

Woosehill Church Magazine

Sharing God's love with the community

November - December 2019

Happy Christmas from
Woosehill Church



*We are on Chestnut Ave, just around the corner
from The Hawthorns School.
'All are welcome here'*

Find us on our website
woosehillchurch.org



Dear Church Family and all other readers,

Might I make a suggestion?

In this issue you should find all the dates you need to know from Advent through to Epiphany. You will also find other festive material which you may like to read over a coffee and a mince pie.

However, remembering that our magazine is bi-monthly, you might like to save the more serious stuff until your brain is clear of the Christmas preparations and you can absorb and reflect on the content - there is plenty to ponder contained within!

Across the parish we are going to make a special effort to share our news and events to better enable us to be a real church family. If there is something from the other churches in our parish that you think we should include, do let me know.

In the meantime, wherever you are and whatever you are doing, I wish you peace and joy over the Christmas season and send my good wishes to all readers for 2020.

Until the next issue,
May God bless you all,

Val

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

19 January 2020

Articles as usual preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com
Or to me in church

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I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas



As we head into the festive season let me share with you some rather staggering statistics about Christmas—the most wonderful, and the most wasteful, time of the year.

Did you know that?

- We generate 30% more rubbish over Christmas – that is 3 million tonnes of the stuff. More waste means more carbon dioxide and methane, and that raises the temperature of the earth.
- A UK adult spends on average £330 on presents.
- A UK child receives on average 16 gifts.
- 1 billion Christmas cards are sent, and then mainly binned, rather than recycled.
- We consume 2 million turkeys.
- We buy 6 million Christmas trees – 14% of artificial trees get binned each year, rather than being re-used. The weight of real trees thrown away is 160,000 tonnes.
- According to Unilever, 4.2 million Christmas dinners are thrown away: that equates to 263, 000 turkeys, 7.5 million mince pies, 740,000 slices of Christmas pudding, 17.2 million Brussel sprouts, and 11.9 million carrots. The sprouts alone that are wasted could power a home for 3 years!
- £700 million is spent on unwanted gifts.
- 227,000 miles of wrapping paper is thrown away.
- 114,000 tonnes of plastic packaging is thrown away and not recycled.

(Statistics from www.phswastekit.co.uk)



Now that I have armed you with enough answers to win the Christmas Trivia Competition 2019, I wonder what your reaction is?

My own thoughts include a real sense of shame at this profligacy as well as a question to myself: what part I can play in reducing my family's waste?

Last year we converted to brown paper and string, with brown cardboard tags bearing fun designs – a preliminary attack on the issue of wrapping paper.

We send 'cards' electronically where we can, and for the rest I buy glitter-free cards that can be recycled. I found out, in the past, where to recycle cards; sometimes I let a residential school have them for the children's artwork.

We have crackers left from last year but, from now on, we shall buy only those that can be recycled and do not contain a lot of plastic bits-and-pieces that no one really wants.

Small changes from us all could make a big difference. I know that Jesus was born into a world very different from ours. A world where less money changed hands at religious festivals, where life was much harder in many ways, and probably one that was much less wasteful. Certainly, one that was less environmentally damaging. As we again celebrate the Incarnation, maybe we can commit to buying a lot less, using a lot less, wasting a lot less – and recycling a lot more.

Have a wonderful Christmas, wherever you are spending it.

Warmest wishes

Rev Judi Hattaway

Ass. Priest St. Paul's, St Nicholas and Woosehill Community Churches.

A daily reflection

Say ‘God bless you!’



‘Whenever [you] bless...people...in my name, I myself will bless them.’

Numbers 6:27 NLT

God’s Word is impregnated with life, wisdom, truth, power, and potential. When He created the world, He simply said, ‘Let there be.’ Every word He speaks – contains the power to create whatever He says.

Every promise He makes – contains the seeds of its own fulfilment. Those seeds have a scheduled season for fulfilment in your life, and when they’re watered with confident, faith-filled prayer, standing squarely on the Scriptures and patiently awaiting God’s timing – His Word cannot fail. Once you grasp this truth, the words ‘God bless you’ become loaded! Speaking them releases God’s blessing into our lives.

