

Woosehill Church Magazine

January - February 2021



Sharing God's love with the community

Find us on our website
woosehillchurch.org
and on our Facebook page
Or follow our livestreamed services on
YouTube



Dear Church Family and all other readers,

We started 2021 on a rather subdued note as the decision was made to postpone our annual Covenant service until we are able to worship together face to face again. During this service at the heart of Methodism, but here at Woosehill embraced by parish and circuit alike, we renew our promises to God as we share the Covenant Prayer together. It's rather a solemn moment, a heavy responsibility, but a beautiful service nevertheless.

At the same time we moved our services online for the safety of all and we are eternally grateful to our tech team, who have been on a steep learning curve to deliver our services to those watching from home.

It feels appropriate that this should be a rather reflective issue with poems and prayers that we have enjoyed and that have sustained us in recent months. I hope you will enjoy reading!

With all good wishes for 2021,
God bless,

Val

Next deadline: 14 March 2021
Articles as usual preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

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A Message from our Minister



Dear friends in Christ,

As I was writing to the weekly church notices a few hours ago, I was reminiscing my past – the number of churches I have served in as a minister and the ones at which I used to worship, prior to that.

Raised in a Methodist home, I went to an Anglican boarding school for my secondary education and to a Roman Catholic school for my A Levels. After coming to Britain, my first church was an independent evangelical church and then when I went to university at Bangor, I worshipped at the chapel of the Anglican chaplaincy with other fellow student residents. During holidays, I can't remember the denominations of the churches Nava and I used to worship in. Never caring where to worship, if it is a Sunday when you are on holidays or in what language the service was offered; we simply went and worshipped.

My first appointment as a probationer minister in South Wales saw me taking over a Presbyterian church, a Congregational Church and a Presbyterian-Methodist-URC LEP. So, I was ordained three times in the different denominations. The list goes on. Oh, until this New Year's Day, Nava and I went to a different Cathedral each year for worship to mark the beginning of the new year.

It may sound like boasting, but I thank God for the richness of experience I have gained over the years and for the deeper understanding that as Christians, we are truly one family. There may be doctrinal, traditional and governmental differences between denominations, but as believers, we are part of the one universal, Catholic church.



I am sure most of us share my experience of having worshipped and being part of different churches over the years. This is truly an enriching experience that gives us the openness to worship anywhere. True ecumenism lies in our hearts; not in the organised, denominational agreements that are expressed in occasional events.

It is about having the enthusiasm and openness to do God's mission together with other Christians. As we have just gone through our annual, *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, this thought gains prominence and invites us to see its significance.

In the Old Testament, two completely different characters meet by sheer chance. Both of them were different not only by nature but also by what they stood for. But they had something in common: their zeal for God. So, the one character, Jehu asked the other, Jehonadab, "*is your heart right, as my heart is toward your heart?*" And Jehonadab answered, "*It is.*" Then Jehu said, "*If it is, give me your hand.*" So, he gave him his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot. Then he said, "*Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.*" [2 Kings 10:15-16]

This is the true Catholic spirit: united as Christians in God's mission and seeing each other as part of the worldwide church of God.

Let us continue to give our thanks to God for the many blessings he has given us and for placing us as precious members of his worldwide family of believers.

With all good wishes,

Soba Sinnathamby-



Together in Prayer

A Prayer from St Augustine

At our 'Together in Prayer' meeting we prayed especially for medical teams and the sick and dying. We closed with this evening prayer from St Augustine. Although written in the 4th century AD, it beautifully sums up how we are led to pray during lockdown.

***Watch dear Lord with those who wake or weep tonight
And let your angels protect those who sleep
Tend the sick
Refresh the weary
Sustain the dying
Calm the suffering
Pity the distressed
We ask this for your love's sake
Amen***

Lyn Brown

A Reflection

The Native American Hopi language has a word to describe life out of balance; they call it, ***ko-yaa-nisqatsi***.

