

Woosehill Church Magazine



Sharing God's love with the community

July—August 2023



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woosehillchurch.org
and on our Facebook page
Or follow our livestreamed services on
YouTube**



Dear Church Family and all other readers,

Firstly, we must welcome back Soba and Nava after their time away in southern India and Sri Lanka on sabbatical. It's good to have them back with us.

The Methodist church year starts in September, so as we near the end of one year and look forward to a new one, it is the time for some new beginnings. We are looking to relaunch the Thursday groups in September to make them more inclusive so that all are welcome to drop in for a chat and cuppa each Thursday morning. We look forward to another relaunch when we meet at Café Church at the end of July to discuss how we want the new pastoral groups to work for us. Do come along and let us know what you think. Finally do have a read of Steve's article about how we can become a more 'green' church—looking for volunteers if that is an area of interest for you.

Don't forget though that whatever your skill or interest we can find a job for you here at Woosehill church!

*With every blessing,
Val*

Next deadline: September 17 2023
Articles and notices as usual
preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

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Reflections on my Sabbatical

Dear friends,



Some of you may have watched the documentary I presented at the church at the end of June. In that short film, I gave a little taste of my sabbatical project. In preparation for my sabbatical, I had to do a lot of groundwork. This involved a lot of reading, researching, cross-referencing, fact checking about Ziegenbalg, and then, about 17th century India, Denmark, Germany the Dutch East India Company and many more. The reading list was exhausting and the subject was fascinating. At one point I had to force myself to stop reading and collecting further materials as I felt deeply drawn towards the life and ministry of Ziegenbalg, fearing I might be too fixated and preoccupied on this venture.

I suppose the primary reason for my interest in Ziegenbalg is my rediscovery of this reformer of the Tamil alphabets. I have heard the name of Ziegenbalg in my school days, along with several other missionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries who read, researched and published ancient Tamil literature that were preserved on palm leaves and copper plates in the depositories of specific temples. But that was a fading memory until I came across this name while reading on the history of the Moravian Church. In the process I realised how sentimental I was about this man who reformed the Tamil scripts that I read and write today. It is, after all, a natural inclination to be thankful to someone who has contributed in a tremendous way for something so essential for your daily living.

My original intention for this sabbatical was to explore the influence of the Moravian Church on Methodism. When I came at the point of realising it was Ziegenbalg who had been the inspiration for Count Zinzendorf, the reformer of the Moravian Church, I stopped reading that book and shifted my attention on this great man of God. The whole of the experience of my sabbatical proved that my choice was not wrong. But again, the scope of my project was vast, so I had to narrow it down to be feasible, given the limited period of my stay and the need to conform with the conditions laid out on my Indian visa. Opportunities came my way, as I was interviewing historians, academics, college students and priests, who in turn suggested me to meet more church leaders and scholars.



But the demand on time and the prospect of travelling long distances between several districts, made it impossible.

The highlight of the sabbatical was providential. I never planned it, but our visit to *Tarangambadi*, a former Danish colony in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nādu and the mission seat of Ziegenbalg, coincided with his 304th death anniversary on the 23rd of February. The local Lutheran church, the first ever protestant church in South Asia which was founded by Ziegenbalg himself, organised events throughout this day of commemoration. To be able to stand at the spot where Ziegenbalg landed and having been given the honour of garlanding the cross on the top of the monument by the beach, was both humbling and emotional.

Perhaps the valuable outcome of my visit was the exchange of information. I learned from the local historian, that the early type faces for the printing of the Tamil Bible were brought from Germany. Drafted and moulded by hands totally unfamiliar with the language, made the whole enterprise time-consuming and expensive. The genius of Ziegenbalg shone when he employed the local goldsmiths to design and cast the alphabets; he went on to build paper and ink factories to be absolutely self-reliant.

From my part, the information I shared with them about Ziegenbalg being the inspiration for Zinzendorf, made them realise, the influence of the man they revere, went beyond India.

On the whole, my sabbatical was a fulfilling experience. I am truly grateful to the circuit for this gift.

