

# Woosehill Church Magazine



**Sharing God's love with the community**

**January-February 2025**



**Find us on our website  
[woosehillchurch.org](http://woosehillchurch.org)  
and on our Facebook page  
Or follow our livestreamed services on  
YouTube**



*Dear Church Family and all other readers,*

Finding enough material for the January - February issue of the magazine is always a bit of a challenge, but with changes in ministry ahead as well as the many activities available in our church I somehow seem to have managed it!

At the start of a new year, please do remember how much work goes into making things happen to ensure our church continues to function throughout the year and think about what YOU could offer to ease the load on our current willing volunteers who work so hard - especially the stewards and the tech team, but also all who make church happen on Sundays and during the week. Offering what you can of your time is not necessarily onerous, it's great to be a part of the team!

In the meantime sit with your feet up and enjoy the new issue of the magazine. There is a lot to consider. Happy New Year

*Val*

**Next deadline: 11 March 2025**  
**Articles and notices as usual**  
**preferably by e-mail to:**  
**[valerie.weedon@btinternet.com](mailto:valerie.weedon@btinternet.com)**

## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>Editor and contents</b> <b>Val Weedon</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Change of Ministry at Woosehill</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A prayer for the year ahead</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Same-sex blessings</b> <b>Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Can you hear me?</b> <b>Ed Smith</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Seasons of the church year</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A new experience</b> <b>Val Weedon</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>Alexander</b> <b>News from Tadpoles</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Embrace the Middle East</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Meditation group</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>More than Words</b> <b>Elaine Steere</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>The Seekers</b> <b>Godfrey Rust</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>News from WOW</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>WADE Skittles Evening</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Tools with a Mission</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Foodbank List</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Christmas poem - Mark Greene</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Table tennis</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Regular meetings / prayer board</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Contacts and services</b>	<b>23-24</b>



## Change of Ministry at Woosehill Church

We are starting to look at the replacement for Soba when he leaves in August, which, under the current alternating ministry will be an Anglican minister. The Parish Share for a full time Anglican minister works out at approximately £65,000 per year, plus 10% to the Methodist circuit. Unfortunately, our budget will only stretch to about £45,000, which is the equivalent to about half a minister, even though it's about 70% of the cost of a full minister!

For Paddy and Patrick, St Paul's were able to provide the shortfall and a full time minister was employed (albeit we nominally only had 70% of their time). Currently St Paul's are unable to contribute any funding to our new minister and therefore we are limited to the half a minister we can afford. Note: in terms of Sunday services the half an Anglican minister would take 3 Sundays a month, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday would be Methodist lead, so half a minister should not be too much of an issue to us.

To employ half a minister, we need the Archdeacon to put the necessary procedures in place and obtain the necessary permissions. The church council has formally agreed for this to go ahead.

### The Circuit

As Soba and Catherine Bowstead retire, Revd Wes Hampton has been invited to join the circuit as a presbyter. He will have Pastoral Charge of Wokingham Methodist Church, and share Pastoral Charge at the Church@ThePines and Woosehill Church (with our Anglican minister) commencing on the 1st September 2025.

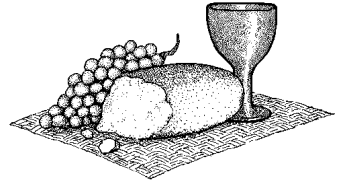
Wes and his wife, Cherry, will move into the manse in Wokingham in August 2025.

The current Berkshire and Surrey Borders circuit is to join with the Hampshire Surrey Borders circuit.

Please pray for our church during this time of change, for the new incumbents and for Soba and Catherine as they move on.



## A Prayer for the Year Ahead



May God make your year a happy one!

Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain,

But by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes;

Not by making our path easy,

But by making us sturdy to travel any path;

Not by taking hardships from us,

But by taking fear from our heart;

Not by granting us unbroken sunshine,

But by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows;

Not by making our life always pleasant,

But by showing us when people and their causes need us most,

and by making us anxious to be there to help.

God's love, peace, hope and joy to us for the year ahead.