It also means 'crazy life', 'life in turmoil', life disintegrating', or 'a state of life that calls for another way of living.'

In the midst of a life in turmoil, Jesus offers His disciples another way of living – the unhurried gentle way of meekness that will inherit the earth.



The Caregiver's Prayer

From Carin and Fredrik Modius (our link parish of Vaxjo) and read by Peter Murgatroyd at our service on 17 January as part of the prayers of intercession:

God, thank you for the responsibility of caring,
but now I'm anxious:
about not being adequate,
about people I'm looking after not getting better,
about the risk of being forced to make difficult choices,
about people being forced to die alone.

God, thank you for my healthy body,
but now I'm frightened:
about getting infected myself,
about continuity of care breaking down,
about lack of medication for breathing difficulties and anxiety,
about the protective equipment not being adequate.

God, thank you for strength and the satisfaction work can bring,
but now I'm tired:
of long working days and extra shifts,
of pain in legs and back and strong emotions,
of high alert and constant waiting,
of all the decisions that have to be made.

God, help me at my work.
Give me the capacity to listen and to see,
so that the patient feels my care.
Equip me with an inner calm,
so that those I care for feel secure.

God, help me in my life.
Give me new energy and new empathy,
so that I can cope with all the difficulty.
Let me have faith that there is a way through,
and the ability to place everything in your hands.

Amen

Refugee by Malcolm Guite

We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,
Or cosy in a crib beside the font,
But he is with a million displaced people
On the long road of weariness and want.
For even as we sing our final carol
His family is up and on that road,
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,
And death squads spread their curse across the world.
But every Herod dies, and comes alone
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.





Woosehill & St Paul's Parish

Bible Study

Tuesday evenings 7.15pm till 8.30pm



DIOCESE of OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world



LIVING IS CHRIST, DYING IS GAIN

A four-session course for small groups

Steven Croft

12th January to 16th February over zoom:
ID 861 4762 3913, Password 702050

For more information please contact woosehillchurchnews@gmail.com



My God is Evergreen

The last few leaves of Autumn fall
Nature's silent curtain call
Longer nights and darker days
With heavy hearts our advent praise

Reflect on loss and griefs unseen
But our God is like the evergreen

Have hope in this soul's wintry night
Our constant God, brings love and light
Into our wanting world so torn
Christ is wait-ing to be born.

The frosted spruce and yew stand tall
Sentry guard by churchyard wall
Nature sleeps its endless night
But holly bough has berries bright

Be still, reflect on what it means
To have a God like the evergreen

Hidden by summer from our sight
He comes with healing, hope and light
Into our waiting world so torn
Christ our saviour will be born.



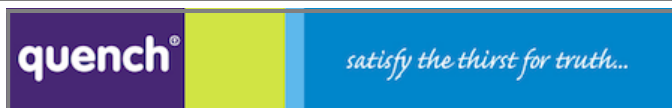


Winnersh Grub Club

A few weeks before Christmas I was approached by Amy Giddings Wokingham Community Engagement officer who asked if as a church we could help the Winnersh Grub Club which was a new initiative to help families in need. We agreed that we would provide some homemade cakes to be distributed to the families. In good Woosehill church fashion I had 14 cakes ready to pass over to her, unfortunately they could not take photos of the families receiving them (GDPR)! But the photo does show the bags packed ready for delivery. Amy and I wish to thank all the cake makers - the families enjoyed them.

Lynn Smith





Did you know that Quench Christian bookshop at Holme Grange is offering Mystery Book Bundles at the moment?

The Bronze bundle is £12 (3 books) Silver is £20 (5 books) Gold is £32 (8 books plus FREE GIFT!) Each bundle comes with a Luke's Gospel to give away.

Having safely collected my bag at the door of Quench I came home and dipped into my bag to take out the first book: 'Walking into the Light - a journey through grief in poems, prayers and thoughts' by Eddie Askew, illustrated with his water colours and put together after his death by his two daughters. It is an unexpected treasure.