With every blessing,

Soba-

A Word from Cara



Recently I went to St John the Baptist Church in Windsor, where they had two depictions of the Last Supper. One a traditional 400 year old painting by Francis Cleyn, the other an amazing modern sculpture by Peter Barnes. The sculpture is life size and right there as soon as you walk into the church, you couldn't miss it, you can touch it, you can walk round it, you can look at it and get drawn in and lost completely in finding details, and then you step back again and find something new. It's a mosaic, made from the keys from a computer keyboard – 600 keyboards to be precise, using in excess of 50,000 keys. It's incredibly clever in its simplicity and intricacy; when you look at the sculpture as a whole you see plain figures with little detail, they have bodies and arms and faces but without distinguishing features. The disciples crowd around Jesus, around a simple long table.

But then, when you begin to tune your eyes, you see that the mosaic tiles are computer keys, you begin to see that there are black and white keys and the white make up the shape of the cross, the edging of the table. You walk around the table and see that on the backs of the disciples there are Greek letters – alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, there is a fish and a dove and on the back of Jesus is a Celtic trinitarian knot.





And as you gaze at the table from the font you realise that the keys aren't all placed randomly, that woven into the mosaic are the words 'The Last Supper' and 'Amen' and then your fingers run gently over the words from scripture that say, 'I can do everything through him who gives me strength'.

You keep looking, because now your eyes are searching this sculpture, and you read 'trust in the Lord' and find 'I am the resurrection and the life.' You study the disciples again, and see that though they don't immediately look unique, actually, each of them is named within the mosaic – Peter, James, John, Judas. And your eyes rest upon Jesus and notice that there is a pattern within the computer keys - that arrow keys are used to point the way to his heart, and that his heart has the key you knew it would have, the only possibly key that could be used... the home key.

I stayed a while staring at the design around Jesus, because somehow, a computer keyboard sculpture has managed to convey the most beautiful truth about faith and Christ and The Last Supper and the Eucharist and the bread and the wine. That in Jesus, we find our home. I spent some time watching other people come in and discover the secrets of the sculpture, watching their faces light up as they too realised the hidden words and symbols, as their faces traced the keys, as they also delighted in Jesus as home. And then, I wanted to share what I'd found with others.

The reason I described the sculpture and not the painting, though both represented The Last Supper, is because I could only look at the painting, and as good as it was, it wasn't the same as trailing my fingertips along the keys in the sculpture, it wasn't the same as touching and discovering its visible secrets. This is the power and simplicity and wonder of the Eucharist. That all are invited, all are made welcome, that this gift is ours to discover and ours to share. That Christ is our home, and we find ourselves to be home every time we receive the bread and the wine. That when our faith is strong, the eucharist strengthens and confirms that. That when our faith wavers, the bread and the wine become an anchor to help ground us. That when our faith is small and fragile, we are given something tangible to hold, bread to nourish us and wine to sustain us. That when we feel alone, God reminds us that we are the body of Christ and that we are one amongst millions who get to cradle Jesus the living bread in our hands and in our hearts, and we are loved, and we worth everything, and we are home.

Edited version of Cara's sermon at St Paul's for Corpus Christ

Elaine's Patch

Seeing Salvation



Seeing Salvation, a very eclectic collection of Images of Christ, was an exhibition held at the National Gallery in 2000, when the inspirational Neil MacGregor was the Director there. It was far and away the best exhibition I have ever seen, and I know Val also visited it and rated it very highly. All the images were amazing, but there was one which for me stood out amongst all the rest: Salvador Dali's huge canvas, painted in 1951, entitled Christ of St John of the Cross. The name refers to an original 16th Century drawing by the Spanish Friar John of the Cross, on which Dali based his striking design. The potency of the beautifully painted depiction of the Crucifixion comes from the fact that Jesus is seen dying on the Cross *from above*: the viewpoint of his Heavenly Father. I had never expected to see this wonderful work again, but when my husband and I went to Glasgow on a brief city break recently, and splashed into the Kelvingrove Gallery in the middle of a torrential Scottish downpour, I realised with delight that this iconic painting is the jewel in the crown of their collection.





