

Hello everyone

The temperatures have dipped suddenly and winter is very much upon us. Christmas activities and services are also approaching quickly.

Nigel and I enjoyed a dark, cold walk at Wrest Park last evening, strolling along a wonderful evening light walk through the grounds, admiring the display of coloured lights which highlighted the trees and buildings. It was very cold and wonderfully atmospheric... and very enjoyable.. but there was no obvious sign of reference to Jesus.

Next weekend will be the Toddington Church wonderful Christmas Tree festival which is such a highlight of our year with community groups getting together to contribute their creative ideas and decorations. There will be restricted access to the church from Wednesday whilst the trees are installed but the church will be open for prayer. I wonder where we will find Jesus among the trees? There will be so much to see and to admire (with refreshments available in the Hall). We finish on Sunday, carol singing amidst the trees.

This morning I attended a Christian Breakfast at Frost's garden centre with Fiona Castle speaking about Christmas... and she reflected on how beautiful the centre looks with its twinkling lights and beautiful displays... but then reflected on how so many people celebrate Christmas, and yet have no idea about the person whose birthday we are celebrating. An interesting perspective!

This week, I had the privilege to spend special time in the lower school with colleagues from church, telling the children about Mary (the mother of Jesus) and Elizabeth (the mother of John the Baptist) as part of our Christmas Assemblies and on Friday, a team of us from church headed back into school for an afternoon of making Christingles with the children... such a wonderful time! We gathered later with the children for a time of worship.. with them all proudly holding their Christingles as I explained the symbolism of the Christingle.. remembering Jesus, the light of the world (the white candle), at the centre. It was a very special afternoon, enjoyed by us all, and I was very grateful to Mr Darlington, and the staff, for making us so welcome.

This afternoon, the Linsdale singers gave a wonderful concert of Christmas songs at church.. definitely with Jesus at the heart. And then I popped along to the Christmas Rotary Afternoon Tea.. which had a lovely happy atmosphere, with people contentedly tapping along to the music, enjoying lovely food and time together. I always love this gathering. Was Jesus visible? He was certainly present in the generosity of the provision and care given by the Rotarians and volunteers who were keen to serve and provide a special time. He was there

drawing people together and in the various conversations. He is so often in our interactions and meetings. I wonder where you will find Jesus this week?

Fiona Castle suggested an interesting type of Advent calendar action... to try to do a good deed each day...something that will make someone's day a little brighter. It doesn't need to be much.. and yet it may make all the difference to the person you reach out to. 'What would Jesus do' is an interesting thought each day. Asking God each day to guide us, can bring about some very special moments.

May you be blessed, as you reach out and may we have wonderful opportunities to introduce Jesus into people's Christmas this year.

This week's services and events:

Sunday services 3rd December. Advent Sunday

9.30 am Holy Communion, Chalgrave Church

11.00 am Holy Communion, Toddington Church

Monday 4th December

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington church

Tuesday 5th December

10.30am Knitting Group Wilkinson Hall

Wednesday 6th - Friday 8th December

setting up for the Christmas Tree Festival

Friday 8th December

Christmas Tree Preview evening with wine and canapes at 7.00 pm. Tickets need to be pre-booked and cost £10. Contact Fran Brown 01525 872501

Saturday 9th December

Christmas Tree Festival 11.00 am – 5.00 pm entrance £2.50, children free.

Sunday 10th December

9.30 am service at Chalgrave Church

11.00 am Holy Communion Service Toddington Church

Christmas Tree Festival 1.00 -5.00 pm finishing with carols by the trees. Entrance £2.50, children free.

Upcoming Christmas events:

Tuesday 12th December 5.45 pm Youth Group Christmas Party, Wilkinson Hall

Thursday 14th December 3.30 pm Christmas Messy Church, Wilkinson Hall

Friday 15th December 7.00 pm Scout Carol Service

Saturday 16th December 6.00 pm Carols by Candlelight Chalgrave Church

Sunday 17th December 3.00 pm Toddington Band Christmas Concert,
Toddington Church

Monday 18th December 7.30 pm Nine Lessons and Carols, Toddington Church.

Tuesday 19th December Parkfields Carol services, in church

Wednesday 20th December Toddington St George L S carol service, in church

The church Christmas cards have now arrived and we will be delivering these to homes in Toddington, Tebworth, Wingfield and Chalton. If you have time and energy to deliver some cards, I will be very happy to receive your help! Please send me an email or a text.

(If you, like me, enjoy Christmas Tree Festivals, you may wish to visit Harlington Church festival this Sunday afternoon).

Wishing you a bright and blessed week.

Linda

Rev Linda Washington

Rector Toddington and Chalgrave.