

Hello Everyone

All too suddenly, my last services are upon us. Tomorrow, I will lead my final service at Chalgrave Church at the 9.30 am Holy Communion Service and next Sunday we zoom suddenly to my final services within Toddington Church and within the benefice with an 11.00 am Benefice Holy Communion Service followed by a Songs of Praise service at 3.00 pm at Toddington Church. How incredibly quickly these services have arrived. I don't feel reality has yet dawned on me, and although a lot of planning has gone into the logistics of arranging future cover for the churches during the vacancy, my head and my heart have not yet caught up to the reality of stepping aside.

As conversations have turned to retirement these past weeks, I know that I, and you, are about to enter a new time.. and the fact of separation is a very real dimension to consider. After over 7 years of building relationships, it will be hard to step away but, although no longer your Rector after 18 March I hope we can remain friends and you will feel able to stay in touch, if you wish. The Church of England ministry etiquette advises me to step aside to give the benefice space to prepare for a new minister to come to pick up the reins and I respect that etiquette, and will keep a low profile, but it is likely that the vacancy may be nine months or more. In between time, Nigel and I will continue to live in Flitwick and will be nearby, and at times will no doubt bump into you in nearby Garden centres or supermarkets, or perhaps at Toddington Community Fridge or at an occasional Pop Up Tea room or coffee morning. We are both there for you, if you need help, and will hold you in our prayers, so please do get in touch if you need any support, especially during the vacancy process. You may be out of sight for a while, but you will not be out of mind, and I pray that the Lord will guide you and protect you and equip you for the days ahead. Thank you for placing your trust in me these past years and for walking alongside me on the journey - in many cases, going the extra mile. Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome and such wonderful support. May God bless you all.

**Sunday 9th February services**

9.30 am Holy Communion Service, Chalgrave Church

11.00 am Holy Communion Service, Toddington Church

**Monday 10th February**

9.30 am Morning Prayer, Toddington Church

2.00 pm Seated keep fit with Alison, Wilkinson Hall

6.30 pm Alpha + Group, Rachel and Doug's

**Tuesday 11th February**

10.30 am Knitting Group, Wilkinson Hall

**Wednesday 12th February**

11.00 am – 2.00 pm Wednesday Winter Warmer

**Thursday 13th February**

2.00 pm Afternoon with Friends, Wilkinson Hall

**Friday 14 February**

10.30 am Painting for Pleasure, Wilkinson Hall

**Saturday 15 February**

Toddington Community Fridge, Wilkinson Hall

**Sunday 16 February**

Linda's Last Sunday Services

11.00 am Benefice Holy Communion Service, Toddington Church

Benefice lunch 12.45 pm Wilkinson Hall

3.00 pm Songs of Praise, Toddington Church (Please see poster)

4.15 pm Farewell Refreshments in Wilkinson Hall

If you would like to attend the Benefice 'congregation' lunch please can you let Dee, Bridget or Sandy know for catering numbers. Dee 872649

I suspect these dear ladies may also be grateful of offers of cakes (and perhaps help to serve) for the farewell refreshments after the 3.00 pm Songs of Praise service too.

It will be so lovely to see you all, and to have chance to say thank you for our time together these past 7 plus years. I will miss you.

God bless

Linda

Rector of Toddington and Chalgrave