



Services

Sunday 19th July, Seventh after Trinity

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.

Readings: [Romans 8:12-25](#); [Matthew 13:24-30](#), [36-43](#)

There will be a *2nd Sunday* planning meeting after the service – please come along if you'd like to get involved.

Diary

Day	Time	This week in our churches
Tuesday	9am	Morning Prayer (Crockham Hill): a short service of prayers and readings
	9am	Churchill School Leavers' service at Westerham
	10am – 12 noon	Coffee Time at Westerham Community Hub in the John Fryth Room (JFR). Join us for tea, coffee, snacks and friendship
	7.45pm	Bellringing practice
Wed - Sat	9am	Morning Prayer (Westerham) in the Resurrection Chapel
Wednesday	10am	Midweek Communion (Westerham): a said service.
	10am – 12 noon	Jigsaw Group at Westerham Community Hub in the JFR. Come along for refreshments and a chat
	6.30pm	Crockham Hill PCC
Thursday		No Choir practice until 3rd September

Sunday 26th July, Eighth after Trinity

10.00am, Holy Communion with Baptism at Crockham Hill: a relaxed, welcoming service in modern language with hymns including the baptism of Rose. Please pray for her as she takes this first step in her journey with Christ. Please join us for refreshments and a chat after the service.

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

Readings: [Romans 8:26-end](#); [Matthew 13:31-33,44-52](#)

News

Wednesday 29th July at 6pm at Crockham Hill. Meeting of the Joint Church Council.

Tuesday 4th August at 1pm: Funeral of the late Jane Edwards at Westerham. Please remember her family in your prayers.

Wednesday 5th August at 7.30pm, Westerham Parochial Church Council Meeting. If you have any agenda items, please send them to the Benefice Office **by Monday 27th July.**

We were saddened to learn of the death of **Jeannie Pearch**, a much-loved and longstanding member of the Westerham congregation and choir. Details of her funeral will follow when confirmed. Please remember her family in your prayers.

In June and July, our Family Service at Crockham Hill and *2nd Sunday* at Westerham have been exploring the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. It's wonderful to have had that continuity across the Benefice. Last Sunday at *2nd Sunday*, adults and children had a joyful and moving time reflecting on those Gifts and sharing how they wanted to deepen them.

There was live music from our band (return of the flute!) and singers, with Kerry leading the actions to *My Lighthouse* with such enthusiasm that the whole congregation had a good physical workout as well as a spiritual one! Plus bible readings from Lorraine and Alma-Rose, a bible discussion, decorating paper doves and gift boxes with Gifts of the Spirit commitments, private prayer space and the usual fellowship over refreshments.

Thank you to everyone involved - from those who attended, to those who helped plan, set up, take part and/or pack away afterwards.

Our next 2nd Sunday service will be on Sunday 9th August at 10.30am, where the theme will be Divine Beauty, and EVERYONE is very welcome.

If you would like to get involved in planning the 2nd Sunday services, or have an idea for a song, hymn, activity or reading, or would like to join the band or choir, please do come along to our next planning session, after the 10:30am service on Sunday 19th July.

A message from Jess

Dear friends at Crockham Hill and Westerham,

Please forgive the time it has taken me to write to you, the last two months have been packed with activity and significant changes!

As a family, we are now in our new home in Tunbridge Wells. Our new parishes have kindly given us a bit of time to move and unpack, and this week we are 'beginning proper' in our new congregations. Everyone has been very welcoming.

My ordination on 27th June was a very special day, and I'd like to thank you all of you who came to support me at the service. I truly appreciate you taking the time to travel to Rochester and join me on what was an exceptionally hot day. It meant a lot to me to have you there.

Thank you also to those of you who contributed so generously to my leaving gift back in May. Not only did it cover the cost of my ordination stole, but it also provided some welcome support towards the cost of our move. Thank you, too, for the flowers, cards, and other gifts, all of which left me feeling very loved, supported, and appreciated.



Although my time at Crockham Hill and Westerham was relatively short, I thank God for the time I was able to spend amongst you. Being part of your community was a real blessing and it is a time I will always value.

Every blessing, Jess

The photo shows Jess with her husband, Craig, who was also ordained as a deacon on the same day.



Called Together Quarterly Update: Did you know? In March 2025, the Diocese of Rochester secured nearly £11 million from the National Church

to support the *Called Together* vision. This is a nine-year programme to grow missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples. This is the largest external funding award the Diocese has received in support of mission and ministry. It is designed to enrich every church setting.

Growing God's kingdom across the Diocese of Rochester

Our Benefice is part of the Diocese of Rochester. As a community of faith across Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley, we are on a shared journey to grow God's Kingdom. This diocesan-wide plan – *Called Together* – is now supported by the grant from the National Church to make this vision a reality.

Diocesan vision helping support local parish plans

In the latest update on the diocesan-wide *Called Together* vision, find out how churches across the Diocese are starting to see the benefits, with new staff funded by the bid in post, bringing increased capacity to support churches with their local mission, from schools' engagement and leadership development to parish revitalisation and mission initiatives.



To read more about these initiatives, scan the QR code or visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/about-us/ourvision/progress-updates or pick up a printed sheet as you leave church today.