Alone of all the paintings in the Kelvingrove, Christ of St John of the Cross is hung in its own little alcove. The idea is probably to allow space for those who wish to pray whilst looking at its sacred image, but frankly, that is not very easy when tourists fresh off the coach are bouncing around holding up their phones to take videos of it! Despite these distractions, I stood transfixed with wonder for ages gazing at it. Seeing it for a second time, new aspects struck me; this time, for example, I joyfully noticed that Jesus' hair, seen from above, looks very similar to the slightly unruly dark wavy mop of my lovely grandson Josh! It was also interesting to read the Gallery's information board, which concentrated much more on the details of how and where the painting was created, unlike when we saw it in London and the description was more concerned about the religious significance of its composition. I learnt that Dali employed a Hollywood stuntman as a model, tying him for hours at a time to an overhead gantry so that he could observe and capture the effect on the body of that unnatural position. He deliberately avoided including the nails, crown of thorns and blood we associate with Crucifixion paintings, having apparently been convinced by a dream that they would mar his depiction of Christ. He set Jesus high above the world but included underneath him a body of water (based on the bay near Dali's home in Spain), complete with fishing boats and a strangely-dressed little fisherman.

Apparently by the time he painted this magnificent painting, Salvador Dali had lost the Catholic faith in which he had been raised, which makes the tenderness and reverence he poured into it even more astounding. The fact that you don't see Jesus' face, so your imagination has to fill in his agony and isolation, is heartbreaking. But perhaps it is because Dali no longer had a personal faith that he was bold enough to do what most of us wouldn't be able to consider: to put himself in God's place, looking down on his beloved Son as he suffers and dies.

There is a mysterious connection between our senses and our emotions, and at no time is it more powerful than when we encounter art of huge spiritual impact such as, for example, Graham Sutherland's Christ in Glory tapestry at Coventry Cathedral or the glowing stained glass panels of Douai Abbey. On the whole, painted images of Jesus (particularly in the formal style of the Renaissance), although I love to look at them, don't stir very deep feelings within me. Dali's Christ of St John of the Cross, however; well, that reaches straight to my soul. **Elaine Steere — Licensed Lay Minister**

Ascension

Anyone can break another,
crumble them into a million splintered pieces,
tear them down,
consider them unworthy, small, vulnerable,
sneer and smirk, laugh and letch,
crush them until they are almost unrecognisable.

There is no power in this.

No strength, no goodness, no pride,
nothing to boast about in this.

No.

Strength comes from clawing back all that was shattered,
in allowing others to return lost pieces of yourself,
in repiecing, restoring, remembering...

There is power in stitching yourself back together
especially when your thread is thin but tough,
spun with hope and hard won,
in recognising that you are not alone and never have been,
that what shines through your scars is light eternal,
and they, like you, are taken up in glory.
In realising that God is love and this love is
stronger than you ever dared imagine.

There is power in refusing to remain broken.

Cara Smart



Woosehill Church, Sustainability and the Climate Emergency

We've all heard about the climate emergency, the need to have a more sustainable, carbon neutral lifestyle & economy, to reduce pollution and harm to planet Earth. In our lives and in our homes, we make decisions about what we will do, perhaps recycling, choosing green energy, generation our own electricity, drive an electric car, reduce our use of plastics, encourage wildlife in our gardens, buy organic food, etc. But what about the Church and more specifically Woosehill Church? As Christians we know that everything on the earth, in the earth & seas and flying in the skies was created by God and like Adam & Eve we've been tasked with caring for the planet, ensuring through our stewardship it is handed over to future generations in a good condition. As a Church we ought to be setting a positive and active example of caring for our local environment and our planet.

We have started our Woosehill Church green journey, we've changed the lighting to LED lighting, changed the hot water heating over to electricity from gas (to reduce our carbon footprint) and we are actively investigating a replacement for our 30-year-old, now inefficient, boiler. But there is undoubtedly much more Woosehill Church could and should do. At the last Church Council, we agreed to set up a Green Church Group, focused on how we as a church should be responding to the climate emergency and the need to move to a more sustainable, green way of living and we are now looking for people to be involved.



