

Hello Everyone

As my period as Rector of Toddington and Chalgrave draws to the end of its season, I would like to say an enormous thank you to you all for your friendship, care, love and support during my ministry these past 7 and a half years. It has been such a privilege to serve in these two parishes and to walk with, and alongside, so many of you through life events. There have been times of sadness, and times of joy, times of celebration and times of exhaustion, times of need and times of plenty, times of prayer, times of worship, times of silence and times of joy and laughter. Each experience and conversation has been significant and important. Thank you so much for all you have offered during our time together.

There are so many workers in the field, in church and outside church. The churches depend on the kindness and the generosity of time and effort from such a wide range of volunteers: those who ring the bells, or set the clock right, those who manage the church accounts, or who arrange flowers, those who clean the churches and clean the brasses, or those who maintain the grounds with weeding groups or church grass mowers, those who bake cakes or prepare meals, those who arrange fundraising or social events, and those who sing, play the organ, prepare notices, maintain websites and social media sites, or serve in church; those who lead Messy Church, Youth Group, Toddington Community Fridge, or open up the church and church hall day after day. There are those who clean and decorate the hall, hang posters and displays, or those who read in church or prepare intercessions, those who pray or support financially, or assist as friends to maintain the buildings. Whatever the role, however big or small your contribution, it has been invaluable and so appreciated. I pray that you will continue to support the churches during the interregnum and that the process of appointing a new minister will go smoothly and be a validating experience for you. The church building is important, but so are the people of Christ who are the 'living Church' in the community. May you continue to shine a light to all you meet.. May Jesus the Light of the World sustain and encourage you when times seem tough and may you never doubt how much God loves you.

Thank you to you all for joining me on 16th February for my final Sunday Services. I will never forget them - or you. I am awaiting a link to the filmed 'Songs of Praise' service and hope to be able to release this to anyone who would like to see it (do let me know if you'd like a link) and I have recently received some photos of the farewell events and have attached a few to share with you. If you have any photos which you can share with me, I'd be delighted to see them.

Thank you also so much for your wonderful gifts, flowers, and retirement cards. I was so blessed! You have been so kind and thoughtful. I'm still enjoying the flowers and cards, one month on .. see attached photo and I look forward to spending some quiet moments reflecting with notebook and pen in hand, or to trips to the theatre to see some favourite shows. Thank you so much!

Looking ahead, do please consider joining the vacancy meeting on 27 March at Wilkinson Hall when the Bishop and Archdeacon will discuss the vacancy process and will invite your thoughts about a future minister. I do find myself reflecting that the role I have held has been a paid 0.5 role, but I have worked nearer full-time. I hope and pray that it will be possible to appoint a replacement minister for more than 0.5 to continue the valuable work which we have shared within the churches, the community and within the schools.

At my farewell discussion with Bishop Richard, I was asked what note I would leave on the desk for the minister, following me in, and I replied, "Love them!".

Thank you so much for your warmth of love and care to me during my time as your minister. It has been so very special.

As I hand over communication links to members of PCC, can I please check if you are happy for me to pass on your email address so you can continue to be informed of upcoming events and services. If you would prefer that I remove your email address, please let me know, and I will withhold it.

God bless you all

Linda
Rector (for a few more days)
Toddington and Chalgrave