

Woosehill Church Magazine



Sharing God's love with the community

March—April 2024



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



Dear Church Family and all other readers,

Well, I said 'I look forward to receiving your articles for our entertainment, reflection, amusement, and edification' and you responded in a big way!

I am always open to receive all that you send me, and it makes the magazine what it is, a special reflection of who we are at Woosehill—not of me as editor. As such, you may find Elaine's contribution to this issue in need of a serious read. She accepts that it may be challenging for some, and is open for you to respond in person or in writing for the next issue in May.

'Give us wisdom to discern how our ideas line up with Scripture, how they fit with our gifts as a church and how they meet the needs of our neighbourhood. Show us how and where we can practice hospitality, a listening ear and an ability to put others at ease. In all we do, Lord, keep our eyes on you, our aim to please you, and our motive to glorify you.'

With every blessing, Val

Next deadline: May 16 2024
Articles and notices as usual
preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

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Stillness

(An edited version of Richard's presentation at the Quiet Day)



One child splashes, screaming through puddles, rushing wildly around, showy, demanding, flitting from one thing to another. Easily bored, easily distracted, never settling, never focused -- you can't take your eyes off them because, as soon as you do, the attention-seeking gets more and more extreme.

Unnoticed, forgotten, behind us stands another child, transfixed by the sound of a thrush, gripped by the beauty of a daffodil, just standing and standing, still.

Which is a little like our lives in 2024, rushing after the next novelty and seeing nothing worthy of our attention, nothing deserving our love.

*So, simply, stop and see. So, simply, still yourself –
to let yourself be found by the one who is love.*

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."



I am conscious that the way I am focusing on busyness, on rush, on noise, on instant gratification is not the case for everyone- for some people the main issue they face every day is isolation, lack of company. But isolation doesn't automatically necessarily lead to deliberate stillness and time with God, which is what this reading is really about. It repays our attention. On an obvious level the story is saying that the better way is stillness than rush and busyness, and portraying a particular identity.

But let's be honest. Stillness is not that exciting. Stillness is just not that productive. You can't measure it. You can't really boast about it. It doesn't have an output. When people ask "What have you done today?" we want to list off how much we have achieved, how well we have invested every single successive second. I don't know when it started, where we got things so wrong, but we have somehow created a world where we are measured by the number of emails we send rather than the actual effect we have. We boast about how busy we are, how much we have to do and how little spare time we have left. We are driven by anxiety and we dare not rest.

Busyness screams for our attention. It is like an energy drink, fizzing in a brightly coloured bottle, doing everything it can to be noticed; there is so much to rush past, so much to get done. Unnoticed, shyly, quietly, contentedly, stillness gets on with paying deep attention, truly noticing things, giving fulsome thanks. Stillness is utterly in the moment, in the present, not looking for the next thing but happily seeing the beauty in everything. And stillness is open, like Mary, to what God wants us to see, wants us to do, where God wants us to be. Life is very often frantic rush. The stimulus, the things that need doing, never end. The internet never ends. The garden, the cleaning, the emails never end.

The things vying for our attention never end. Life, we fancy, is a race, a competition, a challenge, an opportunity to achieve as much as possible.

But the input and the demands never end. There is always something to be done. Once we start running it so hard to stop.

The person who pays the price for this busyness, this rush, this addiction to short-term and shallow achievement, is me, and is us. We aren't made for cheap thrills. Our relationship with God does not thrive in the shallows. Our souls are deeper than that. Our attention span is longer than that. We are built for deep relationship, for true attention, for stillness and all of the fulfilment that stillness brings.

Stillness is not only a gift. It is also a necessity for us. We have to make space for it- as we walk, as we wake, as we go to bed- not just an absence of noise and movement but deep attention to our world and deep attention to God. Stillness matters so very much- it roots us in our self, in our world, and in our God. It allows us to listen to our own soul, and to the world around us which is constantly sending us messages, and to God who won't compete with the busyness we so often prefer and won't scream over the top of the noise we surround ourselves with but simply waits for us to be ready. Busyness screams - stillness whispers.

Let's step away from the computer and the jobs list and go outside, to stand in the garden, where two children are playing. If we just quietly go and stand near the still one and see what they are looking at and see what else is there, and what beauty there is in the everyday, and what we can hear, and how our breathing sounds, then it is very possible that we will find God there, or God will find us.