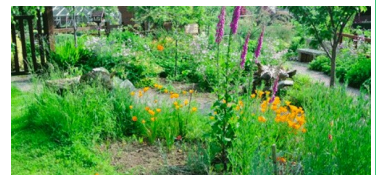
Good idea, I hear you say, but what's the remit of the Green Church Group? There are many green areas the group could focus on, in fact too many! The answer is whatever the group wish to focus on, based on interests, passions, time, resources, etc. The group will need to decide where to focus their efforts and develop plans for quick wins, longer term projects and future aspirational desires.

On a hot Saturday in June John, Ed and Steve went to a 'Equipping Churches to Care for Creation' meeting. We went primarily to hear about alternatives to a gas boiler, but the meeting covered many more aspects of being a Green Church, so a few ideas from the meeting as to what our green group could focus on:

- Reduce our carbon footprint, use green energy, generate our own energy.
- Introduce recycling at church, reduce the church's use of plastics.
- Make greater use of our outside areas, encourage wildlife, build 'bug hotels', 'hedgehog corridors'.
- Support other users of the church in their green activities. Perhaps support a local wildlife charity. Organise our own Green Events. Join the Deanery green church group.
- Invite guest speakers, have green themed services, prayers, and bible study.
- Register as an Eco Church (see [Engage your Church - A Rocha UK](#)), which will also provide ideas for our next steps.
- Develop a green policy against which we assess our decisions (don't worry we can adopt/adapt another church's policy).
- Some Churches are even actively involved in campaigning and protests!

We are looking for people to be active members of this Green Church Group, to bring their ideas and enthusiasm, to develop action plans and ensure these plans are carried out. So, if that's you please contact Soba or one of the Stewards - John, Bob or Steve, and together we will help Woosehill Church progress along its green journey.

Steve Lewis





Tithing Gifts

Part 7 in the series exploring the charities who benefit this year from the allocation of our tithing gifts.

What is Soulscape?

Many of you will be familiar with the work of Soulscape, a charity which we have supported regularly for a good number of years.

Their website states:

Young people today face 24/7 pressure. Soulscape exists to give them space. Soulscape is a charity working in partnership with Berkshire schools to give young people the space they need.

Being a teenager has always been tough. But for today's young people, peer pressure happens around the clock, bullying invades their own homes, and exam pressures at school have ratcheted up. With pressure to keep up appearances online, be available 24/7, perfect (and share) their bodies, get the best grades, think and say the 'right' thing, and support their families too, teenagers live with a huge amount of stress.

We are seeing a mental health epidemic in our young people. The number of teenagers with mental health problems has doubled in the last 20 years. In 2018, more than a fifth of 14-year-old girls said they had self-harmed. And for those who don't become ill, there is little time and space at school or home to switch off, breathe, reflect, and form their own opinions and ideas – something that is a crucial part of adolescence.

In most recent news;

Exciting news! The team are getting ready to support young people at our Soulscape Hub at Reading Festival 2023. Creating a space for fun, conversation and where they can get any help they might need.



A prayer in worrying times

Creator God, our eyes look ahead and see rising prices,
striking workers and energy shortages.

In the midst of our worries help us find security
in your unceasing love for us.

We ask for protection for the weakest,
courage for the vulnerable,
and hope for the frightened.

Do not let our worst fears come to pass,
but flood the hearts of those who make decisions
with generosity, compassion and justice.

And so may your children be glad to be alive
And turn to you with grateful praise.

Amen



Prayer by Peter Graystone, Diocese of Southwark.

Read by Lyn at the conclusion of our prayers of intercession on 16 July.



News from Tadpoles

As the term draws to a close, we are bidding a sad goodbye to a little group of our Tadpoles, many of whom have been with us since they were very small. As we sing 'One more step along the world I go', we send them forth to the next stage of their lives, praying that they and their families will remember their time with Tadpoles at Woosehill and know that we continue to be there for them whenever they need us.

In a new venture we are holding a picnic at the church on Tuesday 15th August from midday with a return of the popular Mouse Hunt as well as games provided by the Breast Cancer Now campaign, for whom we are making this a fundraiser. They are holding fundraising afternoon teas throughout August and we thought our picnic would be a good opportunity to help support this worthy cause. We have a Just Giving page if anyone would like to donate.

