

Vicar's View – Westerham APCM Meeting on 20 May 2026

Much of what I have to say is already said. But I'll repeat some of my closing comments in the PCC report and add a little more.

Being a church is different to membership of any other voluntary organisation. Outwardly, we're like other charities, with committees and elections and relatively few people doing the 'official' work but our inner life, which is not so easy to see for outsiders, is one in which everybody has a place and vocation.

Vocations change over time, but they never cease and I hope that you get a sense of them from the reports you have been reading. Flower arrangers, churchwardens, churchyard helpers, PCC members, readers, intercessors, choir members and musicians, safeguarding, schools work, Treasurer, sidespeople everybody deserves thanks but if I try to thank everyone, I will forget somebody and so many of you fill numerous roles both within the church and the wider community. From one day to the next, there never ceases to be somebody at work, doing something to help our mission to make God known in this place, and to turn hearts to Christ. In the name of Christ Jesus, thank you to you all.

As we look to the future, we acknowledge the past and give thanks for everything and everyone who has brought us to this time. We mourn our dead (but with hope) and welcome the newcomer.

What will that future look like? Well, we never know for sure. As I write these words a new chapter is starting in our life together as Revd Emma settles in as Associate Minister, and Jess Spickernell leaves us for ordination. We do not yet know the full story, and how can we? God knows, though, and I think it will be rooted in those three words, Worship, Welcome and Community.

In these, if we choose, we can find the fulness of the Gospel, of the truth of God with us and his desire for us to be with him; of his calling and invitation to us be shaped individually and as community, ever more into his image in Christ Jesus. And to do so in service to one another, to the stranger, to our community and to the world.

God's vision for his people is to be community – to be gathered. To be his *Ekklesia*, to use the word that Jesus uses in the Gospel. Each of us has a part to play, and all of us need each other if we are to fully play that part within his body, the church.

I really do believe that God is actively calling people in this parish community into something – some things – new. Do you, personally, feel a sense of that call? Where is it leading? Do you struggle to believe that it could be you? I would be very happy to chat about your sense of vocation.

Whatever is in store I think, hope and pray that the next few years will be times of blessing and new life for the parishes of Crockham Hill and Westerham.

Revd David Fox-Branch