When you say, ‘God bless you,’ God backs you up. ‘Whenever [you] bless... people...in my name, I myself will bless them.’ So if you want to bless your loved ones, speak these words of blessing to them: ‘The Lord bless you and protect you...and be gracious to you...show you his favour and give you his peace’ (vv. 24-26 NLT). Asking someone, ‘How are you?’ is an expression of courtesy and care. And when you say, ‘Have a nice day,’ you sincerely mean it. But when you say, ‘God bless you,’ and understand the scriptural truth behind those words, God’s blessing can change that person’s life!

Author Kate Nowak says: ‘It should be a habit, this business of blessing others...I’ve come to realise it’s one of the most powerful and practical ways for reconnecting with each other, our world and life itself...the most phenomenal way possible to lead us to happiness and success. A blessing is a sweet release from pain...an ancient key to a successful and fulfilling life.’

[Ezekiel 27-29](#), [James 3](#)

Thanks to Eileen for sending me this reflection which appeared on the United Christian Broadcasters website on 14 November.



From the Methodist circuit Minister's letter for Greetings, Nov 2019

Dear Friends,

The Methodist Conference this year spent a lot of time discussing "God in Love Unites Us" the report of the Marriage and Relationships Task Group. This report has now been commended to the wider Connexion for study and prayerful reflection. The report covers topics such as:

- the qualities of good relating
- an understanding of co-habitation
- celebration of civil partnerships
- prayers following the end of a marriage
- allowing same-sex marriages to take place in Methodist Churches

The report containing these resolutions is now to be discussed locally and then voted on by District Synods in the spring. A report will then be sent back to Conference for a decision next July.

One way of coming to a decision is to use the so-called "Wesley Quadrilateral". This is a method whereby the four elements of Scripture, experience, tradition and reason are each used to examine the topic in question in order to reach a balanced and sensible conclusion. It's a helpful method to use in decision making and as you read the report you will see how the task group have implemented it to reach their conclusions. I would urge you to do the same as you study the report, you may find it challenging or refreshing, you may agree with much of it or find that you disagree with the findings but I ask you to read the report in its entirety with an open mind.

These are very significant discussions and as some people find these subjects highly emotive such conversations can easily become highly charged, so it's important that we conduct these conversations in a loving and respectful manner.

The Methodist Church acknowledges that we live with “contrary convictions” on these matters, and whatever the church decides there will be some people who will be very disappointed. Therefore, the way in which we discuss this and the way in which we continue to work together after the decision is made will be vitally important for the future of our denomination.

It is important that everyone has the opportunity to read the report and share in the discussions if they wish. All the resources can be found on the Methodist Church Website: www.methodist.org.uk/MandR19 but there will be some paper copies of the report available too.

There will be some study and discussion sessions around the Circuit in the New Year. At Wokingham these are likely to be on Sunday evenings 19th Jan, 16th Feb and 15th March. Further details of other days and venues will be available nearer the time and you will be very welcome to attend discussions at another of our circuit churches if you wish.

With every blessing,

Catherine

Rev'd Catherine Bowstead,

Minister to Wokingham Methodist Church and our Circuit Superintendent



Your Giving

A couple of months ago you will, I hope, have received a letter from the Stewards thanking you for your continued giving and asking whether you were in a position to review it – upwards hopefully, but it is appreciated that financial circumstances can change and not necessarily for the better. Our church finances are fairly delicately balanced and last year – 2018 - we incurred a slight loss overall and it currently looks as if the loss for 2019 will be at least as much, so I thought it would be useful to explain where our income comes from and where it goes to.

Firstly, the big figures – our total income for 2018 was £69,490 and set against that are outgoings of £73,140. So, a loss last year of £3,650. No immediate cause for panic as we had reserves at the end of the year of £43,721, but something we should remain vigilant about and make efforts to rectify.

In terms of income, by far the largest source is through the giving of members of the congregation combined with the tax refund we receive through gift aid. That amounted to £49,982. The other very significant source of income is through the lettings to the various organisations who use our premises and that, last year, amounted to £17,422. However, that is not, of course, without associated costs in terms of cleaning and utilities. Finally, income from Church “activities” and a small amount of interest made up the balance of £2,826.