Rev'd Canon Richard Lamey



Lenten Banner

I hope you have had the chance to admire our newest banner, made by our wonderful Banner Group to celebrate Lent. Especial thanks to Lynne for masterminding and adding the finishing touches. We are very blessed to have such a wonderful collection of banners for the church year - and creative church members who put in the work to complete them.



A Message from our Minister



Dear friends,

This holy season of Lent has so far taken us through some important events on our church calendar. Each one has its own significance. Starting with Ash Wednesday, we were reminded once again that we were created out of the dust and to the dust we will return. We were made to realise that in our brief and unpredictable span of life, we depend on God's grace and forgiveness. And this truth was brought into focus on Mothering Sunday as we thanked God for his love, motherly and unconditional.

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday are just around the corner, and as we go through them, we will see each one of them reminding us of some important truth about our faith. On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus Christ taught his disciple to love one another and to serve each other.

Good Friday events are too much for us to grasp, specially as we consider Jesus dying on the cross for our sakes, yet without sin. In that unimaginable sacrifice, everything about God – his love, forgiveness, his offer of salvation and eternal life – become a reality for us.

Then on the day of the resurrection we are reminded that the forces of evil have no power to withstand God, as the risen Christ emerged triumphantly. Furthermore, the events at the empty tomb as experienced by the women who closely followed Christ in his life and death, reminds us of another aspect of our faith.

As it was still dark, they couldn't recognise the risen Christ at once. When Jesus called Mary by her name, she realised it was her Lord she has been looking for all this time, standing before her. This momentary experience reminds us that God is always with us, despite the fact that in our weakness and limitations we lose our focus on him.

As we continue through Lent, let us be open to be reminded. Church traditions have a lot to teach us. Learning involves remembering and being reminded of.

With every blessing for Easter,

Soba-



Our New Boiler



We want our Church to remain Warm & Welcoming.
We can all provide the welcome but to keep it warm we need to replace the boiler, now over 30 years old.

It is going to be in excess of £15,000

So, can you help, could you make a donation towards keeping us warm?

This can be done by a transfer to the church account referenced 'Boiler.'

Thank you.

For further information contact Lynne on:

treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com

For One Who Is Exhausted - A Blessing

You have travelled too fast over false ground;
Now your soul has come to take you back.

Take refuge in your senses, open up
To all the small miracles you rushed through.

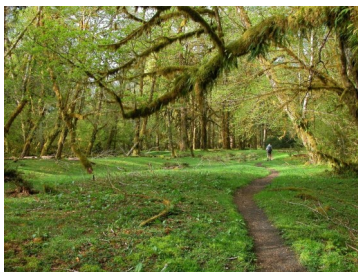
Become inclined to watch the way of rain
When it falls slow and free.
Imitate the habit of twilight,
Taking time to open the well of colour
That fostered the brightness of day.

Draw alongside the silence of stone
Until its calmness can claim you.

Be excessively gentle with yourself.

JOHN O'DONOHUE

Excerpt from the blessing, 'For One Who is Exhausted,' from John's
books:





Love and faith for all



One of the most wonderful things about being a Christian is the freedom we experience when we realise that, if we are honest with God, because of the Cross he forgives and restores us, and we don't have to fear judgement. Doesn't that make it all the more tragic that historically, and in our present society, people who call themselves Christians seem to be first out of the traps at expressing condemnation for others? At a time in this needy world when all believers need to be shining like stars and acting as one to demonstrate all that is wonderful, lifechanging and fulfilling about our faith, the C of E has unfortunately got itself hopelessly divided again as it discusses the issue of how we respond to same-sex couples who want to have their relationships blessed by God. The recent discussions and decisions from the General Synod are being talked about in PCC meetings up and down the country, and a good many have got their underwear well and truly in a bunch about it! It can't be said, unfortunately, that any of the other denominations have achieved much unity or clarity on the subject, either. For non-believers looking on in confusion, we can hardly be described as making a good impression.