—*Author Unknown; Adapted by Debra Mooney*

*Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

**Jeremiah 29:11** - *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

## Same-sex blessing



The need for opening our church for same-sex blessing has been tabled at the Church Council meetings a few times. We are an ecumenical partnership between the Methodist and Anglican churches. Our decisions on major issues are bound by what is commonly approved and held by the two churches.

Obviously, the Methodist Church has approved same-sex marriages and as a result of that, same-sex blessing is allowed. The Anglican Church has not decided on same-sex marriages yet, but same-sex blessing is allowed. Therefore, we are not restricted in going forward with [same-sex blessing](#) in our church.

But there are some procedures involved. Going by the Methodist route, the following steps need to be taken:

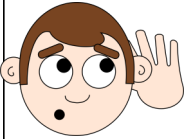
**Expression of interest:** there must be sufficient expression of interest from church members. This leads to the next step.

**A general conversation involving all church members:** A booklet produced by the Methodist Church, ***God in Love Unites Us*** which provides a theological outline on same-sex marriage, will be distributed to members. After giving adequate time for members to read, reflect and pray about the concept of marriage/same-sex marriage, a general meeting to be convened to discuss the views of church members. If the majority of members are in favour of this, the next step will be:

**Church Council:** A meeting of the church council will finally decide whether to go forward with same-sex blessings.

Therefore, I invite you to write to me or speak to me directly when you see me at church, if you would like to see same-sex blessings to be allowed at Woosehill church.

**Soba-**



## Can you hear me?

One of the challenges for the audio-visual team is that of ensuring the sound quality is good for both those in the church and for the “home” congregation. Here is how you can help.

Firstly, if you are reading or doing intercessions from the lectern, please make sure that the microphone is adjusted at the right height for you, that is close to your mouth. Remember the volume of sound going into the microphone falls off with the square of the distance between it and you. That is if you move twice as far away, the microphone captures a quarter of the sound intensity. The microphone at the lectern is on a flexible stalk and so can be directed in a way that allows you to speak comfortably and most importantly clearly. There were a couple of demonstrations of how this could be achieved at the carol service.

If you are uncomfortable with doing this, we can always provide you with a clip on radio microphone, if you ask before the service starts.

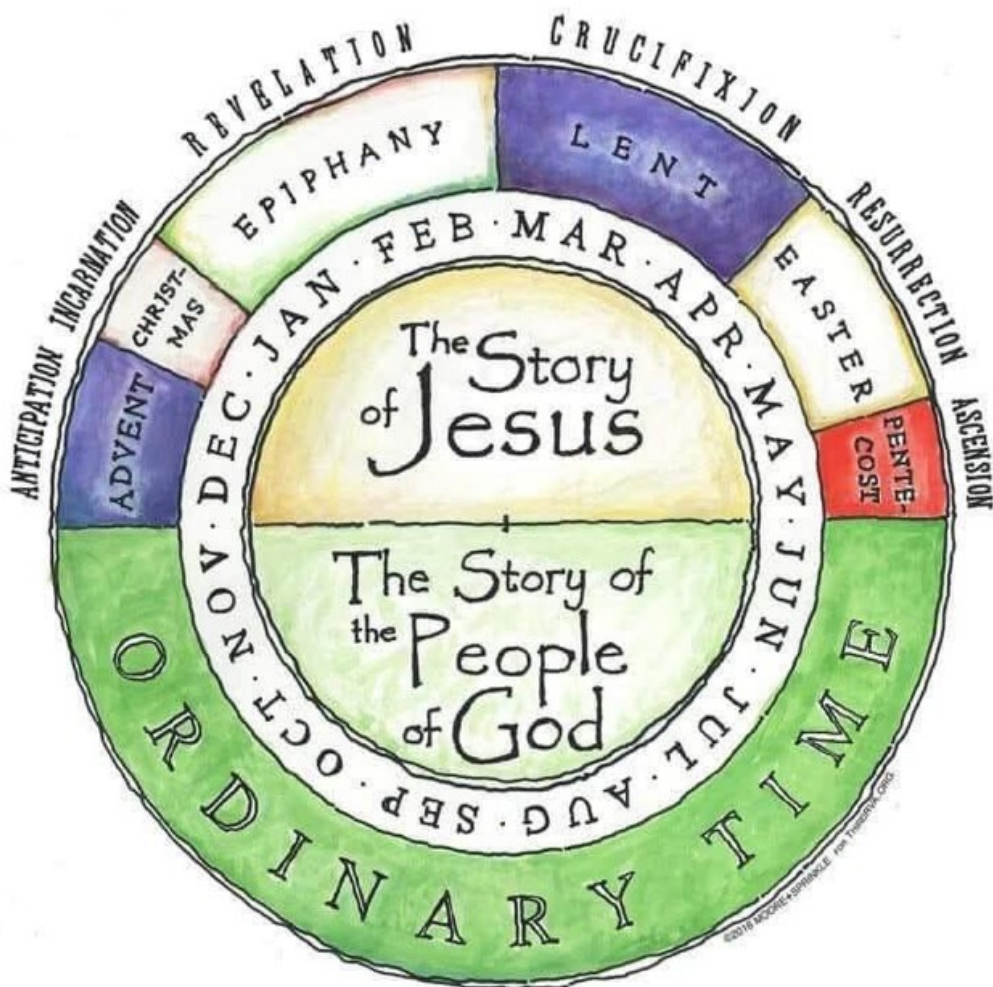
You might ask can't we just turn the volume up and in some cases we do that, but when you turn the volume on a microphone channel up, you amplify any ambient noise, as well as the speaker's voice. In the worst case, noise originating from the loudspeakers within the church, is picked up by the microphone and recirculated through the sound system, which further amplifies and distorts it. In extreme cases this manifests itself as high pitched howl, which most find extremely unpleasant.

