

Dear friends,

Most of us will have seen the recent news about the Makin Report and the Archbishop of Canterbury's subsequent resignation.

As we have seen from the report, and from many other sources, the institutional church and individuals within it failed to act to prevent and deal with serious abuse. Like any institution, the church is not immune from individuals who infiltrate and exploit. However, it is especially egregious that many have come to harm through being part of an organisation that should be a place of safety and healing.

I want to take this opportunity, therefore, to highlight the importance of safeguarding for us as a benefice. Whilst the clergy, PSOs (Parish Safeguarding Officers) and PCCs have clear, specific responsibilities, every church member is responsible for safeguarding. Without everyone's ownership of that responsibility, it will be impossible to create a truly safe place for all who attend our churches and activities. Please do familiarise yourself with both the Parish Safeguarding Policy and key safeguarding contact details (both should be displayed in the lobby/porch of your church and any other buildings).

If you have any questions, or wish to highlight any concerns, please do get in touch with Rev Philip and/or me, and of course your PSO. For those who would value support in dealing with past experiences of abuse, we are very happy to help where we can, including signposting to appropriate external help. Rightly, the diocese and Church of England nationally are recognising that the needs of victims and survivors must be put first. This is also the approach we commit to in the Weymouth Ridgeway Benefice.

Finally, please do pray for the Church of England and its leaders at this time- that lessons will truly be learnt, leading to cultural change that will ensure such abuse is never able to happen again.

Yours in Christ,

Rev James Menzies

Team Rector, Weymouth Ridgeway Benefice