

# Woosehill Church Magazine

January - February 2026



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

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

**Dear Church family and all other readers,**

Our Crib service this year returned to pre-Covid numbers with over 150 families gathering on Christmas Eve for the usual special celebration as we brought the spirit of Christmas to the Woosehill community, with a special appearance of a large Christmas tree – see pictures inside!

A more sober event was our Covenant service led by Wes in January when we renewed our commitment to our faith, to our church and to our mission in the community.

Plenty to think about as we consider the major change to our financial position from Easter this year. Do read our treasurer's report on page 8 and think about initiatives which may be helpful.

Wishing you all every blessing as we celebrate another year at Woosehill Church.

**Val**

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## A Message from our Minister

### What's in a name?

Or rather, more accurately for our thinking this month, what's in a translation? The picture at the end of this article shows a few of the Bibles I've been given or bought over the years, of various different translations. I have my very first one given to me when I left primary school in year 6, the GNB, or Good News Bible. It is the most faded of them all, and the most highlighted as I used it up until GCSE!

I also have an NIV (New International Version), a few NRSV's (New Revised Standard Version) including the Jewish Annotated copy, the copy I was given at my ordination which has the orange leaves on, and a copy which shows both NIV and NRSV side by side. The Word on Fire version is a Catholic version of the Gospels complete with artwork, mini sermons and deeper explorations of some concepts. And on my Kindle I have the NLT (New Living Translation), ESV (English Standard Version) and the FNV (First Nations Version) of the New Testament, which isn't a translation at all but rather a reimagining of the Gospel into a context that merges Native American traditions and storytelling.

But why? Why have different translations, what is the difference between them and what difference does it make as we read the Bible? The Bible was originally written in 3 languages – the Old Testament was mainly written in Hebrew, and the New Testament was mainly written in Aramaic and Greek. At theological collage we were given the opportunity to study Greek or Hebrew, for which I chose Greek and can

make a passable go at translating the first 14 chapters of John's Gospel! But the point here is that every Bible we read is already a translation from those original languages into Latin and then later into English.

Language is always changing and evolving, words take on different meanings and nuances become more or less pronounced. Which means that a literal word-for-word translation of the Bible isn't really possible or indeed desirable. Different translations have different merits and points to commend them, and there are a variety of reasons why we might choose one version over another. In church we currently use the NIV, the New International Version. At the last Church Council, we voted in favour of changing that to the NRSV, the New Revised Standard Version, and there are a couple of reasons for this.

Firstly, both the Church of England and Methodist churches use the NRSV as default. If you have the C of E Daily Prayer App on your phone then this is the version that all the readings are taken from, and is the version referred to in Common Worship and the liturgy we use in our services. So, it feels right that we do likewise.

Secondly, the NIV version that we are currently using has gender-specific language, whereas the NRSV is gender-inclusive and gender-neutral. For example, Jesus came for all men, vs Jesus came for all people. It might seem a small point, but I really don't believe it is. I think it truly matters that we have a fuller and richer and more inclusive text that mirrors the inclusivity and attitude of God. I think it matters that we are able to put ourselves into the Biblical stories and be reminded that women have been there and have always proclaimed and shared the Good News of the Gospel. I think it matters that we have to translate men into all when we hear it when that isn't how language is used anymore.

Lastly, we are an ecumenical church, made up of both Anglican and Methodist, as well as people from other denominational backgrounds. The NRSV isn't biased towards any particular Christian tradition as it was translated by a range of scholars including Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholics. It is sometimes slightly harder to read than the NIV, as it is more of a word-for-word translation, whereas the NIV is both thought and word. This isn't a bad thing though, as it helps remind us that the Bible was originally written in a different language and at a different time.

We will be changing both the lectern Bible and the one projected for us during services. If you don't have an NRSV Bible at home, this doesn't necessarily mean that you have to go out and get one, unless you'd like to. I think the most important point for personal Bible reading and study is that the best version for you is the one that you are going to read! If you have a favourite or treasured Bible, or if you're lucky enough to have a family Bible that has been passed down and read, then that's wonderful and is part of the way in which we inhabit the Biblical texts rather than just reading them. We make those stories our own through reading and re-reading passages, which is just so beautiful.