During plenary sessions, which typically happen during café church, we will typically provide two hand held radio microphones. By using these, the sound will not only carry better within the church, but it also reaches the home audience. So if you are presenting the findings of your group debate or making an observation during such services, please use the microphones provided.

The goal is to make sure that word of God is audible to both the in church and home congregations, so that services can be as inclusive as possible.

**Ed Smith**

## Seasons of the Church Year





## A new experience

Those of you who have been members of Woosehill Church for many years will know about our Crib Service which has always brought in our biggest crowd and been the real start to Christmas for our local

community.

For many years Elaine led the festivities with great skill and good humour, so when she moved on (she is now starting the tradition in her new church), there were big shoes to fill.

The Covid pandemic gave us a bit of a respite, not in the way we would have hoped, but once we were ready to start anew there was a question about 'who would be brave enough?' Last year I bravely/foolishly volunteered and then was unwell on the day, landing John and Steve to valiantly step in and lead a Crib Service as successful as ever. Phew!

This year, I didn't manage to get out of it, so wearing my best Christmas jumper and being instructed in the use of the unfamiliar headset, I took to the stage.

One thing that has changed since Elaine's day is that we no longer dress the children at the front, but they are invited to choose a costume as they arrive. There was some anxiety that no one had agreed to be Joseph and Mary might need to go it alone, but all was well in the final moments before lift-off.

And so, we made a start, with Mary played by Kelly's daughter Sarah, and Joseph by Harry, a former Tadpole, always an enthusiastic volunteer. A high point was when Sarah reached under her chair for the baby Jesus as he was born and 'delivered' him in very authentic style!

We had a lively donkey and a veritable host of angels who seemed to be reluctant to leave the stage to return to the heavens. The lack of an inn-keeper meant audience participation – and they obliged willingly with a chorus of 'NO ROOM.'

As is our tradition we had a real very new baby to show how tiny and vulnerable the Baby Jesus was and Naomi from Tadpoles obliged with baby



Joanna who was shown around to all present.

With the tableau set there was an invitation for a photo opportunity, which led to total chaos, and it was difficult to get the crowd back under control for our final carol. (**memo: change order next year!**). However, once peace reigned again the children sang the first verse of *Away in a Manger* beautifully and the audience joined in to end another special service to bring Christmas to our community.

It was really good to see so many of our Tadpoles families past and present in church that day.

Thanks to Kelly, Sue and Rebecca Youle (a former Crib service performer, many years ago!) for helping in the wardrobe department, the tech team, to Soba for the final prayers and all who helped to make this happen. It was a privilege to spread the good news of the birth of the Christ Child to the people of Woosehill.

Till next year!

**Val**





### Alexander

After Alexander read so very well at our carol service, we invited him to do the prayers of intercession at our Crib Service. Not only did he agree, he even wrote the prayer himself!

