

Hello Everyone

All of a sudden we are into full Christmas season flow!

This weekend we are enjoying the beautiful Christmas Tree Festival at Toddington Church, which has many wonderful trees imaginatively decorated and presented by different community and church groups. Thank you to everyone who has helped in any way to make the Friends of Toddington Church Christmas Tree Festival such a success. The trees look wonderful, the church looks beautiful, the tombola is full-some and tempting.. and so are all the beautiful cakes and refreshments. So much time and effort has gone into the planning, organisation and preparation with community groups arriving during the week to set up their tree displays. Which one will catch your eye?

On Sunday morning both our services will be Christingle services and as we light them we will reflect on Jesus, the Light of the World. And how our world needs light this year to shine through the darkness!

The week ahead promises to be busy! On Monday church folks will be clearing up after the Christmas Tree Festival and I am going to school to see the nursery class nativity in the afternoon. On Tuesday I have been invited to go with the lower school choir to L and D hospital where they have been invited to sing.. and the children in school sing (and sign) so well! In the evening, Youth Group will be having fun at their Christmas Party. On Wednesday I'll be back in school in the morning to attend Year one's nativity. This is quickly followed by Tebworth Christmas Pop Up Tea room where there promises to be another wonderful array of tasty Christmas provisions. On Thursday, I'll be leading a collective worship at the lower school, telling the next instalment of the Christmas story. In the afternoon Nigel and I will visit Harlington Upper school for an hour or so to remember with staff and students loved ones who have died. Christmas time is a time, for many of us, of mixed emotions as we remember loved ones who will not be sitting around the table with us this year. It is good to spend time to value those we have loved and to remember and it can be particularly helpful to meet with others who are experiencing similar loss or sadness. It is reassuring and comforting to share. If any of you reading this email would find it helpful to meet with others to remember, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I am keen to support if I can. Some churches hold a 'blue Christmas' service and if this is something that you would find helpful, I can organise a special service before Christmas.

On Thursday afternoon Toddington Messy Church team look forward to hosting Christmas Messy Church in the Hall, at 3.30pm (Thursday this month instead of on Friday) and we will be doing Christmas crafts and have a Christmas story and Christmas Tea. On Friday, the church will be filled with lots of young people at the Scout service. It certainly will be an exciting week. No days off this week!

On Saturday, folks will be busy lighting candles at Chalgrave church for the 'Carols by Candlelight' service at 6pm, when Nicholas will be playing and the Quintet Choir will be singing.... and if you have time to spare to help clean or to decorate the church this week, please let Sandy know. She will be very glad of an extra pair of hands!

On Sunday 17th we have our usual 9.30am and 11am morning services with an Advent theme and in the afternoon at 3pm Toddington Band will fill Toddington Church with Christmas music and songs. Do come along if you can. It is always a toe tapping enjoyable time.

The following week continues with carols and Christmas music. On Monday 18th Toddington Church hosts a Nine lessons and Carols service at 7.30pm with the Quintet Choir singing; do come along and join in with the singing and hear the Christmas story told by readers from church and the community. On Tuesday 19th we look forward to hosting Parkfields KS2 and KS3 carol services at Toddington church with the church filled with wonderful music by Mr Wynn and the two different Key Stage choirs. I'm excited to welcome the children and staff to church again this year. It was such a joy last year.

Then on Wednesday morning 20th December.. Toddington St George School will be coming to church for their morning Christmas Carol service. What special times we have ahead. I love the families and children coming to church. The excitement at Christmas, as we remember the baby Jesus, is so tangible and joyful.

Do look out for the church Christmas Card which should be delivered to your home very soon. If you haven't received one yet, do pop into church to pick one up and I have attached a copy with this email.

Thank you all for your wonderful support, fellowship and care for each other.

God bless

Linda

Rev Linda Washington
Rector
Toddington and Chalgrave