Members of the church are welcome to drop by and meet our lovely group of families.

The group is already fully subscribed for September and taking waiting list enquiries.

Val, on behalf of the Tadpoles team

Quiet Day

Advance Notice:

Mary Cassidy has booked St Mary's Winnersh for a Quiet Day on Saturday 21st October.

Further details in due course.





All Saints Church
WOKINGHAM

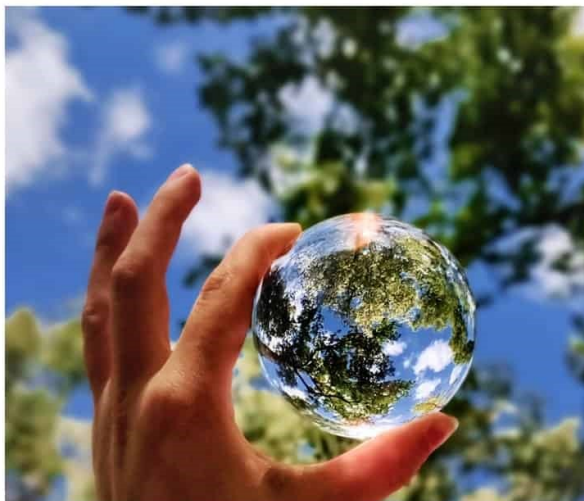
EARTH FAYRE

Saturday 23rd September

10am – 4pm

All Saints Church, Wokingham

sharing green initiatives amongst the community



Speakers

Activities for children

Workshops

Stalls

Music

Programme of events to be confirmed

All welcome. Free entry.

For more info visit allsaintswokingham.org.uk/earth-fayre-2023



To make you smile

To commemorate her birthday , actress/vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP. One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favorite Things' from the legendary movie 'Sound Of Music'. Here are the lyrics she used:

(Sing It!) - If you sing it, its especially hysterical!!!

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,

I simply remember my favorite things,

And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,

These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,

When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, When the hips break,

When the eyes grow dim,

Then I remember the great life I've had,

And then I don't feel so bad.

Sent in by Lynn Smith who thought it might appeal to church, members of a certain age! Sorry I can't edit any errors as it's an image.

A song Julie Andrews sang for her 79th birthday and for which she received a standing ovation.



Anyone for coffee?

I recently took delivery of a box of our usual Church coffee from our suppliers for many years, Kingdom Coffee, and with it a leaflet explaining their connection with Toybox, one of the charities we have supported through our tithing. Kingdom Coffee is a family owned and run Fairtrade Certified Company and describe themselves as “Coffee with a Conscience”. For many years they have had a partnership with Toybox and have so far donated over £90,000. Toybox, if you recall, is a UK charity working with street children in Latin America, Africa and Asia, starting its work in Guatemala City in 1992.

Here is what Lynne Morris OBE, CEO of Toybox has to say about the partnership: “Toybox and Kingdom Coffee have had a 12-year partnership and to date Kingdom Coffee have donated over £90,000 to Toybox with a further pledge to donate £100,000 in 10 years. Over the last decade I knew that the values, behaviours and ethos of Kingdom Coffee and Toybox were aligned but it was during the global pandemic that it became evident how closely our values are aligned. We were phoning all our corporate partners to see how they were doing during the pandemic and if they needed to reduce their donations which we completely expected and understood. But the response we got from Darren was, “we were, like a lot of companies, losing a lot of money, but we just knew we needed to give as much as we could because if we were suffering, well I just can’t imagine what it was like for the kids on the street with no homes – with nothing really. So we dug deep, and we have come out the other side and are grateful we could continue to support Toybox. It was our moral and social duty to do so”.

For me this was an exceptional response, which we got from a lot of our corporate supporters, and when we know a company is giving sacrificially to support the street children Toybox works alongside – well I can promise you, it makes us re-double our efforts to make companies like Kingdom Coffee proud of the partnership they have with Toybox.

