

Hello everyone,

What a week this has been. Last week's email was difficult to write, and this week's is similar. Ukraine has been constantly in the news, and we have watched and listened with shock as events have emerged. Why is this happening!

Our hearts ache for the people of Ukraine, Afghanistan and other areas of terrorism and war (on Friday a suicide bomb also exploded in a mosque in Pakistan causing death and injury to many people - described by the Archbishop of Canterbury as a godless and heinous crime). How can such atrocities happen in a modern world? Our screens are full of images which show evil at work and there is a sense of helplessness. The countless stories of families divided, needless pain and the destruction of a peaceable people takes the flavour from our living. We pray, we lament, we look to ways to reach out and give.

The Upper Room online service this week will be dedicated to prayer for Ukraine and our world and we will include prayers in our morning services.

People are keen to help others and aid is being shipped out to support folks, but guidance messages are appearing (on BBC news and other sites) that money donations are the most useful way to support as this can be directed more purposefully to people's needs. Should you wish to donate money to the Disaster Emergency Fund, which includes the Red Cross and other large charities, the Big Give are currently doubling donations under a match funding scheme..

We need to remember in this challenging time, that there are also things to raise our spirits, and this week it has been a joy for Nigel and I between us to host Youth Group, lead another assembly at school, mark the start of Lent with the Ash Wednesday services, take a wedding, share food and fellowship at the Ploughman's lunch and Westcaf, unite with the other local churches in the World Day of Prayer service on Friday, breathe the fresh air and admire the emerging beautiful snow drops, crocus, hyacinths, daffodils and spring flowers and even notice a hint of blossom forming on the trees too. The beauty of God's creation as it is meant to be.

This week has been a week of adjustment, dealing with the shock reality on our screens of families torn apart, possessions left behind, and destruction. It leads us into a time of reflection about what really matters. Let us unite in our prayers for Ukraine, the world, and its people and pray for their protection and come together this Lent to value the special treasures that we have in family and friends, and in our relationship with Christ.

Services this Sunday 6 March

Harlington

8.00 am BCP Holy Communion - Linda

9.00 am Families Breakfast Club - Rebecca

9.30 am Holy Communion - Nigel

12.30 pm Baptism - Nigel

Chalgrave 9.30 am Holy Communion - Linda

Tingrith 9.30 am Morning Praise - Jon

Toddington 11.00 am Holy Communion - Linda

Westoning 11.00 am Holy Communion - Nigel

The Upper Room online service at 6.00 pm. Theme: Praying for Ukraine, Afghanistan and our world
zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86765254593?pwd=VmVuZDladi9BYTd3bHlWUURtbjZKQT09>

For details of how to join please contact Revd Linda

Services and events this week:

Monday 7th March

Morning Prayer Toddington Church 9.30 am

Memorial Service to Paul Scrivener at Westoning Church at 2.30 pm

The Online Bible Course 7.45 pm session 6

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82179935493?pwd=bkh1WndMYnJKWGVyeldPWmdlVUw3Zz09>

For details of how to join please contact Revd Linda

Tuesday 8th March

Westoning Westcaf 10.00 am – 12.00 noon Westoning Village Hall

Sewing Bee 1.00 – 3.00 pm at Westoning Village Hall

The Knitting Group 10.30 am – 12.00 noon, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

Youth Group (9-11 age) 5.30 pm – 7.00 pm, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

Wednesday 9th March

Morning Service at Harlington Church 10.00 am

Thursday 10th March

Lent Course begins via zoom at 7.45pm Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88985497408?pwd=OFA5UHFYMW82Ty9vOWY4VUdRa2ExUT09>

For details of how to join please contact Revd Linda

Friday 11th March

The Painting for Pleasure group 10.30 am – 12.00 noon, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

Little Stars 1.15 - 2.4 5pm Westoning Church

Friday Fellowship 2.00 – 4.00 pm Westoning Village Hall

Messy Church 3.15 - 5.30 pm Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

Saturday 12th March

Diocesan Synod Meeting 9.30 am - 1.30 pm

We wish you a fruitful and blessed week. Do get in touch if you would like a chat, or a time of prayer. Toddington Church will be open from 9.30 am to about 3.00 pm each day this week, if you would like a quiet place to say prayers.

God bless. We wish you love and peace.

Linda and Nigel