My second book out of the bag is: 'The Recovery of Hope' by Naomi Starkey, 'Bible reflections for sensing God's presence and hearing God's call' It has short reflections suitable as a daily reader and two beautiful poems at the beginning apt for our current situation.

I will put a poem from each book elsewhere in this issue.

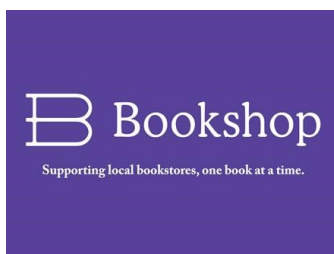
Val

Ali Ceaser, manager at Quench writes:

We are soooooo excited to be a part of [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) - a great new place to shop for books (and a more socially conscious alternative to Amazon!)

Choose us as your chosen shop and we will receive 30% of the cover price of ANY book you order! Doesn't have to be a book we would usually stock - it could be a cookery book, a sports book, anything!

Why not check it out? uk.bookshop.org/shop/quenchshops





Ways to help the community

We've been talking to some of the staff at the RBH and they've asked for two things – one is some 'treats' to keep them going during the very long shifts they are doing: biscuits, chocolate, tea, coffee, crisps etc would be really welcome, as well as bottles of squash.

There is a box at the back of St Paul's Church if anyone would like to donate anything and then we will make sure they get from there to the RBH or, possibly, to local GP surgeries if we get a lot of stuff. Foodstuffs need to be individually wrapped – a box of biscuits wouldn't work but individually wrapped biscuit bars would, for example.

Also, and at least as important, the staff would love to have letters of encouragement from the community – a note, a thought, a prayer, a picture, something to read through or look at when things are at their most challenging. Again, they can be left at the back of St Paul's or sent straight to the Hospital or given to someone who works for the NHS.

Or you can email your pictures and notes to one of the Chaplaincy team freya.parrish@royalberkshire.nhs.uk; she will be very happy to send them on to the wards and staff from there.

Thank you,

Richard



Words of Knowledge

Sometimes
God speaks in neon signs,
Slogans branding public buildings,
Text message straight to the heart.

‘Everything will be all right’
I guess so ...
Though I can’t
For the life of me
Imagine how.

‘Take courage’
OK ...
I will take enough for today
And hope there will be some left over
For tomorrow.

‘Wait in the unknowing’
I’ll try ...
Still anxiously reconfiguring
The feasible options
‘Until the unknowing is known’.

‘There is nothing for you in the desert’
Oh ...
But I’d thought this was where I should stay,
Balancing the burden
For the effort of the next step.

And with that,
A glimpse of different possibilities,
A smoother path under clearing skies,
The recovery –
So gentle a surprise –
Of hope.

**Naomi Starkey ‘The Recovery of Hope’ sent to the chaplaincy team at the
RBH for staff and gratefully received**

Val



Kindness to Strangers

'There are so many invitations to make a gesture to a stranger in these challenging times. One that has caught my eye on Facebook is 'The Cumbria Way Homeless Scarf Challenge'.

A lady, also called Anne, who was once homeless, has initiated a drive to knit or crochet enough scarves to stitch the length of the Cumbria Way. Anne is aiming for 73,000 scarves by January 2022. They will offer the homeless comfort, support and a sense of being cared for: a very tangible way of wrapping love around a stranger.

My own recent experience set me thinking. Our scrubs group got together a parcel of goodies to cheer up a nurse in Wrexham, North Wales, who had contracted Covid. We knew absolutely nothing about Michelle but her name. Group members added things they had made: a colourful heart, a knitted Superwoman, a cheerful face covering, a candle, a hand cream. These were duly sent and received by Michelle with surprise and joy. 'I cried happy tears.' Michelle wrote.

I was engulfed by a joy which took me completely by surprise by its powerful intensity. It set me thinking, 'What does giving to a stranger really mean for the giver?' 'Who is the stranger?' I think it's important not to know very much. The stranger can be anyone you imagine him/her to be when you gather together the gift: lonely, frightened, scared, anxious, unsupported.