We are indeed blessed to have this young man - and his family - in our church.

Here is the prayer that Alexander wrote:

Dear God

We are praying, here today, for those who are not as fortunate as us. The people who are all alone at this time of the year. The children in the world who can't pray in a church as wonderful as the one we are gathered in today. For the children who don't have a place to call home, or the children who are all alone.

Dear God, thank you for the amazing gift you gave us on that night, over 2000 years ago, your son. We pray for children around the world to be safe at this time of year and always and an end to all conflict and keep them from harm. Whether these children are at home, or even on the streets keep them safe in your embracing hands.

In Jesus name,  
Amen

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### Tadpoles

Tadpoles is back for a new term. We have enjoyed celebrating two birthdays - one a 3 year old and another slightly more mature 70 year old, both regular members of our group. Cake was provided by both and a party atmosphere prevailed!

Our membership now includes members originating from Hong Kong, India, Turkey, the Middle East, West Africa, Germany and Australia. ( I shouldn't forget our lovely Jeannie from Bonnie Scotland ☺) We rejoice in the mix and the friendly mutual support within the group, commented on by Cara when she visited for our end of term Nativity service.





## How do we hold on to hope as the Middle East conflict persists?

Against a backdrop of prolonged and escalating conflict in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and Lebanon, it is hard not to feel overwhelmed by the violence and suffering. Over the past year, we have seen innocent lives lost and communities shattered. Our partners in the region continue to serve faithfully – yet, despite our prayers for peace, the situation is spiralling downwards and peace seems ever more distant.

As the conflict and violence persists, how can we continue to trust in God? And how can we be steadfast in prayer, even when circumstances appear hopeless?

Trusting God despite seemingly unanswered prayer is one of the greatest challenges in our Christian walks. We pray, we ask, we plead, we wait – and the longed-for response seems absent. But this is not a new struggle for God's people; we see this pattern play out in the Psalms, we hear it in the cries of the prophets, and we even confront it in the life of Jesus himself.

The Psalms are full of examples of people pouring out their hearts in frustration and despair. Psalm 13 opens with a cry: "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (v1). This expression of abandonment may resonate with those of us who have prayed faithfully and yet seen no immediate response. Yet the psalmist does not stop at lament. He continues: "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation" (Psalm 13:5). Even when faced with silence, the psalmist holds on to hope, resting in the assurance of God's unfailing love.

Back in July, as tensions between Israel and Hezbollah increased, one of our Lebanese partners wrote:

***'Though it is not always easy, we have seen how God works amid darkness and destruction to bring about good. In these times of tribulation, we trust that he continues to stand with us, works with us and through us to achieve his will.'***



Let us stand with our partners, holding onto the hope that one day God's kingdom of peace will come. Let us continue to pray unabated for those affected by the war in the Middle East, trusting that God can bring healing and reconciliation in ways that transcend our understanding. And let us continue calling for justice and peace, knowing that this is God's will.

***Ed: Let us pray that the peace agreement under discussion comes into force and brings relief for the people of Gaza.***

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## **Meditation Group Update**

Having had to meet in the Rapsey Room, rather than St Paul's, last month, we've realised that meeting somewhere warm during the winter months (October to April) makes far more sense. So if the cold was putting you off joining us before, then do come and join us, usually on 2nd Tuesday of each month. In the Rapsey Room, St Paul's Parish Rooms. This is on the left at the top of the stairs.

### ***Would you like to learn more about Christian Meditation?***

Starting with our meeting on 14th January 2025, I will be offering some teaching on aspects of Christian Meditation, over 6 sessions, starting with "What is Christian Meditation". This will form part of our monthly meeting, but starting promptly at 1pm to allow time for teaching, meditation and discussion, aiming to finish by 2pm. I hope this will encourage you on your meditation journey and give you a better understanding of the history of Christian Meditation too.

Please contact me for more details.

