are random people - local influencers who have connections and local knowledge.  
Resources - use them via social media, relevant to share our witness.
- Individuals and buildings need to be safe places for hidden hurt to be revealed.

- We need to be heart of and have love for community -approachable, intentional about coming alongside, really wanting to know, mentor people - teaching one another and community to do kids work, tech stuff, make cuppa,
- Mental Health issues - ready to answer the questions that others have about fear  
Training needed, practical resources, welcoming environment

### **Ideas:**

Emotional and mental health issues.

Eden Team - Mental Health Course - opened a Night Life crisis cafe

Listening - cards - conversation starters. Signposting, providing resources or being a resource, CV writing aid (some churches have Job Clubs), space to talk, people help one another

Creativity - 'Purposeful activity' - discover inner creativity and skills to benefit self and others

Schools - assembly, drama, holiday clubs, (Messy Church, Vintage Church, Open the Book)

We have marvellous opportunities as we all are about, around our locality, to engage with the anyone and just start with "good morning!"

Cafe on estate - get to know people, over coffee - hospitality and shared humanity - a drink, relationship building. A 'door' into deeper needs

Q If an individual is completely opposed to faith and Christian beliefs, yet are concerned for their well-being, should you still follow churches safeguarding processes?

Taking off church hat when approached outside perhaps at home – do we? Should we?

The questions seem clear cut when clergy - as people approach knowing who and 'what' they are. They have to follow church safe-guarding policy.

Meeting people where they are - explaining the procedure, being transparent about the need to tell someone else to get the help that is needed for them.

Pastoral support, signposting, replace items - aware of the thief too (may need support)

Priorities of church - do we carry on a church meeting or send representation to someone in need?

Who is the company of Jesus - are we keeping the same?

Prayerful foundation, listening identify needs and assets, relationships, safe space and focus on Jesus - incarnation

Is there something different about us?

Themed resources are available to hand out:

Thy Kingdom Come resources

Scripture Union resources

Bible Society resources

The Bramble (Southwell) media - views and news.

Opportunities to explore – how do we reach out currently, what could we do differently?