Everybody is going to have a different take on this subject, depending on their own personality and life experience, and of course I totally respect that. However, let me set out my own feelings right now: I want to belong to a diverse and inclusive church that saves its judgement for those who are cruel, hurtful or exploit others, and really deserve it. I have lovely same-sex couples amongst my friends and personally see no scriptural reason at all to regard their relationships as "wrong" in any way. In the gospels, Jesus never said a word of condemnation about LGBTQ+ love. You can find negative words about the subject in the Old Testament, particularly in the Laws given to Moses, but as Christians we don't keep all those Laws, so why would we single out the ones about sexual preferences whilst ignoring those about not eating shellfish or shunning women who are menstruating?! Some of Paul's words in the Letters seem to reject same-sex relationships, but for all his theological wisdom Paul was a product of his culture, and we seem to have already moved on from those of his personal opinions (also stated in

his Letters) which forbid women from speaking in church and /or exhort wives to obey their husbands; it strikes me as illogical, not to mention hypocritical, to pick and choose which prohibitions of his we accept, and which we reject. (Oh, and by the way, if someone wants to find ethical instructions for today's complex world in the book of Genesis, I have only two words of reply: Talking. Snake.)

In reality, we understand the truths of the Bible through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Since that is internal, of course, each of us has the opportunity to put some unintentional spin on it as we share what we've "learned" with others; that's why we need to combine it with a careful examination of Jesus' behaviour as recorded in the Gospels. From lepers to tax collectors, from Samaritans to sex workers, Jesus seemed to exclude nobody from his love and blessings, although sometimes, if it harmed others, he asked them to change their behaviour to fit with the core values of his Kingdom. I'm in full agreement with Frederick Faber, the writer of the hymn "there's a wideness in God's mercy", who despite being the product of the straight-laced Victorian era, wrote these insightful verses:

"For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind; and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderful kind.

But we make His love too narrow by false limits of our own; and we magnify His strictness with a zeal He will not own."

The Church of England has begun the journey into the "heart of the Eternal" and the creation of its new liturgy of blessing for same-sex couples, Prayers of Love and Faith, is very positive (although predictably this has already been reduced to the miserable acronym PLF, as if the longing of couples in love to have their unions blessed in church can be expressed adequately in three letters). As with contentious decisions in the past, such as the remarriage of divorcees and the acceptance of women bishops, I think with regret about the disappointment and wasted potential caused by the somewhat glacial progress, whilst acknowledging that an organisation this vast and varied can only evolve at the pace of its slowest but greatly valued members. I have the utmost admiration for the leaders, especially Archbishops Justin and Stephen, who have the patience to listen with grace to all opinions and gently guide us into the future God intends us to experience together. Let's continue to pray for them, and about our own contribution to the inclusive Kingdom of Christ.

Elaine Steere - Licensed Lay Minister



Thursday Groups



A group meets at the Church every Thursday morning at 10am.

On the second Thursday this is WoolWam, a very friendly knitting, crochet and natter group. You can do your own thing or make items for local Wokingham charity 'First Days' (babies & children's clothes, blankets or toys)

WoolWam members are welcome to attend any other Thursday where the emphasis is just on getting together to chat and enjoy whichever activity you fancy. You can simply have a cuppa and chat or you can sew, draw, knit, do puzzles, build jigsaws – whatever takes your fancy. Occasionally we run special activities such as card making – keep an eye on our website woosehillchurch.org



Refreshments are provided, a contribution of £1 is requested. You can bring your children; you are responsible for them - toys are available.



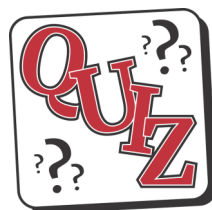
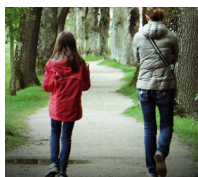
Sharing God's Love with the Community

If you would like to join us, please just come along or to get a bit more information first email treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com

WOW 2024

Here are the planned activities for our popular Women of Woosehill Church social group. Look out in the weekly newsletter or talk to the organiser for more information about timings and venue.