In reality the stranger may be none of the above but does that matter? Perhaps there is more to this than we can easily understand.

There was a lovely moment when I collected pyjamas sewn for the children's ward at Frimley, from a group member recently, who said 'I'm sorry I've only made two pairs of pjs, Ann, but I've prayed into every stitch'.

How lucky the child who receives those pjs will be! Giving takes so many forms!

Call it by any name the act of giving is truly transformative.

Ann Pearce

Cara's sermon - St Paul's 17 January 2021

(1 Samuel 3 verses 1-10 and John 1 43-end)

'Don't leave us on a cliff-hanger!' could well be our feeling after this morning's readings. We started off with God calling Samuel, and Samuel not understanding at first that it was God calling. Our story is set in a time when, we are told, the word of the Lord was rare, and Samuel did not yet know the Lord. No wonder he assumes that the voice he hears is not God but Eli the priest. And after this happens a few times and Eli realises God is calling, we get to the good part, the part where Samuel answers the Lord and says 'Speak, for your servant is listening.' And then, the part we've been waiting for, the Lord says to Samuel..... and our reading ends. If it were an episode of EastEnders we'd hear the familiar theme tune as the scene ends and we cut to the credits.

And then we have our Gospel reading, Philip is called to follow Jesus and does so, and then brings Nathaniel to Jesus with those words 'Come and See'. Nathaniel recognises Jesus as the Son of God, the King of Israel! Jesus tells Nathaniel that he will see greater things than these, he will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. And then.... our reading ends again! What other greater things will Nathaniel see, when will he see these things? What else will happen?

Our stories today are ones of beginnings. Samuel hears God calling and responds, and I'll fill in the next part, God said to Samuel, 'See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears it tingle.' Both ears, it's an interesting way of putting it, isn't it. Both ears, if you're paying attention, will tingle. And Samuel listens to the message of God, the message that tells him that, in time, he will grow up and become a great prophet and leader for the people of Israel. The cliff-hanger then, is a tingle of hope.

The same with our Gospel, where Philip invited Nathaniel to 'Come and see' Jesus. What Nathaniel found was that he came to see Jesus and in the process, was seen himself, and told that he will see greater things than these. But I want us to pause at this particular cliff-hanger, because I want to ask,

'What can be greater than being truly seen?'

What can be greater than being completely and utterly known by God, to have God see you and tell you your character the way he tells Nathaniel he is an Israelite in which there is no deceit?

What would it feel like to be truly known and seen?



Come and see, and you will be seen. Philip says to Nathaniel 'Come and see Jesus, and he will see you, he will notice you and he will see all of you. Come and see Jesus and you will be seen. Come and see Jesus and you will be set up for seeing greater things than these. Come and see.'

One of the things that we have hopefully started to get better at is trying to reduce and get rid of the stigma that can surround mental health. We're trying to open up a bit more to those around us, to realise that answering the question 'how are you' with 'I'm fine' when we're actually not, is damaging us in the long-term. Concepts such as toxic masculinity, that have given us the impression that boys can't have feelings can be incredibly harmful, not just to men but to all in society. 'It's OK to not be OK' is quoted quite often and I'm really pleased to hear it, because there are so many people that really aren't OK right now, and that is, quite frankly, probably only to be expected in a time where support networks and systems and ways of helping manage our well-being are stripped right back. We need each other, we need to be seen, to be noticed.

So I ask again, what would it feel like to be truly known and seen?

To come to see Jesus and be seen for who you are, for all of who you are, and to be loved for all that you are.

The cliff-hanger then for us, and for Samuel and Eli, Philip and Nathaniel is, what are we going to do once we have listened and heard God, once we have seen Jesus and found ourselves to be seen too? How are we now to live?