Moving on to outgoings, our congregational giving is pretty well matched by our biggest expenditure – our combined Anglican Parish Share and Methodist Circuit Assessment, which, for 2018, totalled £48,717. Out of this sum Diocese/Circuit pay the clergy salaries and associated costs, maintain the vicarages/manses and cover “head office” costs.

Miscellaneous Church running costs – admin, licences, subscriptions etc – total £5,875 and insurance of the building including public liability cover etc was £1,783. Repairs and renewals cost us £1,583, kept to a minimum by the sterling work of the monthly work parties, whilst cleaning, by outside contractors, came in at £3,412.

Our biggest expenditure, outside the Parish Share/ Circuit Assessment, is on utilities at £6,620. We have recently commissioned an energy report (at a very favourable rate negotiated by Diocese) which points to some savings we can make immediately as well as some longer-term measures. We have also recently had a 5 yearly (Quinquennial) building inspection carried out which inevitably makes some potentially costly recommendations. The Fabric & Finance Committee will be sitting down early in the new year to prepare a summarising account of the two reports with recommendations for the Church Council to consider at the end of January.

Finally, in the course of 2018 we gave £5,214 to the various charities and causes we support. It has been the policy of this Church from when it was first formed to tithe 10% of what it receives in giving to support others and also to split the collection from the Crib Service between our parent Churches' children's charities – Action for Children and the Children's Society.

So, in summary, thank you all again for what you give towards the running of our Church, not only financially, but in time too. And if you feel you can review your giving.....

John Hoskins
Steward



Running the extra mile!

EMBRACE
the Middle East

For most people just finishing a single marathon would be a challenge. Finishing an ultra-marathon would be beyond us.

But 14 in one year ... That is superhuman!

That is the challenge that Mark Calder, one of Embrace's Regional Managers, has taken on in 2019. By the time you read this Mark will have completed his final run, having completed pilgrimage routes across Scotland and the North of England to raise money and awareness about the even bigger challenge that Iraq's Christians face as they try to rebuild their country after war.

Mark says:

The Middle East is my personal and professional passion. I have studied and volunteered in the region spending time in Yemen, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Lebanon. I spent 16 months in Bethlehem focusing on Syriac Orthodox Christians and have researched peace-building in Syria.

I live in Aberdeenshire with my wife and two young daughters. Alongside long distance running, I enjoy music - my PhD was part-funded by working as a singing waiter, so I'm always happy to sing when I come to speak about Embrace the Middle East!

Val says:

On a really cold wet November day in Keswick Colin and I waited on a street corner in the hope of giving Mark a cheer as he ran past on his 13th ultra marathon which ended at Carlisle Cathedral at 1am early the following morning But we somehow missed him as he had passed before we arrived!

Do pick up the Embrace magazine and prayer diary from the table at the back of the Sanctuary. This is a small charity, with a head office in Amersham. Embrace the Middle East is a Christian charity with over 160 years' experience helping people of all faiths and none to free themselves from a life of poverty and injustice. I am so pleased that we have chosen it as our current church charity.

Val

Dickens Quoted and Jesus 'Misquoted' at C of E Stranger to Friend Conference



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,.....” you know how it goes; “it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, ..” What the dickens! Apparently this brilliant quip at the beginning of Charles Dickens’ *A tale of Two Cities*, has never lost its sheen, in scrutiny of culture during and beyond himself.

In the Stranger to Friend conference’s application, the Church of England faces a choice in looking at our culture’s response to Jesus and the church. One can either focus on the tremendous opportunities there are in the midst of the challenges (the best of times) or focus on the seemingly overwhelming challenges evidenced in the statistics of dwindling congregations (the worst of times). And so came the parody on Luke 10:2; “The harvest is almost non-existent, the few labourers are utterly exhausted and the competition of interested people is intense. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to help us survive somehow” Never heard it quite like that.

Churches across the country are struggling to get young people through their doors and are dealing with an ever-declining number of UK Christians. Research suggests that the average church has only three children attending, and the smallest 25 per cent have, on average, none at all. The decline in regular church attendance has continued, with average Sunday attendance reaching a new low of 780,000 people in 2016 – continuing the recent decades’ trend, even if attendance at Christmas services in 2017 was the highest, at 2.68 million.