Date	Activity	Venue
April Jeanette	Learn some British Sign Language	Church?
May Amy Truluck	Evening Walk	tbc
June Ruth and all to help	Parish Afternoon Tea	Church
July Lyn Brown	An evening of Pim's and nibbles	Lyn's garden
August Lynn Smith	Walk to the Walter Arms from the church for a cool drink	Starting point church
September 10th Linda Hoskins	Walk around Dinton Pastures with refreshments at the cafe	Dinton Pastures
October Louise Cole	Pub Quiz	tbc
November Sue Falquero	Pottery Painting Christmas decorations	Church
December Gillian Payne	Christmas Wreath making	Church





World Day of Prayer



This year's World Day of Prayer Service was on the 1st of March and at Woosehill Church. The service had been written a couple of years previously by the women of Palestine (Palestine is not a country but a state recognised by the UN) and considering all that is happening in Gaza and Israel it was very poignant. (Copies of the service are at the back of the church) It was the pleasure of Lyn Brown and I to represent our church and lead the planning and the service, we were ably assisted by the St Paul's and St Nicks, Catholics, Methodists and Baptists and Paula a Quaker who played the piano for us.

We had the Deputy Borough Mayor, Councillor Adrian Mather, and the Town Mayor, Councillor Sally Gurney, join us and a congregation of 48 from many Wokingham churches and some Bracknell Methodists who Soba invited as they were not having a service this year.

We decorated the altar with Olive branches, and fruit and flowers from Palestine as you can see in the photo.

The World Day of Prayer is a charity that always has a day when churches from the farthest East to the Farthest West pray together using the same words that are prepared by a different country each year; next year it will have been prepared by the Women of The Cook Islands in the South Pacific. It used to be known as the Women's World Day of Prayer but men are also welcome now.

A big thank you to Amy for our refreshments and John H for help with the chairs Lynne for the power point pictures and for Ed for his invaluable help getting the microphones working.

Lynn Smith



News from Tadpoles

There is so much joy in our Wednesday group for under fives. Here are two of our helpers, Jeannie and Jeanette together with two of our regular grandparents Nigel and Yvonne, enlisted by Sue to cut out the hands for our latest display which you should have seen in church.





Pastoral Groups update

The approach to Pastoral Care at Woosehill has been under review since the end of the pandemic. A clear facet of this was understanding how we could look out for each other, given the very limited resources in people time available. Our limitations here mean that the highly structured approach that other churches may have been able to take are not open to us. After significant debate at Staff and Stewards and Church Council and following a Zoom meeting of group co-ordinators with Soba, it was decided that it would be useful to have an extra Café Church on 11th February where church members would sit at tables in their groups with a focus on getting to know one another better and discussing what they would like from their particular group, to help shape the scheme as it evolves.

The morning, led by Doreen, proved very successful, energising the groups and helping them to decide what would work best for them. For some, this is arranging social meetings face to face, for others it is keeping in touch by WhatsApp or email newsletter, always remembering that the co-ordinator is not the leader so that any group member can initiate contact, although the co-ordinator may act as a focus for communication.

Going forward;

- We aim to ensure that all new church members are allocated to a group.
- We should all be expected to look out for each other. This is obviously easier where people attend church regularly or are members of church groups.
- The groups provide a network structure that provides this radar function, so that cases where people need support can be identified and support provided where possible.
- Each group will function as its members choose, there will not be a prescribed model.

Based on Ed Smith's report for the upcoming AGM

Stories of Healing and Hope

Hiba's Story :

Working for change in Israel-Palestine

Hiba, along with her Israeli colleague Hedva, heads up a unique project run by Embrace partner Musalaha which brings Palestinian and Israeli women together to promote dialogue and understanding:

'I am Palestinian from a Christian family in Beit Sahour, an old town in the Bethlehem area. I am living under occupation. Each time I want to go and visit Jerusalem and other sites outside the West Bank, I must have permission. Every time I see Israeli soldiers in front of me it causes me trauma. But our faith teaches us to have peace in our hearts wherever we go and I was curious about what Israelis' opinions are regarding us. Are they all in agreement? I can't deny that meeting Israelis for the first time wasn't hard. But I am proud of myself for facing this challenge and for now leading, teaching and facilitation sessions with Israeli-Palestinian women's groups. I am still hoping for change, despite the increasing violence in the country.'

A Prayer

God of goodness and abundance
Give us hearts to trust you
Minds to learn from you
And hands and feet to work for your kingdom

Amen

(Editor: Taken from Healing and Hope in the one household of God.

A study guide from the charity Embrace the Middle East which I am following with my Prayer Group)





An appeal for musicians and singers!

Musicians from St Paul's Church, Chris Merchant and Tom Williams, have been joining the Woosehill congregation in worship once a month for the past two years.

