

Hello Everyone

Hasn't it been a wet week! With flooded fields, paths and roads, and with streams and rivers about to burst their banks.. I wonder if we all need to grow webbed feet! Despite the rain, it has been a very mild February and the Spring flowers and blossoms are quickly appearing, to uplift our spirits. There are lots of good things to give thanks for this week, with the first stage of the internal plaster restoration work at Toddington Church completed, and Chalgrave's restoration work about to start on Monday; The new curtains were hung in Wilkinson Hall early this morning, which I am very much looking forward to seeing tomorrow. The Hall has been undergoing a spring clean with Bridget and Tom hard at work redecorating. The kitchen looks bright and clean, the Hall itself looks so much better after its lick of emulsion, and the entrance hall is about to get some TLC too. Thank you so much to Bridget and Tom for all their hard work.

Other special events this week were Youth Group's gathering on Tuesday night, led by Rebecca, Doug and Bridget with an Eco focus this week, after the God and prayer slot. There was a special atmosphere as I left the group on Tuesday as they settled down for their session. Thank you so much Rebecca, Doug and Bridget for your time and care in leading.

On Wednesday, there was another very successful Pop-Up Tea Room run by Chalgrave Church at Tebworth Memorial Hall, with a good crowd attending for those cakes and savouries which have become so popular. Many thanks to the faithful team who cook and serve: Alison, Sue, Sandy, Sue and David and Margaret (and usually Jane.. and to those who also provide cakes but can't be there!). Wednesday was a busy day because it was also Lent lunch at Toddington where homemade soup is served with a roll, followed by fruit and a drink. It is each Wednesday during Lent at 12 noon at Wilkinson Hall. Thank you again to the team who provided this week. The Lent lunches are covered by the different churches.. but thank you all who come or serve, and who help raise funds for the Foodbank (or for those in need locally).

Thank you also to the happy Messy Church team who led the previous week's Messy Church session. It is so good of everyone to work together so well as a team to provide for the children and families. I understand there were some good crafts and Malcolm inspired the children with stories of the Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep as they considered 'Perseverance' and then the children enjoyed a hot meal.

On the theme of Perseverance.. the New Village Magazine is underway with the team persevering; gathering in articles and adverts and information to prepare a magazine for release to cover the months of April and May. Thank you all so much. This will be such an asset for the Village. We have missed the magazine!

On Thursday evening fifteen people attended the first session of the new Alpha course, which was warmly hosted by Rachel and Doug in their home this week. They provided a very tasty meal for all of us and put us all at our ease before we settled down to watch the first session entitled 'Is there more to life than this'. Following the talk we enjoyed time in two groups getting to know each other better as we discussed the evening's talk. Thank you

Rachel and Doug for your kind and generous hospitality. Next week, we meet at the Rectory at 6.30pm for the second session: 'Who is Jesus?'. You are warmly invited, but please, if possible, could you let me know you are coming (for catering numbers). Each week we will start with a meal, before settling to listen to the main talk. As the weeks progress, a special bond and friendship develops between those attending. Do come and join us.. you will be most welcome.

On Friday, folks gathered for the World Day of Prayer service at Harlington, for which the ladies of Palestine had prepared the service liturgy. The service is led by volunteers from various churches in the area. Thank you to all who took part, and who met to worship, pray and support the people of Palestine. Let us continue to hold the conflict in Palestine and Israel, Ukraine and Russia and so many other parts of the world in our prayers, and pray for peace and love and care for all.

Looking ahead to this week's upcoming services and events:

Sunday Services:

9.30 am Holy Communion Service, Chalgrave Church - Linda and Nigel

11.00 am Holy Communion Service, Toddington Church - Linda and Nigel

(It is possible that, due to the restoration work at Chalgrave, we may not be able to lead services at Chalgrave Church on Sunday 10th and 17th. If that is the case, we will gather at Toddington for a Benefice service at 11.00 am instead.. but more information next week, when we know better). The builder needs to install further scaffolding support under the Nave beam, which is damaged at both ends, so we will not be able to hold services until all is safe and secure. In the meantime.. he is ordering the Oak needed for the restoration.

This week's services and events:

Monday 4th March

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington Church

Tuesday 5th March

10.30 am Knitting Group, Wilkinson Hall

Wednesday 6th March

12.00 noon, Lent Lunch, Wilkinson Hall

Thursday 7th March

12.00 noon Ploughman's 'hot' lunch, Wilkinson Hall

6.30 pm Alpha Course, the Rectory, (hot meal served at the beginning, followed by the talk 'Who is Jesus' and discussion time). Finishes about 8.45pm

Friday 8th March

10.30 am Painting for Pleasure Group, Wilkinson Hall

Saturday 9th March

10.00 am Coffee Time and Book stall, Wilkinson Hall

Sunday 10th March - Mothering Sunday service (expected to be a Benefice, Family Service at Toddington Church, 11.00 am)

Sunday 17th March - is likely to be a Benefice morning service 11.00 am, Toddington Church with Evensong, 6.00 pm also at Toddington Church

Looking ahead to Easter Services and events:

We hope to install interactive prayer stations in church again this year.. do pop by during Easter Week to spend some quiet time in church. The church is open during daylight hours.

Palm Sunday 24 March 11.00 am service at Toddington and hopefully 9.30 am at Chalgrave
Alpha: Wednesday 27th March, 6.30 pm (please note the change of day - because of Maundy Thursday services)

Maundy Thursday 28th March:

Visit to church by Toddington St George Lower School for a special school Easter Service (time tbc).

11.00 am Annual Chrism Service at St Albans Abbey for ministers and members of the congregations. Please let me know if you would like to attend. I can give a lift to 3 people.

6.00 pm Maundy Thursday Benefice Supper, Wilkinson Hall

7.30 pm Holy Communion Service, Toddington Church

Good Friday 29th March

10.00 am 'An Hour at the Cross', reflective service at Chalgrave Church

10.30 am Good Friday, Messy Church, Wilkinson Hall (until about 12 noon)

2.00 pm 'An hour at the Cross' reflective service at Toddington Church.

Easter Sunday 31st March

9.30 am Holy Communion Service, Chalgrave Church

11.00 am, Holy Communion Service, Toddington Church

Looking ahead to St George's Day on 23 April.. we are hoping to organise a special St George's Time Together for the weekend of 20/21st April leading to a special event in the afternoon of 23rd April. More information to follow.

Sorry for the long list of dates but I thought you may like to have them for your diaries.

Have a good week.

God bless

Linda

*Rev Linda Washington
Rector, Toddington and Chalgrave*