

## **HOPE**

As I write, we have reached the time of year where we have our Annual Parochial Church Meeting and we have just celebrated a joyous Easter. The Bible calls us to be ready at all times to give an account of the hope that is in us, so here are 3 particular reasons for hope on our journey forward.

**1. The past.** Our record of surviving tough times is currently 100% as we are still here. Our stories and what we have accomplished, given, learned and developed contain the wisdom and strength we need to go forward, and when we combine those stories we can gain from everyone else's experiences too. Our past gives us much to be thankful for, shows us who is trustworthy and reminds us of blessings we have enjoyed. God's people always tell the stories of God's past goodness as a reason for hope. At our APCM each year, we tell the story of our year to remind ourselves of how far we have come and how we have loved, journeyed, learned and been upheld. Experience makes it easier to trust for the future.

**2. The company.** We do not travel alone, but in families (blood and chosen), groups and communities. Our relationships can be a great source of strength, inspiration, wisdom, humour and support. At our APCM each year, we thank, honour and celebrate all those who journey with us and minister to us in so many different ways, in Church and community. We have a wonderful family of God here in Brightlingsea!

**3. God.** The Bible tells us that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. God's love for us unchanging and God will never leave us nor forsake us. We believe it is by God's power working in us and not through our own strength and skill that we are able to live the life of faith together. As we go into the rest of this year and beyond, into the change and upheaval of the All Saints' project and the challenges of living with Covid19, rising bills and increasing poverty, we can trust that the God we have walked with thus far will still be with us. Amen and amen!

*Every blessing, Caroline*