**Susannah** [meditationgroup@spauls.org.uk](mailto:meditationgroup@spauls.org.uk)





## More than words

Here in the Hampshire countryside, the local Benefice consists of four churches: Bramley and Sherfield on Loddon are the two Parish churches, Hartley Wespall is a tiny, ancient church in the midst of farmland, and Stratfield Saye is the chapel on the Duke of Wellington's estate, but an Anglican church as well. Our Rector lives in the Bramley vicarage, with the vicarage for the church to which I belong, Sherfield on Loddon, offered for a self-supporting "House for Duty" Associate Priest. Thus it was that two years ago we welcomed the new vicar for our parish, David, as he moved into the village and took up running our services and caring for our community, and noticed immediately how quiet and reserved he could be, how different in fact from the stereotypical idea of a minister.

As a Yorkshireman and retired engineer, I suppose we might have expected that David didn't waste spare words on social chatter; he more than made up for it, however, when he engaged with one of the subjects about which he was passionate. These included creation care and the protection of the environment, as well as reaching out to the vulnerable who don't have a voice, whether at the Memory Café he worked hard to set up to welcome those with dementia or supporting our local special school for young people (mostly non-verbal) with autism. On behalf of the latter, who are currently fundraising to build a new residential block, David undertook a sponsored sky dive, and on that subject he became almost gushing, as it was obviously one of the most exciting experiences of his life!

Quickly we realised that having a brilliant electrical engineer, who had been a lecturer in his subject at one of the country's top universities, was going to be extremely beneficial to the fabric of our old and somewhat crumbling church building. New electrical sockets appeared, fire regulations were tightened up, and the sound system control board became a showpiece of crystal-clear wiring and labelling. Just as welcome was the technical advice David so freely gave to anyone who asked him, often followed by an offer to come round and assist with the project if necessary. We got used to him dashing off after a meeting as soon as the closing prayers had been uttered to sort out an electrical problem for one of our elderly parishioners, knowing that he would stay



until everything was working perfectly again, however long it took.

As the leader of Messy Church, I invited David to participate in our sessions, and he agreed to become involved in the “Science Table”, although I could tell that it was rather out of his comfort zone! On one special occasion I suggested that since we were thinking about the Holy Spirit, he might like to base the science activities around wind. I sort of expected he might have the children just build little windmills or something, but in fact he turned up with an intricately prepared kit to construct a kite, which he and the oldest of our Messy Church family (nine years old and as smart as he is delightful) sat down and built together, lost in their own little world. I then realised that the two of them had gone out onto the field behind the Community Centre where we meet, finding them there with the beautiful kite soaring above them and a growing crowd of onlookers watching in admiration.

By now, I expect you have worked out why I am writing this article about someone you will never meet. In late autumn David became ill, and although he battled on bravely as long as he could and never wanted us to make a fuss, eventually he went to hospital for tests which revealed cancer. We lost him in mid-December, the day before our Christingle service, and his funeral was movingly led by our Rector and the Bishop of Basingstoke two days before Christmas. So now we are just left with memories of his all too brief ministry among us; however, I suspect that as time passes, we will realise that we have been changed, and gained new understanding, during this short time. As a Bronze Level Eco Church (an achievement for which David worked very hard, and of which he was justifiably proud) we will continue to work towards creation care goals, both as a group and as individuals. We will cherish the most fragile of the souls entrusted to us. We will open our hearts to that unwavering love for God and our community which characterised our friend and leader. I think that as a church we have learnt, beyond a doubt, that actions speak louder than words.

**Elaine**

## The seekers

You ask from whence we came—  
from many places. Some are legends now,  
some unremembered. You made us into kings.  
We were not kings, not even of ourselves.  
Were we from the east? That is a point of view.  
We set out from where we were. You gave us names  
like Melchior and Balthazar,  
but those were not our names. From time to time  
we have been called by many names—  
Plato, Confucius, Aristotle,  
Copernicus, Galileo, Newton,  
Descartes, Darwin, Curie,  
Einstein, Heisenberg.  
How long did the journey take? Months? Centuries?  
When does a truth take hold,  
in a moment or a thousand years?  
Though calendars and clocks may shepherd it  
with careful numbers, yet in the wilderness time  
howls like a pack of wolves. We heard it all night long.  
We were both men and women. What we shared  
was an unquenchable desire to know  
something not known before. Were we wise?  
Wise to leave our homes, acquaintances and all  
the comfort of familiar irritations,  
shedding the fabric of our former lives  
like an old coat? Wise to risk  
everything on our unlikely theories  
with no guarantee of safe return,  
and reckless that the truth that we discover  
may prove, for all we know, fatal  
to everything to which we have thus far clung?  
If this is wisdom, yes,  
you may say that we were wise.

