

Hello Everyone

I hope last week was kind to you and that this week will be even better!

As the schools settle back after half term holidays, we approach the start of Lent in the church calendar with Shrove Tuesday swiftly followed by Ash Wednesday. We will be holding a 6.00 pm Ash Wednesday service at Toddington church and both Parkfields and the lower school have invited me to in to lead an assembly about Lent. There seem to be many different perspectives by people about Lent. Some incline to 'give up' something for Lent while others prefer a more proactive approach to 'take up' something for Lent.

I read an interesting article by English Heritage about Shrove Tuesday and Lent which said: 'Christians believe that the 40 days before Easter (called Lent) mark the time that Jesus spent fasting in the desert. Traditionally, Christians would spend this time praying and fasting, which meant not eating a range of foods including meat, eggs, fats and milk. The word 'shrove' comes from a Roman Catholic practice – to 'shrive' meant going to confess your sins and being absolved by a priest. In the past, a 'shriving' bell was rung on Shrove Tuesday to call people to church to confess their sins'.

Lent is indeed a time to seek to come closer to God, and through prayer and quiet time this may well lead to a time of confession. In the church, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday with a penitential service and during that service there is opportunity to receive the sign of an ash cross on our foreheads to remind us of Jesus who was tempted and challenged in the desert for 40 days and nights, before the start of his ministry. The mark of the cross also reminds us that Jesus died on the cross at Easter and bore our sins. Through his death and resurrection, he demonstrated his love and forgiveness to us.

We will be holding Toddington and Chalgrave Lent courses this Lenten season, to enable us to spend time learning about Jesus' ministry and reflecting on how we can apply what we learn today. So, this Lent, there will be a time of 'giving something up' and of 'learning something new' and of 'reaching out'. It is an important discipline to look inwards and to self examine, but also to look outwards with positive action... 'What would Jesus do'.

You are very welcome to join a Lent course. They should be informal groups. Please let me know you are coming so I can prepare, or just come along. The Toddington course will meet at the Rectory at 11.00 am, starting on Monday 27th February, next week
The Chalgrave course will offer a series of Bible studies and reflections and will be based at the Calders.

This week's services and events

Sunday 19th February

9.30 am Service of Holy Communion, Chalgrave - Nigel

11.00 am Service of Holy Communion, Toddington - Nigel

Monday 20th February

Morning Prayer, 9.30 am Toddington

Shrove Tuesday 21st February

Knitting Group 10.30 am, Wilkinson Hall

Youth Group 5.45 pm, Wilkinson Hall (and Tuesday 28th February)

Ash Wednesday 22nd February (The start of Lent)

Final Wednesday Winter Warmer gathering, 10.30 am, Wilkinson Hall - (next Wednesday - Lent lunch at 12.00 noon)

Chalgrave Pop Up Tea Room, Tebworth Memorial Hall 11.00 am – 1.00 pm

Ash Wednesday 6.00 pm evening service, with Holy Communion, Toddington Church

Thursday 23rd February

11.30 pm Funeral of Sheila Parks, Chalgrave Church

7.30 pm Quintet Choir Rehearsal, Toddington Church - (Looking towards Easter) - all welcome

Friday 24th February

10.30 am Painting for Pleasure group, Wilkinson Hall

2.00 pm Rehearsal for World Day of Prayer service, Toddington Baptist Church

3.30 pm Messy Church, Wilkinson Hall

Services and events from Sunday 26th February

9.30 am Holy Communion, Chalgrave - Linda

11.00 am Holy Communion, Toddington - Linda

Monday 27th February

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington

11.00 am The Lent Course, Toddington, Mondays, 27 Feb, 6, 13, 20 and 27 March and 3 April. All Welcome. Come when you can. Location Rectory

2.00 pm Seated Pilates, Wilkinson Hall

7.00 pm Chalgrave PCC

Tuesday 28th February

10.30 am Knitting Group, Wilkinson Hall

3.00 pm Toddington PCC

5.45 pm Youth Group, Wilkinson Hall

Wednesday 1st March

12.00 noon, Lent lunch, Wilkinson Hall

Chalgrave Lent Bible reflection group (each Wednesday evening during March) time tbc

Thursday 2nd March

12.00 noon Ploughman's Lunch, Wilkinson Hall

Friday 3rd March

World Day of Prayer, Toddington Baptist Church, 2.00 pm

If you would be interested to have a chat, discuss baptism or Confirmation, receive prayer, have Home Communion, or have a worry, concern or a joy that you would like to share with me, do please get in touch so we can arrange to meet.

with love and prayers

Linda (and Nigel)

Rector Toddington and Chalgrave