However the research also shows that over 1 **million** children attend C of E schools which are a **quarter** of all primary schools as are over **200** secondary schools besides the 250 sponsored and over **650** converter academies. That makes the church the biggest sponsor of academies in England. That’s an obvious opportunity as most of the children love to attend the services and assemblies especially at festival times when parents come along as well. The *ComRes* survey shows that 2/3 of people including respondents from other faiths and none (67%) say that there is still value in children taking part in



Christian Harvest Festivals.

Further, every week throughout the UK approximately two million babies and toddlers attend groups facilitated by around 27,000 local churches. The Family Matters Institute say that 52% of children under four years old access some sort of church-based parent and toddler group. Along with their parents, grandparents and carers that can mean up to six million people a week entering churches because of these groups. What an amazing opportunity! Not to mention 2.2 million weddings, 7.1 million baptisms and 7 million funerals. With roughly 1,000 weddings, 2,000 baptisms, and almost 3,000 funerals and average attendance of 50, every week, the Church engages with over 15 million people every year! Wow. The glass is half full not half empty. It's the best of times, whatever Jeremy Paxman says.

Apologies for many stats, but here's what I gleaned from this 24 hour National conference. It is the spring of hope amidst the challenges 'In the Bleak Midwinter'. We need to embrace the culture changes and work with them. Within the challenges of dwindling numbers, multiple cultural choices, and even outright opposition there is plenty of God given space and opportunity in schools and colleges, in churches and on the internet for us to share and tell the great story of God's love. Apart from telling it in a language that the present culture can engage with, we need to get better at what we already know and do for welcome and hospitality. As far as Church language goes, the C of E no longer uses phrases like 'Occasional Offices' but we now communicate in terms of 'Life Events'. We shouldn't argue whether someone is seeking christening or baptisms. The semantics just put people off. 'Churchinese' needs to be toned down as it more often than not can be a turnoff. That's the word on the street.

As a minister I am thrilled for the privilege and opportunity to celebrate people's very personal life events and must seek more and more to show my rejoicing with those who rejoice. Apparently there are anecdotes out there about how 'priests are lovely people but they've got to lighten up'. I thought I was enlightened already! I was reminded to continue relating to people as those who are created in the image of God rather than as functional boxes to be ticked. It is such an extraordinary privilege to be with people at the beginning, during and at the end of their lives.

As God's people (not just the priests) apart from steadfast confidence in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we must make room for those who are still strangers to us and to the church, remembering that they are not strangers to God. He blesses us with these encounters whether it's our intention or not. It will take much prayer and patience for God's strangers we don't know to mellow to our friendship overtures. Yes, let's put them on our prayer lists as we anticipate for them to show up in our church foyers or when we meet up with them elsewhere.

We are already aware and do practice welcome and hospitality with those we encounter. We do quite well actually, but cannot sit on our laurels. The big thing for me at the conference was to be reminded that, "**Hospitality is the attitude of the whole church**" not just the few "Welcome or Hospitality Teams" or ushers and sides people. Granted we are all differently gifted but surely each one could take notice of those around, smile and make a connection by saying hello. Hospitality as PMC has reminded us *ad nauseam* needs to be expressed and experienced at many different levels in our relations with the variety of people God brings our way. "If 1 in 50 people" it was said, "invited someone to the church and they stayed we would move out of decline into growth."

Church is not a uniform interest group, but an inclusive and mixed bag which reflects God's action amongst and through his people. The privilege of hospitality calls us not to turn anyone away by our manner, speech or behaviour whether at a Sunday service christening, wedding, last rites or celebration of their life.

Who shows visitors where the pages and the hymns are to be found? How do we serve them coffee or tea or whatever? As the Church we exist for the benefit of everyone else,- especially non-members.

All of us together are God's people.

We reflect the face of God and His availability for everyone. When strangers visit us, think about how much courage it takes them to go through our imposing double doors. How should we attend to them, so they don't feel they have walked into a minefield?