**Godfrey Rust**

*(Heard at one of our recent services and worth reading again)*



## News from WOW

It is the time of the year when our group of 'Women of Woosehill' meet to discuss and plan for what we want to do in the coming year.

We had some great times together in 2024 sharing food, walking, talking, creating things and playing games. What would YOU like to do in 2025? all suggestions are welcome; events are organised by individual members who volunteer for an activity of interest to them, as well as the group. I am just the secretary who sends information to all ladies.

You are invited very kindly by Lynne Paine to her home on **Thursday 23rd January from 7.30pm**. If you need a lift please let me know as I know some of you don't drive or don't like night driving and I will see what I can arrange, also parking is limited at Lynne's but the cake will be good!! All ladies of the church are welcome; do come along with your ideas.

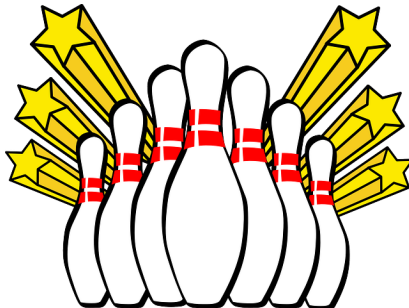
I hope to see you there.

**Lynn Smith**

## WOW February event

All are invited to the WOW event for February - see overleaf for the poster. Lynn Smith has been collecting names for tickets but her deadline will have passed by the time you read this so you are welcome to buy your own.

**Note: This is not exclusively a WOW event and all are invited, female or male!**







Join us for a fun



EVENING  
at



**Wade Day Centre**

40 Reading Road, Wokingham RG41 1EH

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February**

**7.00pm for 7.30 start**

**Tickets £8.00**

There will be a



Contact [secretary@wadecentre.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wadecentre.org.uk) 01189 787025

Free Parking at Masonic Hall (opposite)



## TWAM

### Tools with a Mission

***Empowering people with the tools that create livelihoods and change lives***



It is some time since I published anything about this worthwhile charity and I hope it serves as a useful reminder as well as information for our newer members.

‘TWAM is a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade tool kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation.’

Whilst their focus is Africa they also support local communities and organisations. For example, offcuts of haberdashery fabric that can't be sent to Africa are sent to other local charities.

Material is also sent to prisons for use in craft projects.

They send around 225 tonnes of donated, useable, refurbished tools to Africa every year.

### **TWAM is the main charity supported by Gray's Farm, Wokingham**

Many of you may know Gray's Farm acts as a local depot/collection point for tools which are then refurbished and sent out to many countries mainly in Africa, to enable people to be self supporting.

It is mainly woodworking, metalworking, Plumbing, Electricians, and Motor mechanics tools and IT equipment that are needed.

Also, sewing and knitting machines. Many areas can also use computers and Power tools.

For an up to date list of what IS and is NOT needed please go to the tool list at [TWAM.uk](http://TWAM.uk)

Bibles in modern English are also welcome.



## Wokingham Foodbank

# UPDATED SHOPPING LIST

@wokinghamfoodbank



Tinned Cold Meat



Long Life Milk



Coffee



Tinned Fruit



Cooking Sauces



Toilet Roll



Antibacterial Cleaning Spray



Conditioner



Male Deodorants



Thank you for all your donations

[WWW.WOKINGHAM.FOODBANK.ORG.UK](http://WWW.WOKINGHAM.FOODBANK.ORG.UK)