Those tingles of hope that we glimpsed in Samuel are key, I think. Listen out for them this week, hear them in the joy of each person you speak to who has had their Covid vaccine, and in the news of others who have heard when theirs will be. Because that joy is a tingle of hope that we are getting one step closer to being able to hug those we miss once more.

Listen to those good news stories, the tingle of hope that came last week when people realised that speaking up about the pitiful amount of food being provided to families as school lunches turned into a company apology and the reinstatement of vouchers. We still have a long way to go before our society treats each person with equality and dignity, but that starts with a small tingle of hope.

If you go for a walk, take a look at the spring bulbs....they're starting to peek out of the tops of the soil, all that growth that has happened in the darkness is tentatively starting to come out into the light. Take a look, take a photograph and send it to someone who might not get to see this tiny, comforting tingle of hope.

Cara Smart - Assistant Curate in the Parish of St Paul



THE COWSHED

We are grateful of all donations of new or used clothing, footwear, bedding & curtains at our lovely distribution centre in Winnersh, 4 Kings Street Lane, RG41 5AS on Monday - Thursday 10am - 3pm.

Should I Donate it ?

Would I be proud to wear it ?

Would I be proud to dress my child in it ?

Would I be proud to give it to a friend ?

Would I feel proud to know I had given this to someone who really needs a boost, needs to be shown some love, needs to be given back their dignity ?

“The aim is for our clients to feel they are receiving a gift to assist them in a time of crisis rather than some old clothes that are over worn, marked or damaged. “



Tadpoles

We continue to try to support our Tadpoles families through our closed group Facebook page, as even our outdoor coffee initiative, Tadpoles Alfresco has had to be abandoned in the current lockdown - it would have been pretty cold anyway!

We now need to recognise that many, or most, of our group from last year will have moved into other settings - childcare, preschool groups or even school. We are stressing that all remain part of the Tadpoles family as long as they choose to follow our page and we should certainly consider a Tadpoles Reunited coffee morning once we have the freedom to do so. This contact is very precious and we mustn't lose it.

Val

WOW - Women of Woosehill Church

WOW is up and running again - on Zoom of course!

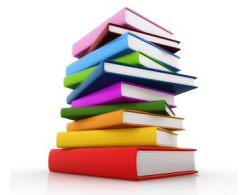
We held a very successful Book evening on 13 January when we shared chat about books we have enjoyed in recent times.**

We aim to meet again on Wednesday 10 February, for a 'Show and Tell', exchanging news about what we have done or are doing to fill the days during these wintry lockdown times.

You are welcome to come along to sit back and listen or to join in as you like.

If you would like to know more contact Lynn Smith at woosehillchurchnews@gmail.com

**If you would like a list of the books contact me, Val, at valerie.weedon@btinternet.com.



HOME GROUP



The home in question is Geoff Peck's. Of course at the moment we are meeting on Zoom. We are a friendly butch of 5 including Soba who attends when he can and guides us on bible readings chosen by members.

Otherwise Geoff leads us . We start and close with prayers, members decide on the subjects/persons to be included In the closing prayers. We would love to welcome more members on **Monday nights at 8.**

No commitment to attend every week, just whenever you want. If you want to just listen, that is fine, if you want to contribute that is fine also and comments/opinions are taken at face value. If you do not have wi-fi, please still register your interest and when the pandemic controls allow , we will start meeting at Geoff's again either inside or in the garden, weather permitting!!!

Please give serious thought to joining us as it is a very easy and rewarding way to learn various passages from the bible and you will be most welcome.

Contact details:

Geoffpeck@hotmail.com phone: 07531537376

I look forward to seeing you at the Home Group.

God Bless

Michael Taylor





News from Yeldall Manor



Chris's story

Many addicts come from broken homes with a history of physical violence or sexual abuse. I came from a good family with a nice house; quite a privileged up-bringing really. I didn't realise at the time, but I was trying to emulate my father, whom I idolised. But I could never be like him. I felt a failure. Whilst I was still at school, I was drinking half a bottle of spirits a day. For the next 25 years or so, I was a 'functioning alcoholic'. On the good days, I'd have only a litre of vodka; on the bad days, a couple of litres (plus the beers and the sherries). I lied, I stole, I womanised. I did all sorts of appalling things just to suppress my feelings.