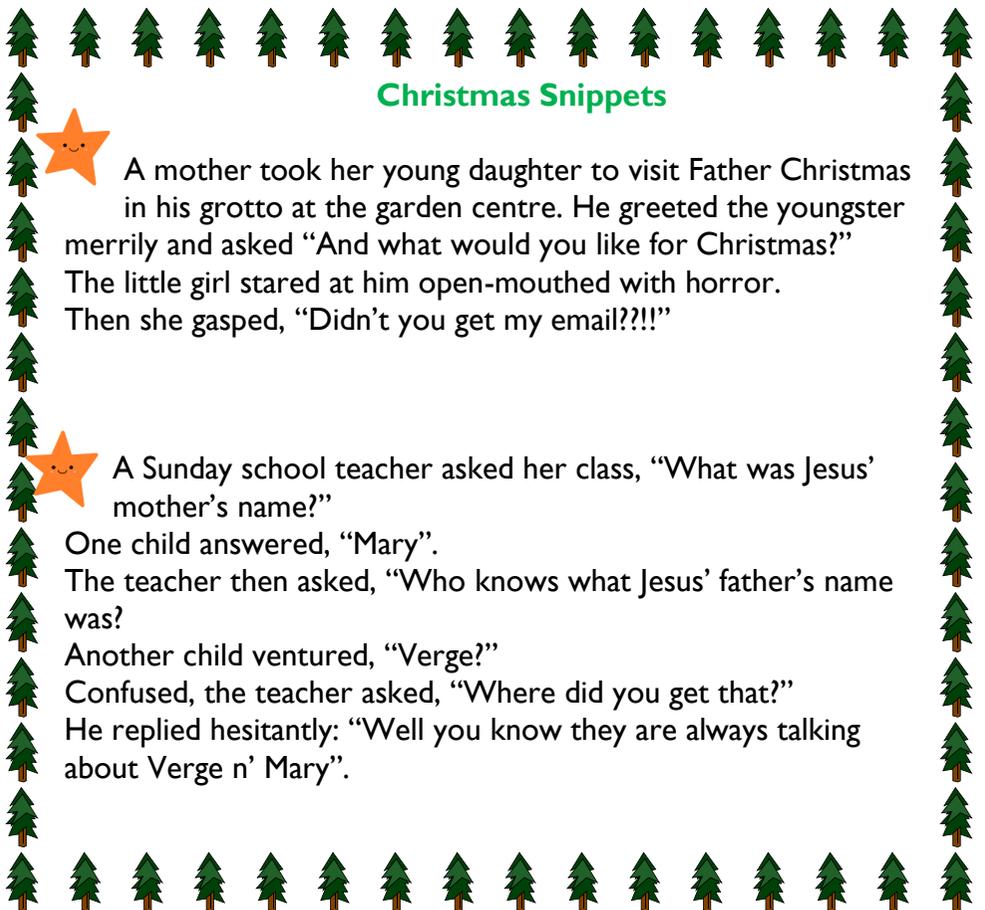


The second thought was in prioritising the outreach and discipleship of those under the age of 18 years. It turns out that most people began to make sense of their faith when they were in this age bracket. Let me tackle that after the Bleak Midwinter.

Patrick

The Revd. Patrick Mukholi. Associate Priest.

Patrick has referenced a number of his quotes, too numerous to include here - do chat to him about the content of this article. Perhaps in the new



Christmas Snippets



A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily and asked “And what would you like for Christmas?” The little girl stared at him open-mouthed with horror. Then she gasped, “Didn’t you get my email?!!”



A Sunday school teacher asked her class, “What was Jesus’ mother’s name?” One child answered, “Mary”. The teacher then asked, “Who knows what Jesus’ father’s name was?” Another child ventured, “Verge?” Confused, the teacher asked, “Where did you get that?” He replied hesitantly: “Well you know they are always talking about Verge n’ Mary”.

Christmas Prayers

Let the love that shaped earth and heaven

Dwell within us this Christmas

Let the love that created humanity

Dwell within us this Christmas

Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred

Dwell within us this Christmas

Let the love that causes us to rejoice with loved ones

Dwell within us this Christmas

Let the love that forgives and renews

Dwell within us this Christmas

Let the love that brings reconciliation after separation

Dwell within us this Christmas

Let the love that brings the blessing of peace

Dwell within us this Christmas

*May we share that peace with all people near and
far.*

www.christianaid.org.uk





YOU'RE INVITED TO A

CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATION

WITH THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

On Christmas Day, we're hosting a celebration full of joy and companionship for anyone in the Borough who would otherwise be alone.

