

Faith Comment for Petersfield Post 3rd July 2025
Canon Susie Collingridge, Area Dean (Petersfield) and
Priest in Charge of Steep and Froxfield with Privett



Primary School Assembly Bangers

What are your richest primary school memories? Sports? Reading? Lunchtime? Maths? Someone told me that their grandson loves Collective Worship best (what we used to call *assembly*). He comes home sharing what he's learnt and sung. They're grappling with the Christian value of *Justice* at the moment. If you have been following the Glastonbury Festival you might have seen James Partridge with his Primary School Assembly Bangers show.

Music can reach us in a unique way. Music can help us feel close to others as we listen or sing together, and songs can help us put words and thoughts to our feelings. It can move us to dance to express ourselves – whether on a dancefloor, a ballet stage or in church pew or a mosh pit! As any football or rugby fan will tell you, there's something very special about a big group of people singing together.

Music can take us right back to when we first heard a song. A relative with dementia could no longer manage conversations with others, but when their sisters visited and shared songs from their childhood, amazingly she opened her eyes and joined in the singing. We can remember songs when we've forgotten everything else.

I wonder what your favourite 'Assembly Bangers' are? At church weddings people sometimes suggest *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, reminding them of the glories of the natural world, or the lively *Lord of the Dance* that follows the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. *One More Step Along The World I Go* tells of embarking on a new chapter of life, and asking God to lead us and walk along with us. *Shine, Jesus Shine* is a joyous celebration, and a prayer for God to use us to change the world for the better. At my school (back in the Dark Ages!) we sang from our little blue hymn books. Even those of us who were not religious at the time adored *Praise my Soul the King of Heaven* which raised the roof at the start and end of term. We all love celebrating a special occasion with songs and other music that is meaningful for ourselves, our families and friends.

It's part of what I love most about church – people from different walks of life getting together and singing their hearts out to God. I think it gives us a little taste of heaven!