But when I came to Yeldall Manor, I found structure, acceptance, love; all those things I craved deep down. It wasn't easy, and Campbell, my counsellor, made me face a lot of things I didn't want to face, but I loved it.

I dismissed the Christian aspect at first and tried to intellectualise it but, in church one day, the speaker asked, 'Who wants to be filled with the Holy Spirit?' In spite of myself, my body stood up. I don't know why. But in that moment, every sin, every care, every lie, everything I'd ever done bad was lifted from me. Absolutely gone. And, I realised recently, I was healed on that day. It doesn't mean I can go and drink again, but I was healed."

Now married to Jennie, "the final piece of my jigsaw", Chris supports many others in their own journey of recovery, giving them work experience in his small gardening business and also helping in the Admissions office back at Yeldall Manor.

As lockdown continues into 2021, our priority remains the safety and well being of our residents, staff and visitors. For this reason, we are operating an amended programme and there are fewer opportunities to visit us. We are still keeping our doors open for admissions of men in need.

Thanks to Sue Falquero for sending me this

* WHAT IS LUXURY? ... * They made us believe that luxury was the rare, the expensive, the exclusive, everything that seemed unattainable ... Now we realize that luxury were those little things that we did not know how to value when we had them and now that they are gone, we miss them so much ... Luxury is being healthy. Luxury is not stepping into a hospital. Luxury is being able to walk along the seashore. Luxury is going out on the streets and breathing without a mask. Luxury is meeting with your whole family, with your friends. Luxury are the looks. Smiles are luxury. Luxury are hugs and kisses. Luxury is enjoying every sunrise. Luxury is the privilege of loving and being alive. All this is a luxury and we did not know ..

Stay blessed. Stay grateful.



Wokingham
foodbank

Updated Shopping List

- Hot Meals (tinned curry/macaroni cheese/ravioli)
- Tinned potatoes/instant mash
- Tinned Peas
- Tinned Carrots
- Sponge Puddings
- Bars of Soap
- Adult Toothpaste
- Men and Women Deodorant
- Shaving Foam
- small packets of washing powder
- Nappies - size 5, 5+, 6 and 6+

We currently have an abundance of the following items and request that people DO NOT donate Soup, Baked Beans, Pasta, Biscuits, Squash, Tea Bags.

St Paul's Parish Zoom Quiz 6th February 2021

- Where is it?** In your own home
- What time?** 7pm
- How much?** £5, children free. The entrance fee will be going to support our three charities
- When will we eat?** You can have your Fish and chips before the Quiz
- What do you bring?** Yourselves and paper and a pen and a drink if you like
- Team answers?** Teams of 6

Please e-mail me if you would like to take part and I will give you the BAC details or details for a cheque to pay your entrance fee.

If you have a team of 6 also let me know who is in your team, so it will be easier on the night to sort break out room teams. If you want to take part and are not in a team we will happily put you in one.

Thanks Margaret Davies

margaretanndavies@hotmail.co.uk

0118 978 7788 or 0779 1604 007





Woosehill Church Services and meetings

Due to the pandemic our church services are again online only and to be found on the Woosehill Church YouTube channel with the link posted to our newsletter, website and Facebook page each week.

We also at present Zoom:

Bible study on Tuesday evenings 8-8.30pm

Morning Prayer for the Parish on Thursday mornings at 8.30am

Together in Prayer weekly on Thursday evenings

Contact Lynn Smith on 0118 9619393 for details

For Zoom house group on Monday evenings contact Geoff Peck on 0118 9786711

Church Contacts

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office@stpauls-wokingham.org.uk

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5 Chetwode Close, Wokingham RG40 2LL 0118 9781756

minister@wokinghammethodist.org.uk