

Hello Everyone

This week's newsletter is like no other that we have written. On the doorstep at home we step out and see the emerging beautiful Spring flowers and breathe in the fresh air and appreciate the calm after last weekend's storms, but this contrasts severely to the shock and horror of the news of war which has burst across the airwaves these past three days. Russia's invasion of Ukraine suddenly became a reality. People - who are just like you and me - disturbed, fearful, homeless, sheltering the attacks in cellars or subways, or in long traffic queues or on trains; refugees seeking escape and, in many cases, this is not for the first time. History repeating itself: families torn apart: women and children seeking shelter across the border, whilst husbands, sons, daughters, fathers and grandfathers remain to fight for their country and for Europe.

How can this be happening in our modern day world which has been so proud and protective of peace. How soon the world's perspective changes in these days of modern warfare. The news pictures have seemed strangely surreal and my mind has struggled to comprehend what is happening, needing time to catch up and adjust to a new world perspective of uncertainty and threat. One moment living in peace and the next.... We have watched people bravely demonstrate, singing patriotic songs, wearing their countries flag with pride, gathering to pray. There are casualties and deaths.. such needless deaths. One struggles to understand what has brought us to this point in time, and what can we do to help.. we feel so helpless. But one important thing we can do is to pray. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and also in Russia.. for the many innocent people who will suffer from this evil act of war. Sanctions and fighting will bring distress. Each death is a mother and father's son or daughter. We need to pray and pray without ceasing.

The Archbishops and the Pope are calling us to dedicate our Sunday services to a time of prayer focus for Ukraine and for peace. Peter Greig of 24/7 prayer is calling us to create prayer rooms- and these can be remote or physical, where someone covers an hour or 20 minutes to pray and then hands on to the next person, so every minute of each day is covered. We are called to solidarity to pray against evil and for the love and protection of those in need. We will send some prayers which you may wish to use. Let us unite and pray for our world to be at peace.

This week begins the season of Lent, with Ash Wednesday marking the beginning of this penitential season. It is naturally a penitential season, when we take time before God to seek His guidance, and his forgiveness. For it to be a time of deeper prayer to seek His will and purpose for our lives, and for our world, is appropriate. May you be touched deeply in your relationship with God this Lent, as you walk alongside Jesus, our Lord and Saviour on his Easter journey.

Sunday's services - 27th February

Chalgrave 9.30 am Holy Communion

Harlington 9.30 am Holy Communion

Tingrith 3.00 pm Community Communion Service

Toddington 11.00 am Holy Communion

Westoning 11.00 am Healing Service with Holy Communion. Speaker Vicky Yorke

The Upper Room, 6pm Zoom service, with a theme of A Project for Lent

Zoom

link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88503867001?pwd=WE8ybUc0Qm1jazFCRFRQWFNIYkoxUT09>

For details of how to join please contact Revd Linda

This week's services and events:

Monday 28th February:

Morning Prayer 9.30 am Toddington

The Bible Course Session 5 - 10.45 am The Rectory

The Bible Course Session 5 - 7.45 pm online by zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83757446362?pwd=SUxpOURxVUJwQUJtaUI2dUdNOEtBQT09>

For details of how to join please contact Revd Linda

Harlington PCC meeting 7.30 pm in church

Tuesday 1st March (Shrove Tuesday)

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

Westcaf, 10.00 am – 12.00 noon Westoning Village Hall

Sewing Bee 1.00 pm Westoning Village Hall

Youth Group 5.30 – 7.00 pm Wilkinson Hall, Toddington (yrs 7,8 and 9)

Amphill and Shefford Deanery Synod 7.15 pm Clifton Church

Wednesday 2nd March (Ash Wednesday)

Ash Wednesday Holy Communion service 6.00 pm Toddington

Ash Wednesday Holy Communion Service Westoning 7.30 pm

Ash Wednesday Services, Harlington 10.00 am and 7.30 pm

Thursday 3th March

Ploughman's Lunch (with hot meal choices) 12.00 noon, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

Westoning Church - meeting with Bishop Richard and Archdeacon Dave

Friday 4th March

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

World day of Prayer Harlington Methodist Church 2.00 pm

Friday Fellowship Westoning Village Hall 2.00 pm

Little Stars 1.15 pm Westoning Church

Private Prayer: St George's Church, Toddington is open each day from 9.30 am to mid afternoon for quiet prayer.

Future dates:

Lent Course 'Unanswered Prayer' begins by zoom on Tuesday 8th March at 7.45 pm (Westoning Benefice led)

Messy church at Toddington will next meet on Friday March 11th

Foodbank donations are invited at:

Chalgrave Church (Sunday Mornings)

Harlington Church - donation box in church or contact Tricia

Toddington Church - donations can be left in church or by the back door at 22 Leighton Road

Westoning Church- donation box in the porch.

As times become more difficult financially for many families, the foodbank welcomes regular donations, thank you.

Thank you all for your contributions to the respective churches in time and effort, prayer and service and in love and care for each other. This week we give thanks for:

- The third Chalgrave Pop Up Tea Room at Tebworth Memorial Hall which was such a lovely occasion of fellowship and hospitality. Next tea room on Wednesday 23rd March
- The first (post lockdown) whole school assembly at St George's lower school. It was a joy for everyone to be together again.
- A wonderful Thinking Day afternoon at Toddington last Sunday with the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and their leaders, which finished with a short Thinking Day service
- A good introductory meeting between representatives of Westoning, Harlington and Tingrith to begin to consider the replacement process for when Nigel retires.
- The different gatherings and fundraising events which reflect people's joy at being able to meet again.
- The Quintet and Tingrith choirs which are gathering again now (or soon will be).

May the Lord's Peace be with you and your families this week and in the days to come.

Linda and Nigel