

Hello Everyone

It has been a very busy week with lots of planned special events...and several unplanned events, like gas leaks in the churchyard and leaky boilers in church, which changed the whole nature of my week.

Last weekend at Toddington Church we celebrated St George's Day with a special Gift Week End. The church was decorated with St George and the dragon and the window sills were enlivened with representations of the life of the church, with additional history, flower and art displays so kindly presented (see photos). On Tuesday, the Friends of St George's put on a wonderful Afternoon Tea with beautiful cakes, scones and tasty sandwiches, tea and company. So special and very much enjoyed by all who attended. The Friends afternoon Tea raised an amazing £500 and the church Gift Weekend for Church raised just over £2,000. Both such amazing achievements! I send a most sincere and grateful thank you to all involved and to all who supported in any way. Your financial donations are precious to maintain the church in good order for many generations to come. They also provide wonderful times of hospitality and fellowship, food parcels, Alpha, Messy Church, Youth Group and so much more for families and people in the village. We cannot do this without you. Volunteers at church give so much time and effort each week in so many ways. It is immeasurable.. so much goes unseen, but it really is appreciated. Time, effort, cleaning, decorating, cooking, generosity, kindness, care and creative ideas, all enable us to reach out to be a living church within the community, and a living developing parish church. Thank you!

On Friday Messy Church focused on St George - making decorated biscuits, St George and the dragon models in clay and paper, and then we sat down to a tea of sausages, fish fingers, peas, chips, ice cream and cake. Very yummy. Youth group's recent session focused on the local church environment and made a bug house.. do look out for it when you walk by. Thank you Bridget for bug houses, dragons, crafts and so many wonderful ideas. Thank you also to Tom and Bridget for hours spent decorating Wilkinson Hall improving decor and conditions for which we are very grateful. It looks so much better.

Our Alpha course entered its seventh week this Thursday and is moving on so quickly. Friendships and bonds have been formed and this week we discussed how does God guide us. Have you ever noticed one of those strange 'coincidences' and wondered how something happened and then looked back and thought... how did that happen? Maybe God was alongside you.. guiding you. God is with us and yet we don't always recognise him. Food for thought!

Tomorrow we welcome Bishop Richard to both Chalgrave and Toddington Churches to lead the morning services and we very much look forward to his visit. At Chalgrave he will preach and celebrate Communion and catch up with the people, and the church restoration work. The last time he visited was for our 800 years celebrations during Covid restrictions when we all gathered, carefully spaced apart, sitting in the fresh air in the beautiful church grounds reflecting on 800 years of the life of the church. This time we will be indoors in the Lady Chapel, glad to be back indoors, but very conscious of all that lays ahead with the continued restoration work. This week, we received permission to proceed with the next

stage of work and the new oak has been ordered by the builder ready to restore the rotted support beams. When this is all completed, we look forward to a celebration service.

Tomorrow at Toddington Church, we have a special service of Confirmation, with three confirmation candidates stepping forward to confirm their faith in Jesus. The bishop will lay his hands on them and bless them as he says a prayer of Confirmation. Do come and support if you are able. It promises to be a very special service, and a memorable time not only for the candidates as they step forward in faith, but also because it is rare to be able to have a confirmation service in our home church. All rather special! Do come if you can.

This week's services:

Sunday 28th April - Fifth Sunday of Easter

9.30 am Holy Communion service, Chalgrave Church - lead by Bishop Richard, Bishop of Bedford

11.00 am Confirmation Service with Holy Communion, Toddington Church led by Bishop Richard, Bishop of Bedford

Monday 29 April

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington Church

2.00 pm Chalgrave PCC meeting at the Calders

Tuesday 30 April

10.30 am Knitting Group, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

5.45 pm Youth Group, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

Thursday 2nd May

12.00 noon, Ploughman's Lunch, Wilkinson Hall, Toddington

6.30 pm Alpha Course, The Rectory, Topic: 'How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life'

Friday 3rd May

10.30 am Painting for Pleasure Group, Wilkinson Hall

Hopefully, next week will be a little calmer. I spent three full days at church this week, liaising and monitoring Cadent as they worked in the churchyard. It is a relief that the source of the external gas leak has been sorted. So much work behind the scenes, linking with the diocese for permission for work to take place in the churchyard and the church building.. but we feel rather safer this week, knowing that the leak has been sorted. I wonder what next week has in stall?!!

I wish you all a calm, peaceful week.

God bless

Linda

Rector, Toddington and Chalgrave