Knowing that it had been tough to continue to support us during Covid I was intrigued to understand what kept Darren, Jane and the team connected to us. Darren told me that the story and image of a young girl called Ana from Guatemala City was what moved them, actually moving Jane to tears, her young life full of such challenges and predators. The image of Ana sitting on a dirty pavement surrounded by chaos and dirt, drinking a little cup of coffee, shouts of abandonment, neglect and disregard.



As Darren was telling this story I realised I was there when that photo was taken at La Terminal in Zone 4 in Guatemala City. Ana was sitting drinking her coffee, yes, the children were drinking coffee, on her own in a horrific environment full of violence and aggression, the guilt I felt when I left her to go back to the safety of a hotel and hot shower was overwhelming. A little girl in a place no child should be – no wonder this story gripped, inspired and motivated the team at Kingdom Coffee.

Ana will never know she inspired a partnership which has spanned a decade and changed children's lives, but she did. Thank you Jane, Darren and all the team at Kingdom Coffee – your true partnership is soul nourishing and has ensured a better life for thousands of street children”.

John Hoskins

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Ride and Stride

Saturday 9th September 2023

This national event happens every year across the country, where church members obtain sponsorship to visit churches in their area – in our case across Berkshire. Any mode of transport is fine – you could walk, cycle, ride - simply choose a route and find lots of sponsorship from friends and family, and church members.

You can go by yourself or in a group, any time between 10am and 6pm and many people make a day of it. There are so many wonderful and interesting churches to visit, many will be open and offering refreshments too. It is a great opportunity to see other churches and going as a group makes it a nice social event too! Or you can get your bike out and visit some churches over a wider area, that you might otherwise never see.

There is also the Daphne Barnes-Phillips trophy which is awarded to the most successful church each year – this is a splendid silver cup which is still resting with St Peter's Woolthorpe as they raised the most sponsorship in 2022.

Our parish will benefit hugely as we will receive half of your sponsorship. The remaining 50% goes to Berkshire Historic Churches Trust which in turn makes generous grants to churches in need.

Ride+Stride is a nationwide church-crawl where you can visit as many (or as few) churches as you like on the second Saturday in September between 10am and 6pm. You can walk, run, cycle, ride or drive, following your own route and enjoy visiting some of our county's fabulous churches. Your supporters can donate via our justgiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/berkshirechurchestrust>





Women of Woosehill events in June and July

On Thursday 15th June twelve ladies from church enjoyed a very pleasant time together at Risely Tea Rooms, where apart from the fellowship that was enjoyed by all, we enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea including sandwiches, chocolate brownie cake, macaroons, fruit tartlets and a selection of scones jam and clotted cream. The various diets were very well catered for and a doggy box was provided for some sandwiches to be taken home. As I was paying the waitress looked in the visitor book that I had signed on behalf of our party and saw we were from our church and asked about us, so I was able to share the benefit of having a ladies fellowship group and what we did. She was going to talk to her church in Basingstoke!

Lynn Smith



July Event

For a number of years, Lyn has hosted the July WOW in her lovely garden, always praying for a dry, balmy evening!
This year was probably the best attended yet - and it did stay dry!





IMPORTANT NOTICE



HELP
Still needed!

Staff and Stewards have been politely asking for help for some time. Unfortunately, we are still struggling on with just 2 Stewards, as well as an urgent need for support for the technical team. Not putting too fine a point on it, we are at breaking point.

We love our Church, and we want to look after it and keep it a growing and vibrant place, but we are tired and we all have other issues calling on our time and emotions. We **NEED** a larger team to share the load.

Please consider joining us - we are a friendly bunch and we do have fun. Maybe you have an idea of another way to help - we would love to hear from you.

We urge you to think prayerfully about joining the team.

Please pray for us.

Woosehill meetings

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

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

NEITHER OF THESE GROUPS MEET IN AUGUST

Watch this space for news of our Thursday groups which will be relaunched in September

A Closing Blessing from the Northumbrian Community

*May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.*

*May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.*

*May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.*

*May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.*

*+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of
the Holy Spirit. Amen*





Our Current Pattern of Services at Woosahill Church

1st Sunday - Holy Communion

2nd Sunday - Morning Worship

3rd Sunday Holy Communion

4th Sunday - Morning Worship

5th Sunday - Morning Worship / Café Church

Church Contacts

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