We do not distribute formula milk



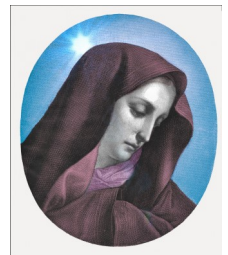


## Christmas Poem

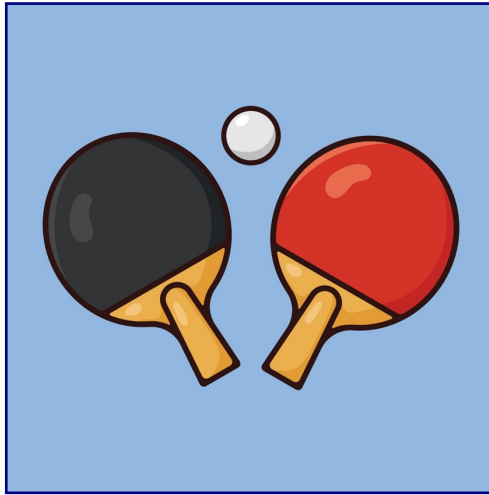
*To Mary, the invitation came, skyborne on angel's wings,  
Heaven sent and pregnant with possibilities.  
For, God knows, she had reasons to say 'no',  
Her future, til then, so serenely assured:  
A home, her good name, a husband to wed.  
Everything indeed for which she thought she'd been raised.  
Are such so easily cast aside?  
Would love, security, reputation  
Be so swiftly pried  
From our determined grasp?  
How other people's risks seem simpler to take,  
Our own stubborn knots so much harder to break.  
To us, the royal invitation also comes,  
Though usually in less spectacular script,  
Sans seraph, but daily clear, which way will we go?  
Of course, we are free to decline,  
But 'no', promising more for now, always leads to less,  
Better, braver, wiser, surely simply to say...*

**Mark Greene**

Mission Champion at the London Institute for  
Contemporary Christianity



## Table Tennis



**Fridays at 7:30pm**  
TABLE TENNIS

Woosehill Church, Chestnut Avenue  
RG41 3RS

All welcome, all abilities

Small donation for adults, U16 free

Table tennis runs year round, provided there is someone to open  
and lock up.

If you would like to join the group, talk to John Smith



## Woosehill Meetings and Service Livestreaming

We continue to livestream our 10am service on our Woosehill Church YouTube channel, the link also advertised weekly on our Facebook page, newsletter and website [woosehillchurch.org](http://woosehillchurch.org)

**Parish Bible study** on Tuesday evenings 7.15 - 8.30pm via Zoom.

**Together in Prayer** on the *Third* Thursday of the month from 8-9pm via Zoom or at the church.

Contact Lyn Brown for details.

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## Don't forget our new Prayer Board

We now have an updated Prayer Board at the back of the Church Sanctuary. It is available to all who use the church to put on it any prayer request. A name, or short message is all that's required and I will ensure that we pray through all the requests at our Together in Prayer meetings, or in intercessions with permission.

Lyn has posted words of encouragement - do take a look.

**Lyn Brown**



## Church Contacts

Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby, 23 Sheridan Way RG41 3AP,  
01189894374 soba.sinnathamby@hotmail.co.uk

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

Rev'd Catherine Bowstead, Methodist Superintendent Minister  
5 Chetwode Close, Wokingham RG40 2LL 0118 9781756  
minister@wokinghammethodist.org.uk

**Church hire** Lynne Paine: treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com

**Other information:** stewards@woosehillchurch.org

Or via the website: woosehillchurch.org

*Sharing God's Love with the Community*





## What's on at Woosehill Church

**Sunday Services** – 10:00am at the Church or online

**Thursday Mornings at 10:00am - just turn up**

1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday – Free to do any craft activity, jigsaws or puzzles with refreshments & chat

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – WoolWAM – a Knitting & Crochet group



**Table Tennis**

On Friday Evenings at

7:30pm

**Saturday Group**

**Sip & Share** – Have you lost someone or are you just wanting company? Then this group is for you. Chat over a cuppa. Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday at 11:00am. No need to book.

**Tadpoles**

On Wednesday mornings from 9:00am. Playtime and coffee for under-fives and their carers. You must register for this group, please see website.

Planning a Wedding, Christening or need to organise a Funeral. Then please do talk to us.

For more information about any of the above, please email [stewards@woosehillchurch.com](mailto:stewards@woosehillchurch.com)

Or visit our website [www.woosehillchurch.org](http://www.woosehillchurch.org)

## Our Current Pattern of Services at Woosehill Church

1st Sunday - Holy Communion

2nd Sunday - Morning Worship

3rd Sunday Holy Communion

4th Sunday - Morning Worship

5th Sunday - Morning Worship / Café Church