I use the website Bible Gateway for reading the Bible online and for copying and pasting Bible passages. You can easily change the translation to one of 64 different versions! Below is Luke 11: 2-4, the Lord's Prayer, as a familiar passage to compare the two different translations. Both are easily recognisable as the prayer we say every day whilst also showing the slight differences and emphasis:

**NRSV**

Father, may your name be revered as holy. May your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

**NIV**

“Father, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.  
And lead us not into temptation.”

If you'd like to learn more about the history of Biblical translation and how it happened, how the language has changed and evolved, then I recommend John Barton's 'The Word' for a thorough and interesting delve into this. And whatever and however you read the Bible, I pray that it may be life-giving, that it may bring you both clarity and comfort, and that it may bring you closer to Jesus the living Word.

**With prayers,**

**Rev'd Cara**



## A Message from our Methodist Minister

Dear Friends,



Recently I saw a television production of Noël Coward's play *Private Lives*. In the play, two people who had previously been married to each other meet again while on honeymoon with their new spouses. Opportunities for embarrassment and reflection on what had gone wrong in their previous marriage abound.

These leading characters have a more relaxed attitude to marriage than do their new spouses, who are each marrying for their first time. Experience has left them more cynical, and it becomes clear that their new marriages lack commitment and depth. We might come away from the play thinking that deep personal relationships are impossible.

February brings us an appropriate corrective, for 14 February, St Valentine's Day, is a chance to recall the saint who defied the Roman emperor because of the importance of love and marriage. Emperor Claudius, in the third century, was worried that his army was being weakened because too few men were ready to enlist. Claudius blamed the preference for family life – he saw that men wanted to stay with their wives and children. So, he outlawed marriage in the hope that there would be more men without the ties of family life, who would then be willing to serve in the military.

However, priests like Valentine continued to marry couples in secret, as a profession of their love and a sign of the commitment to one another. No emperor can outlaw love, and no playwright can convince us that the loving relationships that we share are unworthy of our dedication. This should not surprise us, for relationship is at the heart of our triune God, and love is the very centre of his character. We, too, share in that divine nature.

Today even if we see the attitudes of a play from 1930 in society around us, nonetheless we recognize the impulse to show a deep-seated lasting commitment to others as a reflection of the nature of God in us. God is love and, to the best extent that we can, we reveal his love to the world.

**Wes**

## From the Rector's Study

We are rapidly coming up on Lent, and I will confess that I am happy about it. Lent has the image of being grim and dark, dreary rather than filled with light.



And it is indeed a fast and a time of repentance. It is a time to deal with sin. These aren't necessarily happy topics, but I love Lent anyway. The raw honesty of Lent is something I find valuable.

In 1633, the poet George Herbert wrote his poem that begins 'Welcome, deare feast of Lent'. In that poem, he talks about how Lent, while a fast for the body, is a feast for the soul. When we calm our earthly passions and desires by discipline (or 'giving things up' in the modern phrase!), we give our souls the chance to feast on goodness.

There's also the idea that Lent is a burden that we have to do perfectly or not at all. How often do we tell ourselves that we have failed in our Lenten resolution – or a New Year's resolution – and therefore we give up. That is hardly the Christian way. Our Christian road isn't about perfection, but about having the right intention, and repenting when our deeds fall short of that goal.

Herbert writes, 'It's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day; / Yet to go part of that religious way, / Is better than to rest: / We cannot reach our Saviour's purity; / Yet are bid, Be holy ev'n as he. In both let's do our best.' So as Lent approaches, let's do our best, imperfectly, messily, like the fallible humans we are. Let's do our best, and give our souls a chance to feast, so that when our risen Lord greets us on Easter morning, we can greet him with hearts and souls refreshed and made clean.

'Perhaps my God, though he be far before, / May turn, and take me by the hand, and more / May strengthen my decays.'

Fr Sam Tanna-Korn

## **Church Finances – ideas welcome.**

This is just a little piece to ensure that everyone knows what is happening, otherwise some may not be aware until after the AGM.

Hawthorns School have ended their contract with JAG, the before and after school club, which currently hires the church for 4.5 hours a day during term time and all day in the school holidays. The company who will replace them will be using the school's premises.

\*\*\*\*\****This is a big financial loss to the church.***\*\*\*\*\*

We are forming a team to look at how to make our church more attractive to hire and also new ways of increasing our revenue and decreasing our costs. The good news is that we do have some reserves to do this and to cushion us over the initial period, but we do need a solution, or we will quickly erode these funds.

