

Hello Everyone,

Spring is definitely in the air, with daffodils, camellia flowers and blossoms emerging, and lawns summoning a new year mow. How much better it feels with the lengthening days and the milder weather approaching.

Folks have happily gathered this week at 'church' for Lent Lunch on Wednesday, Hot Ploughman's meal and the Alpha course on Thursday, and this morning for Coffee morning. Thank you all who have worked so hard this week to cook and provide such splendid hospitality. There is something so special about such times when we share a meal or a cuppa. At last, we are all feeling comfortable to mingle again and to relax together. It is such a relief after those horrible times of lockdown and distancing.

For the next two Sundays 10th and 17th March (and possibly also on Palm Sunday 24th) there will be no Sunday morning service at Chalgrave Church while the Church is closed for restoration work. (We will be meeting for a Benefice Service at Toddington Church instead). Mick the builder is getting on well with the work and when I popped in yesterday I took a few photos which show the two rotted ends of the Chancel beam - at least what is left of them! Mick has been covered in dry rot dust for a week and as you can see there are buckets of dust and very fragile remains of the beam ends alongside the buckets. The scaffolding has been extended across the centre of the church while this beam is repaired, and Mick has installed a pulley to help lift the heavy oak replacements up high ready for the repair. We are very grateful for this work taking place.. and I will feel a lot safer standing underneath the beam, once it has been repaired!

Tomorrow we host a Benefice Sunday Mothering Sunday service at 11.00 am at Toddington Church, and all are welcome. I am very conscious that this day can be a day of poignant sadness for some and a time of celebration for others. We are all on a different journey. I miss my own mother dearly and would love to be able to pop by tomorrow to give her a hug and a thank you for such special times together, but instead, Nigel and I will be visiting the cemetery to lay flowers for both our mothers, with deep love and gratitude in our hearts. I also feel for those who would dearly love to be a mother but who are not, and for those who had a difficult childhood, or who are alongside a child in hospital waiting anxiously for their recovery. My thoughts and prayers go out to you all. Tomorrow, in our service, we will sensitively thank God for the gift of motherhood, aware of the joys it can bring, and also aware of the challenges and sadnesses.

This Thursday offered a wonderful time of joy in school as the children all dressed up as book characters, for World Book Day, celebrating the gift of reading, writing and of special books. It was a wonderfully colourful scene as the children and staff all gathered in the Hall. I saw Superman, The Hulk, Worzel Gummage, Dorothy with her red shoes, characters from Frozen, and so many more. A lovely sea of characters. How special it is to curl up with a book to have a good read. Perhaps we should start a church book club?! It has certainly been a privilege to share in Alpha and we are only two weeks into the course, but how important it is to share our own stories and our faith to build each other up and to encourage each other.

This evening there is a special service at St Albans Abbey to celebrate 30 years of Women into Ordained Ministry. Another special time to share. Here is the online link.

Join us today for our Choral Eucharist celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in person or online.

 Saturday 9 March

 5pm

 The Revd Christina Rees CBE

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBV-2AhaNGU>

This week's Services and Events:

Sunday 10th March

11.00 am Mothering Sunday Benefice Service, with Holy Communion, Toddington Church - Linda and Malcolm

Monday 11th March

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington Church

1.00 pm Chalgrave MAP meeting - the Calders.

No Pilates at Toddington this week (Jo hopes to return in September.. and we will investigating if we can offer a temporary alternative option)

Tuesday 12th March

10.30 am Knitting Group, Wilkinson Hall

2.00 pm Toddington MAP meeting, Wilkinson Hall

5.45 pm Youth Group, Wilkinson Hall

Wednesday 13th March

11.00 am Funeral of Mrs Rosemary Line, Toddington Church

12.00 noon, Lent Lunch, Wilkinson Hall

2.00 pm Toddington PCC, Wilkinson Hall

7.30 pm Deanery Synod, Studham,

Thursday 14th March

2.00 pm Afternoon with Friends, Wilkinson Hall

6.30 pm Alpha Course, session 3: 'Why Did Jesus Die?' - The Rectory, 41 Leighton Road, Toddington. (All Welcome - but please let Rev Linda know you would like to come for catering nos)

Friday 15th March

10.30 am Painting for Pleasure group, Wilkinson Hall

Sunday 17th March

11.00 am Benefice Morning Praise service, Toddington Church - Malcolm

6.00 pm Evensong, Toddington Church - Malcolm

Future Events:

Thursday 4th April Ploughman's Lunch

Our 'Gift Weekend' April 20th- 21st which we hope will include an art display, a children's art and craft display, historical display, refreshments and more.

Sunday 21st April - an evening Confirmation Service, led by Bishop Richard, Toddington Church.

23rd April (St. George's Day) Afternoon Tea in Wilkinson Hall (ticket only)

Have a good week.

God bless

Linda

Rector, Toddington and Chalgrave