Embargoed to Sunday 15 November 2026

Announcement for the Benefice of St Peter and St Paul, Edenbridge

The Bishop of Rochester is delighted to announce that Revd Richard Fermer is to be appointed as the new full time Priest in Charge for the Benefice of St Peter and St Paul, Edenbridge, subject to the completion of legal formalities.

Richard is currently Vicar of All Souls, Crockenhill in this Diocese, and has previously served as Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and as an Incumbent in the Diocese of London, an Assistant Chaplain in the Diocese in Europe, and as an USPG Mission Companion in Brazil, where he met his wife Giseli, who is a massage therapist and aesthetician. His father is a "Kentish man", and Richard's grandparents lived until their passing in Maidstone.

Prior to ordination Richard was a teacher, and he remains passionate about the nurture and discipleship of young people. He has a doctorate in theology from King's College London.

Art, drama, music and poetry have always been integral to Richard's spirituality and ministry, inherited from his mother, who is a professional artist, while his wife Giseli has brought dance and the distinct rhythms of Brazilian music and carnival.

Richard has musical roots and has served in many churches with good choral traditions and is looking forward to working with St Peter's and St Paul's strong choir, as it enriches worship.

Richard says: "In Genesis, it is a river that waters the Garden of Eden. It is a river of "the water of life" that supplies the "New Jerusalem", a vision of what is to come, in the Book of Revelation. Spiritually speaking, this is the creative and animating energy of God's Spirit, and fills me with excitement as I come to minister in the place known as the "Bridge over the Eden".

God has been faithful to the congregation of St Peter's and St Paul's during a long three year interregnum, and has been at work. I am looking forward to gathering that fruit, already evident in an openness and an eagerness to reach out further to the wider community. There is also much to build on with the impressive working together of churches in the town.

Edenbridge is changing. The city is coming to the garden. The vision of Eden is of harmony between nature, humankind and God. As we engage with people and invite them to share our life as a community, let us pray we can inspire with a holistic Gospel pattern of life that loves neighbour, creation, and the God who has given everything so that the "living water" might flow and sustain us.

To do that, we know that we will have to *change*, we will *grow* still further*,* and we will continue to *serve,* following Jesus, who was servant of all."

Richard and Giseli hope to move to Edenbridge in mid-January. In the meantime, please hold Richard and Giseli in your prayers as they make their farewells and prepare for their move. Pray also for the people of Crockenhill, who will be sad to see their departure.

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge, Nick Cornell, writes: "*I am delighted that Richard has accepted God's call to Edenbridge. We look forward very much to welcoming Richard and Giseli in the new year and to the next chapter of ministry at St Peter and St Paul. Please join me in praying for Richard, for the people of Edenbridge as they await his arrival, and for the parish he will be leaving in Crockenhill, praying that God's rich blessing will rest upon them as they enter a new season of ministry".*

It is planned that Richard's licensing will take place early in 2027, more details to follow.

Issued by the office of the Archdeacon of Tonbridge, Ven Nick Cornell
EA to Archdeacon: sal.hamlyn@rochester.anglican.org

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