So, if you have any ideas on how to find new regular **day time** hires, or other ways that we can raise funds, please let the staff & stewards know. You can do this by emailing [treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com).

In the meantime, a bit of traditional, boring “Treasurer” stuff for the beginning of the new year, probably more important this year than in previous years. That is, of course, it is time to review our regular giving and if you do feel able to increase it, even by a little bit, that would be absolutely great and would take some of the pressure off me as Treasurer.

***Lynne Paine***

***Treasurer Woosehill church***

## Crib service

Wow, what a success our Christmas Eve Crib service was this year, with over 150 flocking to the church for the 4pm service.

There was as usual dressing up and lots of audience participation with the added bonus this year of the appearance of a giant Christmas tree to conclude the proceedings!

What a great way to start Christmas in the Woosehill community.





## News from Tadpoles

We started the New Year celebrating Epiphany using the words of the very popular 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' story but instead going on a 'King Hunt'.

We walked around the church visiting King Herod (bravely played by Grandpa Nigel - boo!) and after crossing the desert arrived at the crib to meet the real King, Baby Jesus. We came back splishy-splashy through the river and safely back home. Much fun was had – but with a message too.



***Val, on behalf of the Tadpoles team***

## Birthday celebration



### *A message from Jeanette.*

Please save the date of March 21st if you enjoy playing games. I have a significant birthday coming up and instead of a party, or meal out we are going to organise a games afternoon. More details to follow nearer the time.

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## Hawthorns Christmas Fair

It is good to see a renewal of our relationship with the Hawthorns school, and a group from church were at the Christmas Fair providing a craft activity which proved very popular.



## News from WOW

Our WOW group held two very enjoyable events in November and December, the first, in November, organised by Lynn was a pottery painting afternoon held at the church ....



... and the second in December, also at the church, was an enjoyable morning spent making festive table decorations, resulting in an impressive display of individual creativity, organised by Lynne and Linda:



### **Women of Woosehill – WOW**

This popular social group for the ladies of Woosehill Church meets approximately monthly for a range of activities organised by its members.

The annual planning meeting will this year be at Lynne Paine's on the evening of Thursday 29 January.

All are welcome (I expect there will be cake!)

### **No Time to Pray**

I got up early one morning  
And rushed right into the day;  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I didn't take time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me,  
And heavier came each task,  
“Why doesn't God help me?” I wondered.  
He answered, “You didn't ask.”

I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
But the day toiled on gray and bleak;  
I wondered why God didn't show me;  
He said, “But you didn't seek.”

I tried to come into God's presence;  
I used all my keys at the lock;  
God gently and lovingly chided,  
“My child you didn't knock.”

I woke up early this morning,  
And paused before entering the day;  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I had to take time to pray.

*– Anonymous*

***Thanks to Lyn Brown for sending this***

**“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.”**  
**John 14:27**

**What comes to mind when you consider peace? Perhaps we most often associate peace with stillness, calm and inactivity, but for our Jerusalem-based partner Musalaha, peace demands action.**

Their staff of Palestinian and Israeli Christians are dedicated to promoting reconciliation between communities. Amid deepening divisions and violence, they have steadfastly continued to offer an alternative narrative, showing a peaceful way to work towards justice and safety for all who call Israel and Palestine home. At the three-month anniversary of the official Israel–Hamas ceasefire agreement, what is the reality of this peace in Gaza and the West Bank? In our latest blog, Saleem Anfous, project manager at Musalaha, shares his reflections. I’m delighted to include an extract for you here.:

### **Peace cannot be declared in a conference room**

*"In my hometown of Aboud, a small Christian village northwest of Ramallah, where my family has lived for seven generations, the recent olive harvest was overshadowed by growing settler attacks and the existential threat from expanding settler outposts... the land around Aboud is becoming increasingly inaccessible. Two established settlements, Beit Aryeh and another nearby, already encircle the area. In the past two months, two new illegal outposts have appeared on the surrounding hills...And all of this unfolded after the ceasefire.*

*May we be people who do not settle for political peace alone, but who seek the deeper peace of God, one rooted in justice, compassion, and genuine reconciliation.*

