

# +WEEKLY SERMON

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## ‘Tend my lambs ... feed my sheep’

*John 21:15-19; Resources for Safeguarding Sunday*

Many will recognise those words of Jesus in his discourse with Simon Peter following the resurrection (John 21:15-19). Mirroring the three times Peter denied knowing him, Jesus asks him three times ... do you love me? Rather than admonish for what went before, Jesus simply asks to tend his lambs, feed his sheep. To love others, as Jesus loved us. Nothing more ... nothing less.

In the university this week, I've had conversations either about the care of students or with students themselves about their challenges. Each time, I'm often surprised by how much 'life' they go through, even before starting uni. This week's conversations emphasised that further; that even though not categorised as vulnerable, they are in many ways just so; some because of the challenges they're facing. All need care and nurturing – a responsibility for us to help with, alongside the academic learning.

Many will hold this Sunday, the second before Advent, as Safeguarding Sunday. To importantly, first and foremost, hold in prayer those who've been hurt or harmed, especially in our church environments. A chance to refocus on our own active involvement in safeguarding, within all our activities. For to do so is to tend the lambs ... feed the sheep; exercise, in the right way, our Christian love for others.

It's an opportunity to pray for those working with all our children, young people and adults - whether classed as vulnerable or not ... since the duty of care which Jesus gave to Simon Peter, is the same duty of care given to us as Jesus' disciples. It's no different.

May we also pray for, and show support to, all leading Safeguarding in our churches, communities and Diocese – all involved in making our places safer. Sometimes theirs is a thankless task, especially in encouraging, and requiring us, to keep up with our training and learning – aspects part-and-parcel with our learning and training for the gospel, our learning from scripture day by day. Both should be a continuous personal development of eyes, hearts and minds to look for the lost, the lonely and call-out injustices ... as well as considering safety; that we see and call-out issues to our safeguarding and Diocesan leads.

All IS our duty of care, as Christians, to keep safe all people within our communities; for that is what Jesus called Simon Peter to do; it is what he calls us to do daily – tend my lambs ... feed my sheep, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**The Rev Canon Dr Mike Kirby, Liverpool Cathedral; PTO Blackburn Diocese**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES