**Sermon Notes for MHA Sunday 2025**

**Material**

The reading for MHA Sunday 2025 is Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan. In response to a Torah expert’s question about inheriting eternal life, Jesus affirms the commands to love God and love one’s neighbour. When the expert asks, “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus shifts the focus with a parable that challenges us to ask, “How can I be a neighbour?”

In the story, a man is attacked and left for dead. A priest and a Levite pass by without helping, but a Samaritan—a surprising figure given historical tensions—stops, tends to the man’s wounds, and ensures his care. The Samaritan’s actions reveal that true neighbourliness transcends cultural and societal boundaries and is marked by acts of mercy and compassion.

This parable highlights:

* Unexpected Sources of Care: The Samaritan’s mercy challenges us to see that care can come from surprising places.
* Embodied Love: Jesus calls us to embody God’s kingdom through acts of mercy, fostering inclusive communities.
* Inclusion in God’s Kingdom: The Samaritan reflects God’s restoration of Israel and the mission to all nations (Acts 1:8).

In Irene’s story, we see this call to care in action. Despite living with dementia, she gives back to her community by offering kindness, organising activities, and supporting others. Like the Samaritan, Irene reminds us that care flows both ways, reflecting God’s love and the intrinsic value of every person.

**Key Messages**

1. Care Redefined:
   * Irene’s story shows that care is mutual. She is not just cared for but actively gives back, embodying neighbourliness in her community.
2. Breaking Stereotypes:
   * Society often views those with dementia as passive recipients of care. Irene challenges this by demonstrating that everyone has unique gifts to share regardless of their circumstances.
3. Building the Kingdom:
   * The Samaritan’s actions model the inclusivity and generosity of God’s kingdom, just as Irene fosters a flourishing community at Fitzwarren House.

**Possible Starting Points**

1. "Helping Hands" as a Metaphor for Neighbourliness:
   * Use the "Helping Hands" activity to illustrate how identifying helpers in our lives mirrors the call to recognise and act as neighbours. Reflect on the interconnectedness of community, where everyone has a role in offering support and care.
2. "Who Can Help?" and Recognizing Neighbours:
   * Highlight scenarios from the "Who Can Help?" activity to explore the qualities that make someone a neighbour. Discuss how we can embody the Samaritan’s example by stepping forward to help in unexpected ways.
3. Recognizing Everyday Neighbours:
   * Use prompts like helping a faint person at a bus stop to illustrate how neighbourliness often arises in ordinary moments. Tie this to Irene’s everyday acts of kindness, showing how simple gestures build community.

**Call to Action**

1. Create Communities of Care:
   * Reflect on how you can foster spaces in your homes, workplaces, and churches where everyone is valued and encouraged to give and receive care.
2. Support MHA’s Work:
   * Volunteer your time, resources, or prayers to support MHA in building communities of care. Consider joining befriending programs or contributing financially to sustain this mission.

**Closing**

As we reflect on Irene’s generosity and the Samaritan’s courage, let us ask ourselves:

* How can I build a community of care in my life?
* How can I embody neighbourliness in my actions?