

From the Manse: A Thought for the Week **Sunday 19th April 2026**

Dear Friends,

Recently someone handed me their Church lines at the door. They wanted to formally join our congregation, or our church family. This got me thinking, we (or I) often use the phrase “church family.” We say it easily. Warmly. Almost automatically. But what does it really mean? Well, when we call ourselves a church family, we are saying something far deeper than that we meet in the same building on a Sunday. We are saying that we belong to one another in a way that reflects the love of Jesus Christ.

The early Christians understood this profoundly. In Acts of the Apostles, we read that they shared meals, shared resources, shared prayers, and shared their lives. They did not simply attend worship together — they lived together in faith. They carried one another’s burdens. They rejoiced together. They grieved together. They noticed when someone was missing. They made sure no one was forgotten. That is what family does. A church family is not built on similarity. We are not all the same age, temperament, background, or opinion. In fact, the beauty of the church is that we are wonderfully different. What holds us together is not that we are alike, but that we are held together by the love of Christ.

In a family: We look out for one another. We forgive one another. We are patient with one another. We support one another in difficult times. We celebrate with one another in joyful times. We show up — especially when it would be easier not to. Being church community means knowing that you are never simply a name on a roll. You are known. You are valued. You are prayed for. You matter. It means that when someone is unwell, others step in. When someone is grieving, others sit quietly beside them. When someone is struggling, others gently carry the load. When someone rejoices, we all rejoice. It means that faith is not something we do privately, but something we live together.

This is why coffee after the service matters. This is why phone calls matter. This is why visiting matters. This is why remembering birthdays, anniversaries, and life events matters. These small acts are not small at all. They are the threads that weave us into a true community.

And perhaps most importantly, church family means that no one walks alone. The world can be a lonely place. Many people are surrounded by others yet feel deeply isolated. The church is called to be different — to be a place where people are welcomed, noticed, and included; where strangers become friends, and friends become family.

In 1 Corinthians, we are reminded that we are “one body with many parts.” Each person has a role. Each person is needed. Each person contributes to the life of the whole. You may feel that what you do is small — a smile at the door, a quiet word of encouragement, putting out the chairs, making the tea, offering a prayer — but these are the very things that build community. They are the living expression of love in action.

Church family is not perfect. No family ever is. We sometimes misunderstand each other. We sometimes disappoint each other. But we keep choosing to belong to one another because Christ has first chosen us. That is the heart of it. We are a family not because we are flawless, but because we are forgiven.

Therefore, this week, perhaps we might each ask ourselves: Who in our church family might need a phone call? Who have we not seen for a while? Who might be feeling on the edges rather than at the centre? How can we make sure they know they belong? Because being church is not about buildings, programmes, or even services. It is about people. It is about belonging. It is about love lived out in ordinary, faithful ways. And when we do this well, we become a glimpse of what the Kingdom of God looks like.

With every blessing,
Rev Jade