



## **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May, Sunday after Ascension**

**Readings:** Acts 1:6-14; John 17:1-11

**10.00am, Holy Communion at Crockham Hill:** a relaxed, welcoming service in modern language with hymns. Please join us for refreshments and a chat afterwards.

**10.30am, Holy Communion at Westerham:** in modern language with hymns. Please join us for refreshments and a chat afterwards.

**Jess' last service:** Today is Jess's last service as Ordinand in the Benefice. Although there have already been 'farewells' at Holy Trinity and at *2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday*, today is our 'official' moment as we send her off with a blessing to be ordained Deacon at Rochester Cathedral in June. As she sets out on the next stage on her journey with God and in his service, we give thanks for the blessing she has been among us. We part company enriched by each other and we pray for God's continued guidance and shaping in her life and ministry.

Moments like this are opportunities to take stock of our own lives and ministry, as both Christian communities and individual disciples. God never stops calling! He is calling each of us now. Sometimes it is to continue what we are doing, sometimes it is into something new, or wider or deeper. There are opportunities for Westerham members to take up a new ministry – or continue an existing one – with our APCM this week but why not, regardless of where you worship, visit the [Everyday Calling](#) pages on the Diocesan website, to find out more about exploring how God is calling you now, as you seek to live his life in yours?

And there are one or two people out there who are called to particular, named, vocations. You may not know who you are, or maybe think 'surely not me'. We know what that's like. Perhaps reading this, or seeing Jess on Sunday, will stir something in you. Please talk to Revds Alison, Emma, Dave or Wendy if you think there may be a particular call that needs exploring.

*Whoever you are, wherever you live, whichever church you consider 'yours', whatever life is like for you and regardless of money, status, (dis)ability or anything else, you will be welcome at any service in the Benefice.*

Day	Time	Church diary this week
Tues – Sat	9.00 – 9.30am	<b>Morning Prayer (Westerham)</b> in the Resurrection Chapel; a short service of prayer and readings
Tuesday	10am – 12 noon 7.45pm	<b>Coffee Time</b> at Westerham Community Hub in the JFR. Join us for tea, coffee, snacks and friendship <b>Bellringing practice</b>
Wednesday	10am  10am – 12 noon 7.30pm	<b>Midweek Communion (Westerham):</b> a said service. <b>Jigsaw Group</b> at Westerham Community Hub in the JFR. Come along for refreshments and a chat <b>APCM Meetings</b> in the John Fryth Room
Thursday	7.00pm	<b>NO Choir practice</b>
Friday	11.30am	<b>Burial of ashes (Crockham Hill)</b>

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May, Pentecost (Whitsun)**

**8.00am Holy Communion in Traditional Language at Westerham.** A quiet service based on the poetic liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, without hymns.

### **10.00am, Holy Communion at Crockham Hill:**

a relaxed, welcoming service in modern language with hymns.

**Readings at 8am and 10am:** Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23

**10.30am, Holy Communion at Westerham:** in modern language with hymns. Please join us for refreshments and a chat afterwards.

**Readings:** Acts 2:1-21; John 7:37-39

After the 10.30am service: *2nd Sunday* planning meeting.

Everyone's welcome.

**Bell Sunday, 17th May 2026:** St Dunstan is known as the patron saint of bell ringers due to his experimentation in early forging of bells in the 900s AD. Bell Sunday is an annual celebration, typically held on the Sunday nearest to St Dunstan's feast day (19th May) to



recognise the contribution of church bell ringers and the sound of bells to the community and worship. The Westerham bells will be rung as usual before the 10:30 am service.

The **Westerham Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM)** will be held on **Wednesday 20th May at 7.30pm** in the John Fryth Room. **Papers are available online** or at **the back of the church.**



**Using your gifts for God.** Do you ever wonder if you could use your gifts, skills and wisdom in a different way? God doesn't need our help, but he invites us *all* to get involved in making his love known to the world. **Being a Church Warden** (elected annually), **member of the Parochial Church Council** (elected for three years) a **Deanery Synod representative** (elected for three years), or a member of our new **Benefice Joint Council** (elected for one year) are ways of sharing in the ministry and mission of the Church. Perhaps you've done it before; maybe you never have; perhaps you're already a PCC member! As the APCM approaches, it's time to ask ourselves what call God is making on our lives at this time. Is it to continue what you're doing already? Is it returning to something you've done before? Or trying something new? More likely, it's a mix of these.

If we have more nominations than places, we will have elections; a sign of a healthy church! Please pray about whether you could do any of these important and rewarding roles and if you think God is nudging you, speak to Revds Dave or Emma, or a churchwarden. **Application forms are available at the back of the church.**

**Choral Evensong at Lancing College Chapel:** Many of us will be travelling to Lancing College Chapel on Sunday 7th June to hear the choir sing choral evensong. This promises to be a wonderful event and a great way to hear the choir in a completely different setting. We have hired a coach and the cost per head is £20. At the time of writing there are 9 places still available on the coach, so please do email the Benefice Office if you would like a seat on the coach. Thank you.