“Sharing music with the congregation has been a privilege and a pleasure, and we appreciate how welcoming the congregation has been,” said Chris. Renewing the arrangement for the coming year, Chris and Tom invite musicians in the congregation to participate, at any level of commitment, in music making for Sunday communion services in 2024.

Instrumentalists and singers are invited to let Chris (ceaj.merchant@gmail.com) know of their interest. It's not too late!!



PALM SUNDAY 24th March

9.05 Procession of Palms

from St Paul's Junior School followed by

9.30am Parish Mass

6.15pm Readings and Music for Holy Week

MAUNDY THURSDAY 28th March

8.00pm

Solemn Mass with footwashing

followed by stripping of the altars
and keeping watch until midnight
(Organ Meditation from 7.45pm)

Easter 2024 at St Paul's Church

GOOD FRIDAY 29th March

10-Noon Easter Messy Church for children

2.00pm Good Friday Liturgy

EASTER SUNDAY 31st March

6.00am

First Mass of Easter

with the blessing of the Holy Fire

9.30am

Joyful All Together Mass

NB: clocks go forward today

St Paul's Church, Reading Road, Wokingham

www.spauls.co.uk



church.office@spauls.co.uk

0118 979 2122



A Message from Sue Youle

The past couple of months have been very difficult for my family as we said our final farewells to my Mum.

The support and prayers offered by members of the church family at Woosehill have been invaluable in helping us get through this period.

My Mum was very grateful to have been included in the prayer chain, her faith remained strong to the end and it is a comfort to us to know that she is safe now in God's hands, at peace and pain free.

Thank you to everyone who sent me cards and messages following her death, it was lovely to know we had the support of so many good friends.

She left us this beautiful poem with her funeral plan:

She is Gone

by David Harkins

You can shed tears that she is gone

Or you can smile because she has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that she will come back

Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her

Or you can be full of the love that you shared

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday

Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday

You can remember her and only that she is gone

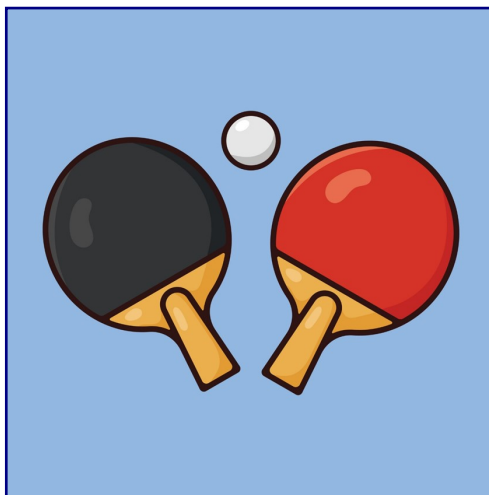
Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back

Or you can do what she would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

Sue

Table Tennis



Fridays at 7:30pm

Woosehill Church, Chestnut Avenue
RG41 3RS

All welcome, all abilities

Small donation for adults, U16 free



Parish and Churches Together



Were you there?

Drama with music and readings
telling the story of Jesus' journey to the cross

Good Friday 29th March Peach Place, Wokingham
12.00 – 12.45pm Free Open Air Performance

Meditation Group

We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of each month in St Paul's Church, 1 for 1.15pm, with music, a reading and 20minute meditation. We usually have from 5 to 9 people attending from across the parish and beyond, with several who attend regularly each month. The time to be still and quiet seems to be much appreciated. We are an open group. Anyone of Christian, other faith or none is welcome to come along to a meeting to experience meditation. I am very happy to be contacted if anyone would like to know more about the group,

or meditation meditationgroup@spauls.org.uk

Susannah Riley

We are part of the Worldwide Community for Christian
Meditation <https://wccm.uk/>



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

Look, Look!

A few easy moments taken in the sun;
three small birds blessing me with their songs;
each with their charming particularity;
each showing (and I'd bet my life upon it)
that they are in possession of a soul;
each repeating (and I beg you to listen)
precisely the same refrain;

Look, look, it is spring!
Look, look! Life is rising from beneath the ground.
The green river is flowing, the green river is flowing!
It is ready to burst its banks.



Look, Look! by Gideon Heugh/Tearfund - reproduced by permission



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

Church Contacts

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01189894374 soba.sinnathamby@hotmail.co.uk

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minister@wokinghammethodist.org.uk



Woosehill Church