Notices

Thank you to Bruce who recently led not one, but two **U3A group tours** at Westerham: one on architecture and the other on art. Both groups were impressed by the breadth of his knowledge and passion for each subject. Thank you also to Christina for providing drinks and her famous cheese scones. The tours raised approximately £230 for church funds.

Tanzania Link: Rochester Diocese maintains links with Dioceses in Tanzania, aiming to:

- support and encourage each other in God's mission,
- to learn about each other's history and tradition,
- to share our spiritual and material resources and to build strong and lasting friendships, and
- to advance the Kingdom of God within our dioceses.

Crockham Hill has long been fruitful in supporting this work and Westerham PCC has now resolved to join in. We are looking for somebody from Westerham congregation who would like to find out more, and join in with Crockham Hill to make this work part of the mission and life of the whole Benefice. If you think this might be you, please speak to Revds Dave or Emma.

Key Points from the Westerham PCC Meeting on 24th June:

To investigate PopUp Church, which works on bringing church and schools together.

To join in with Crockham Hill on its mission links in Tanzania.

Revd Emma will be hosting some events at the Vicarage in Crockham Hill – more details to follow.

It was agreed that a social media policy is required.

It was agreed to more actively support Christian Aid. Ged Bates was appointed to lead this important work at Westerham.

Rachel Preston was reconfirmed as the Environmental Advocate.

Judy Duffield was appointed as the Lay Chair, with members to take their turn as chair at future meetings.

Revd Dave and Ebru Walker will meet with CCLA to find out what happened with the investments last year and this year's forecast.

Arrangements and finances required to sign the contract for the organ restoration were discussed and will be investigated further.

The **Edenbridge Foodbank** has low stocks of chopped tomatoes, dried pasta, pasta sauce, tinned pasta, cereals (no oats please!), pulses (tinned chickpeas, lentils, white beans, etc), long-life milk, coffee, tea and biscuits. Thank you for your continued support – it is really appreciated.



Churchyard Tap at Westerham: we are pleased to report that the tap has now been mended, which is especially helpful in this hot weather. Thank you to Christina, David and Richard, the plumber.

Revd Emma is on leave this week. Please pray for a restful and enjoyable time, and remember to contact Revd Dave or the Office with anything urgent that you would normally address to her.



Swifts in the Belfry: Westerham Swifts (A Tale of Hope and Survival)

Swifts occupied nooks and crannies in Westerham Church for hundreds of years, but around 20 years ago the belfry was 'netted' and the many gaps under

the roof eaves blocked up with mortar to deter bats in the belfry and jackdaws and pigeons under the main roof. As a consequence, the swift population plummeted. Happily, four years ago the nets were removed on the north side of the belfry, enabling the installation of swift nesting boxes, and in tandem with Eco Church, swifts were welcomed back and moves to attract them began.

A beautiful set of swift boxes was installed in the belfry complete with a caller broadcasting swift calls several times a day during the season (May to August) to attract passing birds and encourage them to stay and hopefully breed.

At the same time, rewilding of the churchyard continued, resulting in a vastly increased number of insects to provide food for swifts, other birds and bats. The summer of 2022 saw a renewed interest in the natural world with many more people walking to exercise during Covid and Westerham Swifts developed and grew. Watching swifts and particular behaviours resulted in an active WhatsApp group collecting data and keeping track of numbers.

Now in our fourth year, we are currently watching (we think) some of the young birds we first saw four years ago. Swifts do not breed until four years old and this year has seen a phenomenal rise in numbers. All the attendant breeding behaviours have been noticed, such as screaming and racing around the church and across the town, getting excited when the bells chime or the organ plays, and yes breaking into the nave! (This year on several occasions already). Older church members remember this happening years ago and although rather alarming to those unused to the ritual (sorry about that), it marks a renaissance of confident swifts ready to breed and hopefully repopulate the church and surrounds!

In 2002 when the Resurrection Chapel refurbishment was underway, there was consultation about what images should be etched into the glass screen. Angela Bird (!) wife of the then Vicar, Revd Peter Bird, proposed that swifts should feature because at that time they were regular visitors and, arriving around the festival of Pentecost (50 days after Easter), their screaming reminded her of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Three swifts, also representing the Holy Trinity, feature on the screen flying past the church spire.



Thank you, St Mary's and particularly Revd Dave, who has championed these amazing creatures from the start.

With immense gratitude, Lynne Proudfoot (Westerham Swift Group Co-ordinator).

A Prayer for Peace: God of peace and justice, we pray for the peoples of Ukraine, the Middle East, Somalia and Sudan today. We pray for all the world's war zones, for the laying down of weapons and an end to calls of violence; for all those fearing 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.

**Please send news and notices to the Benefice Office
by 12pm on Wednesdays**

Contact Us

Benefice Office 01959 561330; office@chwbenefice.org
Open Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri, 9am to 1pm. **Closed Thursday**
Website: www.chwbenefice.org

Vicar: Revd David Fox-Branch (rest day Monday)
Associate Priest: Revd Emma Wylie TSSF
(working days Sunday – Wednesday)