The Link Visiting Scheme along with 'Our Community First' aims to make Christmas day a happy, memorable day for those otherwise on their own. We'll have lots of delicious Christmas food, entertainment and plenty of good company. Transport can be provided if needed.

Contact the Link Visiting Scheme on: 0118 979 8019 or email: marjie@linkvisiting.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



the **Link** visiting scheme

Can you help fund Wokingham's Christmas Day community dinner for those on their own?

The Link Visiting Scheme needs additional funding this year. If you can make a donation or offer any help please call them on [0118 979 8019](tel:01189798019) or donate directly on their [website](#)



Check out our Christmas shopping list

This is that time of year when we ask for donations to give those in need a happy Christmas:

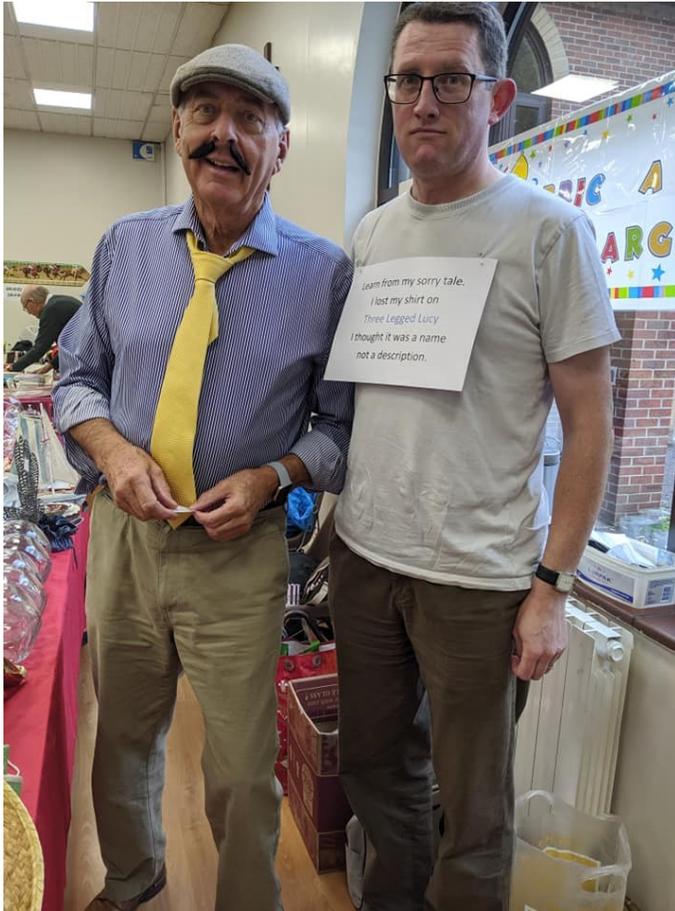
- CHRISTMAS CAKE/SLICES
- CHRISTMAS PUDDING (small or medium)
- CHRISTMAS SELECTION BOX/SMALL BOXES CHOCOLATES
- TINNED HAM/CHICKEN
- TINNED SALMON
- TINNED FRUIT/TINNED CREAM
- SAVOURIES - NUTS/CRISPS
- BOXES OF BISCUITS
- CHRISTMAS CRACKERS



Parish Bazaar

Thank you to everybody who worked so hard to make the parish bazaar such a triumph. Thank you especially to Liz who led and organised it all. The theme for the costumes was at the races, just in case that isn't clear... **

Richard



**

Richard's label reads:

Learn from my sorry tale:

I lost my shirt on **Three legged Lucy**

I thought it was a name not a description ---

WOW Calendar for 2019

Women of Wooshill is a social group to which any ladies from the church are invited. We meet monthly for a variety of activities.



December 2 at 7.30pm: wreath making with Gillian at the church in the creche room.

If you are coming, please let Gillian know by 25 November so she can purchase the frames, moss and wire at a cost of £3 per head.

