

Hello Everyone

It has been so wonderful to feel a hint of Spring in the air today with birds singing in the bare tree tops and daffodils, snowdrops, primroses, and aconites bursting forth in Toddington Church grounds. People have breathed a sigh of relief today to sense the warmer weather, looking up to the sunlight peeping through the grey clouds, to absorb a little vitamin D... and there is hope in the air. Today's coffee morning at Wilkinson Hall had a busy, happy atmosphere with folks enjoying company, cake and catch up after all that rain! Thank you so much to all who have provided this week for Youth group, Wednesday warmer lunch, Time with Friends, and coffee morning. They are all such special times.

This week has also been a time of Architect, Structural Engineer and Builder visits. Both churches now have areas shrouded in plastic sheeting as work either commences or investigations progress. The Chancel plaster repair work began at Toddington church on Friday and the Reredos and the altar are now hidden under protective covering to avoid damage while work progresses to remove the 'old' blown plaster in readiness for the new, fresh plaster replacement.

At Chalgrave Church, the structural engineer, architect and builder climbed up to the top level of scaffolded platforms to examine the roof beams. We now know that both ends of the Nave roof beam, which had been causing concern, need to be replaced. The wood on each end is soft and rotting, due to damp (probably dating back to when the roof lead was stolen some years back). Unfortunately, another large beam end towards the centre of the Nave also needs replacing, plus a smaller roof beam needs repair. Sadly, it will be a much bigger job than first thought, and much more expensive too. We will now await the Engineer's report, repricing quotes and will then have to submit an application to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for permission to proceed. We will also need to apply for grants to help us to cover costs. I've attached some pictures of this week's building projects, plus some pictures of some lovely spring flowers.

This week we move into the season of Lent in our church services with Ash Wednesday swiftly following Shrove Tuesday. There will be a benefice Ash Wednesday Holy Communion service, with the Imposition of Ashes, at Toddington Church at 6.30pm. All are welcome.

I've attached a separate calendar of this month's events for your information but have listed below next week's events:

This Sunday's Services

9.30 am Holy Communion, Chalgrave - Nigel (and Linda)

11.00 am Holy Communion Service, Toddington - Nigel (and Linda)

This week's services and events:

Monday 12th February

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington Church

Tuesday 13th February

10.30 am Knitting Group, Wilkinson Hall

Wednesday 14th February Ash Wednesday

12.00 noon Lent Lunch, Wilkinson Hall

2.00 pm Friends of St George's Church, Trustees meeting, Wilkinson Hall

3.00 pm Friends fundraising meeting, Wilkinson Hall

6.30 pm Ash Wednesday Benefice Holy Communion Service with the Imposition of Ashes, Toddington Church

Thursday 15th February

2.00 pm Fellowship time, Wilkinson Hall

Friday 16th February

10.30 am Painting for Pleasure group, Wilkinson Hall

On Thursday 29 February we begin a new 10 week **Alpha Course** at the Rectory at 6.30 pm, which will mainly be held on Thursday evenings, with an occasional Wednesday. It is a wonderful time to learn more about the Christian faith in a friendly, informal setting. We begin with refreshments, then watch a film on a different weekly theme exploring such topics as Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? How can I be sure of My Faith? Why and How should I read the Bible? Does God Heal? Why and how do I pray? What does the Holy Spirit do? Then we move into small discussion groups to consider what we have heard that evening. The sessions soon become very special, with folks valuing each others company and by the end of the course, people have made new friends and feel like part of a bigger family. All are welcome. Please ring Linda to have a chat and for more details. (07715 603557 or 01525 714442). The course dates are: Thursdays 29 Feb, 7, 14 and 21 March, Wednesday 27 March, and then after a short break for Easter time, we recommence on Thursdays 18, 25, April, 2, 9 and 16 May.

Alpha is an ideal introduction to the Christian Faith for anyone wishing to consider being confirmed. Do please have a word with me if you would be interested to confirm your faith at a Confirmation service.

I'm also happy to consider leading a Lent Course if folks would like one?

Do please link if you would like a chat, a prayer or any support.

Have a good week

God bless

Linda

Rector

Toddington and Chalgrave