WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding is the practical action taken to help people be safe and to prevent harm. In a church context, it's about creating a culture where all children, young people, and adults can worship, belong, and explore faith together without fear, pressure, or abuse, and where concerns are taken seriously and responded to well.

In everyday terms, safeguarding means:

- **Protecting** children and adults from abuse, neglect, exploitation and mistreatment
- **Preventing harm** to a person's health, wellbeing or development
- **Noticing early** when something isn't right and offering support before a situation worsens
- **Responding appropriately** when there are concerns, so people get the help and protection they need
- **Creating a culture of safety**, so people can flourish in safe, respectful relationships and environments

Why safeguarding matters in churches

Churches are often built around trust, welcome, community and service. These are all positive and powerful strengths, but they can also create risk when boundaries are unclear, power and authority is misused, or concerns are minimised or covered up.

Safeguarding matters because:

- **Abuse can happen anywhere**, including faith settings
- **People may disclose harm in church** because it feels safe and trusted
- **Good safeguarding protects everyone** – those who may be harmed, those who have been harmed, those who serve and lead

Safeguarding is not about suspicion or bureaucracy; it is a form of care: taking responsibility so that people can participate confidently and safely.