## **A Prayer for Peace**

*Lord we come before you today to cast all our burdens onto you.*

*Lord you are aware of everything going on in our lives now, please come into our lives and give us peace.*

*Remind us to think of you and your goodness instead of worrying about our problems.*

*Give us rest and help us to trust in you.*

*Please take away all our fears and our anxieties and grant us peace and serenity.*

*Comfort our hearts and give us the strength to endure all that challenges us.*

*Thank you for gracing us with your presence and your comfort.*

*Through Jesus Christ we pray,*

*Amen*



## VACANCY *in* SEE

Dear friends and colleagues

Today (Wednesday 7 January) we begin the process of seeking views from across the Diocese as we look for a new Bishop, following Bishop Steven's retirement announcement.

We are writing to you to ask you to take part. We have your details as you subscribe to our publications or have a role in your local parish or community.

We need to create a document called a Statement of Needs that will set out information about the Diocese, including its hopes and challenges, and what people have told us is important to them in a new Bishop.

We have created a short survey that will be the main way we ask for views and opinions to be included in the Statement of Needs. The survey features four questions and will take less than ten minutes to complete.

You can take part in the survey [by clicking here](#).

We will share a link to this survey on our website and via our communications more widely, but we would like to ask you to share your thoughts. Every voice matters and will be heard.

We appreciate you may be asked to do this more than once over the

next few weeks. We apologise for the repetition.

The survey will close on Wednesday 4 February at 5pm, and while the timescale for this feels compressed, we are following advice from the Appointments Secretaries who will themselves hold a further second consultation in March.

That will also include some meetings with civic and council leaders, and organisations we work with.

Please send any queries at all about the survey to [newbishop@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:newbishop@oxford.anglican.org), as well as using that for survey responses if need be.

We are immensely grateful for your help, both in completing the survey and in praying for this whole process of discernment.

With every blessing, and our thanks.

*Revd Canon Geoff Bayliss  
Chair, Vacancy In See Committee  
Mark Humphriss  
Secretary, Vacancy In See Committee*

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**ASH WEDNESDAY HOLY COMMUNION**

**AT WOOSEHILL CHURCH**

**7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY**

**LED BY REV'D CARA SMART**



## UPDATED SHOPPING LIST

- Cold meat
- Fish
- Washing Powder
- Women's Deodorant
- Size 7 Nappies



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Don't forget the Bankthefood app. for up-to-date needs.

**N**urture gratitude in each sunrise.

**E**mbrace God's timing; every delay carries divine purpose.

**W**alk by faith, even when the way feels uncertain.

**Y**ield your plans to the One who knows your heart best.

**E**xtend grace freely to yourself and those still healing.

**A**bide in His presence; there, peace quiets the world's noise.

**R**ise renewed, for every ending is God's new beginning.

**2026**

- MINDFULCHRISTIANITY

# Pancake Party!

## Woosehill Church

Tuesday 17th February



6.30-7.30pm for a quiz,  
pancake race and eating.

Followed by a Lent Bible  
Study 7.30-8.30pm

*For more information please contact Rev'd Cara Smart  
on 01189 014365 or [woosehillminister@outlook.com](mailto:woosehillminister@outlook.com)*

## **Developing faith and prayer**

**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.



Contact Lyn Brown for details.

## **Church Contacts**

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**Church hire** Lynne Paine: [treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com)

**Other information:** [stewards@woosehillchurch.org](mailto:stewards@woosehillchurch.org)

**Deadline for next issue Sunday 15 March 2026**

**To:** [valerie.weedon@btinternet.com](mailto:valerie.weedon@btinternet.com)

## **What's on at Woosehill Church**

**Sunday services:** 10.00am at the church or online via the Woosehill Church YouTube channel or click on the link on our Facebook page.

**Thursday Morning social groups:** From 10 am – 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 and chat.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – WoolWAM** - a knitting and crochet group.

### **Saturday Group: Sip and 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, craft, coffee and snacks for under-fives and their carers. To register for this group, see the website [woosehillchurch.org](http://woosehillchurch.org)

### ***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 either*

*Rev'd Cara Smart on [woosehillminister@outlook.com](mailto:woosehillminister@outlook.com)*

*[stewards@woosehillchurch.com](mailto:stewards@woosehillchurch.com)*

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