Please can you bring if possible:

- Evergreen foliage - e.g., laurel, viburnum, ivy, fir, conifers, box, rosemary, bay, holly, eucalyptus, heathers etc.
- Stuff to decorate it e.g., ribbon, seed heads, berries, baubles, twigs, rose hips, pine cones, cinnamon sticks etc.
- Gloves
- Secateurs

An evergreen wreath should last 5/6 weeks outside if you remember to water it.

This should be a lovely evening to start our Christmas preparations.

If you don't fancy making a wreath, do come along for a chat and a mince pie!

December:

CAROLS AT THE PUB As in previous years, we will again be singing carols, by our fabulous music group, at The Old Leathern Bottel. **Monday 16th December**, starting at 7.30pm. All very welcome to come & join in what is always a great fun evening !





Events across the parish

The first ever joint meeting of the St. Nick's, St Paul's and Woosehill standing committees took place recently. Here we are dwelling in the word together. It turns out we have a lot of common issues and opportunities across the three churches- and a really stonking new idea for an annual joint Sunday morning service. Can't wait for the summer!



Coming up:

At St Paul's:

Sunday December 1st at 6.15pm: Candlelit Advent Service

Sunday 8th December at 6.30pm: Alexander Devine Carol concert

FIRST STEPS



for pre-school children and their parents, grandparents or carers to introduce the children to church in a relaxed, fun and friendly way.

2nd Thursday of Each Month during Term Time

Next session: 12th December.

Children's Chapel

St Paul's Church, Wokingham

Please come along with your pre-school children for **songs, stories, craft activities and refreshments**

For more information call:

Rev'd Richard Lamey 0118 327 9116 or

Liz Gallagher 0118 989 1176

COFFEE & CHAT

ST PAUL'S PARISH ROOMS

READING ROAD, WOKINGHAM

**EVERY
FRIDAY
2 - 4pm**

At a loose end?
Feeling lonely?
Had a bad week?



Drop in for a drink and a friendly chat



REGULAR MEETINGS

Sunday

Church services - see Services Diary and weekly newsletter

Mondays at 8pm: House Group

For more information talk to Geoff Peck: 9786711

geoffpeck@hotmail.com

Tuesday

Bible study group: Exploring Faith from 8-9.30pm in the church.

Wednesday

Tadpoles group: Coffee and play for pre-school children and their carers
9.00-11.00am in term time.

Contact: Val Weedon: 9791156/ 07919062770

or valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

Thursday

Together in prayer: monthly on third Thursday from 8-9pm

Contact Lyn Brown: 9782816

Saturday

Church work party: first Saturday in month 10.30am

Contact John Hoskins: 9792597

Church contacts

Rev'd Patrick Mukholi - 23 Sheridan Way, Wokingham, RG41 3AP 0118
9773397 patrick.mukholi@spauls.org.uk

Rev'd Richard Lamey, The Rectory, Holt Lane 0118 3279116
richard.lamey@spauls.org.uk

St Paul's Parish Office, Reading Road, Wokingham RG41 1EH
0118 979 2122 (Parish administrator Louise Cole)
office@stpauls-wokingham.org.uk

Rev'd Catherine Bowstead

5 Chetwode Close, Wokingham RG40 2LL 0118 9781756
minister@wokinghammethodist.org.uk

For room hire bookings contact Tony Sayer on 0118 9786560
or email tony.sayer@ntlworld.com

Pattern of Services at Woosehill

Keep an eye out in the newsletter for more up to date information too. You can receive this weekly by email:

contact Alison Lewis at woosehill.church@googlemail.com

1st Sunday:

8.45am Holy Communion

10am Morning Worship

2nd Sunday:

**10am Holy Communion with
Sunday Club for our young people**

3rd Sunday

8.45am Holy Communion

10am Morning Worship

4th Sunday

10am Holy Communion

4pm Messy Church - for all ages

6.15pm Evening Reflective Worship

(5th Sunday)

10am Café Church

5.30pm Service at Suffolk Lodge Care Home



Christmas at Woosehill Church

1st December - Advent Service at 10am



15th December - Carols, readings and poems at 7.30pm



18th December - Toddler Praise at 10am



24th December - Crib service at 4pm



And at 11pm Midnight Communion



**25th December Christmas Day
Communion with Carols at 10am**



5th January Epiphany Carols at 10am



**26th January Christingle Service at 4pm as
part of Messy Church**