**Jess's Ordination – 27th June:** Jess is pleased to announce that both she and her husband are being ordained at Rochester Cathedral on Saturday 27th June at 3pm and warmly invite all to join them for the service. You don't need a ticket to attend, but a limited number of reserved seats in the nave are still available. If you are certain you will be attending, please email Jess at [ordinand@chwbenefice.org](mailto:ordinand@chwbenefice.org) by **Monday 18th May** to ask for a reserved place. Reserved seating will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



**Breaking and Making Bread:** Last Sunday was our regular **2nd Sunday** service at Westerham, where we thought about what is meant by '*The Bread of Life*'.

Over 30 people joined this informal service of word, music, prayer and praise. During the service, after reflecting on why we share

bread, we took the opportunity to do exactly that, with Jess and Emma breaking a gluten free loaf to share with the congregation, followed by an activity, for all, of actually making some to take home, bake and share with others.

We also took the opportunity to show our gratitude and thanks to Jess, as it was her last *2nd Sunday* service ahead of her ordination next month. Jess has been an integral member of these services for the last two years and will be greatly missed by all the congregation. We all wish her well in her new ministry and will keep her and her family in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.

Thank you, also, to everyone who is involved in planning, setting up, taking part and/or packing away of our *2nd Sunday* services. **If you're not yet involved, you are missing out! Come along to the planning meeting for next month's *2nd Sunday* service directly after the 10:30am service on Sunday 24th May.**

Next month's 2nd Sunday service will be on Sunday 14th June at 10:30am, where the theme will be *Fruits of the Spirit* and we would love to see you there.

**Preserving our heritage:** Both our churches play a part in continuing the living tradition of sacred choral music - a tradition which goes back more than 500 years. When the choir of 25, made up of 'regulars' and 'guests' sings at Choral Evensong in Westerham on the first Sunday each month, we help to keep alive a tradition which dates back to the time of Elizabeth I. It's a tradition which is seeking recognition as a UNESCO Living Heritage. The choir also continues one of its own traditions: the music. We often sing the Responses composed by St Mary's late Director of Music, Michael Barlow.

Music is essential to the life of the Benefice - and it's not limited to sacred choral music or, indeed, modern worship songs. As we work towards the restoration of the wonderful organ at St Mary's, who will ever forget the performance of '*Ahoy for the Mary Rose*' with five primary schools, singers from within and without the church, with accompaniment by the composer? How wonderful it was to have members of both our choirs sing together at Revd Emma's licensing! And we are invited to sing at other churches and cathedrals, too, including Rochester Cathedral last year. Do join us at Lancing College on 7<sup>th</sup> June if you can.

And of course, the richness of our music ministry is made possible by the dedication and skill of our Directors of Music, our other musicians and singers, and the organs in both churches that enrich and enlarge our life together.

**Summer Teas at St John's United Reform Church, Marsh Green, 3 – 5pm on Saturdays 13<sup>th</sup> June, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 15<sup>th</sup> August and 19<sup>th</sup> September: live music, children's activities, open nature reserve and delicious cake.**

**Saturday 30th May, 10am to 4pm, A Prayer Festival at St Benedict's Centre, West Malling. Please see poster for details.**



**No Mow May** is one of the easiest ways to help the environment – letting wildflowers like daisies, dandelions and clovers grow while supporting bees and butterflies. No lawn is too small. Even the tiniest wild patch can provide vital food for insects and give wildlife the best start to summer. You can still pledge

to join this initiative [via the Plantlife website](#) and get your free No Mow May Guide for top tips and tricks and the wildflowers and pollinators to keep an eye out for! (Source: <https://www.plantlife.org.uk>)

**Trinity School in Sevenoaks** is looking for an Assistant Chaplain, who does not need to be ordained. Follow the link for more information: [Opportunities at Trinity School - Trinity School](#)

**A Prayer for Peace:** God of peace and justice, we lift up to you the peoples of Ukraine, the Middle East and Sudan today. We pray for all the world's war zones, for the laying down of weapons and end to calls of violence; for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them; for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions. Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear, asking you to hold, protect and provide for them. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

**To receive the newsletter via email, please sign up via the website or email the Benefice Office (details below).**

**Newsletter items should be sent to the Benefice Office by 12pm on Wednesdays: [office@chwbenefice.org](mailto:office@chwbenefice.org)**

## **Contact Us**

**Benefice Office** 01959 561330; [office@chwbenefice.org](mailto:office@chwbenefice.org)  
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