

A letter from your curate, August 2026

Dear friends,

If there is one word that keeps rising to the surface this month, it is **joy**. Not the thin, fragile kind that depends on everything going well, but the deep, steady joy that Paul writes about in *Philippians* — joy that grows in partnership, in prayer, in perseverance, and in seeing God at work in one another.



Paul's letter bubbles over with gratitude for the people around him, and this month our parish has every reason to echo that same thanksgiving. God is stirring up gifts among us, calling people into new forms of service, and reminding us that the work of the gospel is always shared work. We never do this alone.

Joy in Growing Vocations

This month we celebrate and give heartfelt thanks for several members of our church family who are stepping forward into vocational roles. Their willingness to listen, to learn, and to serve is a sign of God's ongoing work among us — the very thing Paul rejoices over in *Philippians*.

- **Ruth Gibbs** has generously taken on the role of **Parish Safeguarding Officer**. Safeguarding is holy work — quiet, careful, essential — and we are deeply grateful for Ruth's commitment to helping our parish remain a safe and nurturing place for all.
- **Mark Coates** begins his training to become a **Licensed Lay Minister**. Mark's faithfulness, prayerfulness, and pastoral heart have long been a blessing to our community, and we rejoice as he steps into this next stage of discernment and formation.
- **Denise Williams** and **Deb Adams** are starting a one-year training course with Portsmouth Diocese as they explore whether they might become **Authorised Lay Ministers**. Their gifts of compassion, presence, and service already enrich our parish life, and we look forward to seeing how God continues to shape and use them.
- **Mary Singh** begins her ministry as an **Anna Friend**, working alongside Elaine Davenport and Julie Brown. This is a ministry of gentleness, patience, and Christlike love — and Mary brings all of these in abundance.

Each of these people is responding to God's call in their own way, and each reminds us of Paul's joyful confidence: "*He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.*" Their journeys encourage us to ask how God might be calling each of

us — quietly, steadily, joyfully — to grow in faith and service. If you feel God is calling you to serve Him in the church here in Cowplain please speak to Rev Chris or Rev Polly. Moses was 80 when God called him and sent him to free the people of Israel, Abraham was 75 when he left Haran in response to God's call, Samuel, Gideon and David were young when they first heard God's call on their lives. Age is not a barrier to responding to God's call.

Joy in Community

As we continue exploring Philippians together in our 11 am services and through our house groups, I invite you to notice the small sparks of joy in your daily life:

- the kindness offered unexpectedly
- the courage found when you didn't think you had any
- the peace that arrives in prayer
- the sense of belonging when we gather as Christ's people

Joy isn't something we manufacture. It's something we recognise — a sign of God's presence already at work.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming weeks, we'll continue to explore how joy shapes our discipleship. Joy doesn't deny hardship; it transforms it. Joy doesn't erase struggle; it accompanies us through it. Joy doesn't ask us to pretend; it invites us to trust.

My prayer for us this month is simple: **That our love may overflow more and more, with knowledge, wisdom, and joy.**

May we be a community that celebrates each other's gifts, supports each other's callings, and shines with the quiet confidence that Christ is near and that **we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.**

With gratitude and joy,

Rev'd Polly



If anything I have written has challenged you, or if there is anything that you would like to talk through please don't hesitate to contact me, revdpolly@gmail.com, or one of the others from the ministry team.