

# Woosehill Church Magazine

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

**May - June 2021**



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YouTube**



*Dear Church Family and all other readers,*

There is a good deal to read and reflect upon in this issue. As rules are relaxed somewhat and some of us are beginning to attend church in person, we have a chance to review who we are and who we want to be.

The three groups who have started meeting have drafted out some ideas for us all to consider especially during the next few months - but they are not an exclusive club and all are welcome to share in the discussions, by joining a group or simply grabbing one of the group members to express your own views and ideas.

We are looking forward to a different future for Woosehill church and are already thinking up some exciting ideas to strengthen our current church family members and in the longer term attracting more. For instance, after the success of displaying our Easter Cross for all to see as they walk down the lane, we look to make more use of our location rather than lamenting it! And finally, I hope you will be as pleased as I am to welcome back one of our favourite contributors.

With every blessing,

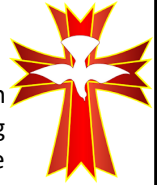
*Val*

**Next deadline: 18 July 2021**  
**Articles as usual preferably by e-mail to:**  
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## Pentecostal Spirit



Sometimes people look back at the past and seek a fleeting consolation when the present reality of the missing generation in congregations and the shrinking church membership confronts them. They often say, things are not the same now as it was in those days. We sympathise with them and understand why they have to say that.

Truly, 'the golden era' is now; not even during the time of Christ. The Church began on the day of Pentecost, as the Holy Spirit was given to the body of believers, and it continues through the generations and times endlessly. And the Spirit enables people all over the world to come to know the Son and the Father. It falls afresh each day and time on them, creating new believing communities and thus the golden era is witnessed by different people at different time in different places.

Amazingly, what we see in the Pentecostal experience is the reversal of the present world order: in the beginning, it was a uniting Church. People from different parts of the Mediterranean and Semitic region, one different from another in social, linguistic, cultural and racial backgrounds, were brought together as one believing and witnessing community. They understood each other's language. Sadly now, it is on these very lines most communities, including churches, are divided, not to mention the whole world order, giving rise to the existence of another kind of spirit among us, the like of which, we get to see and experience almost every day, from Burma to Yemen and to Israel and Palestine: humanity against humanity.

The Spirit of Christ is a loving, reconciling and forgiving Spirit. It was evident on that day *that they were all together with one accord*. This is the power of the Pentecostal Spirit: bringing people together and giving them one heart. In reality, the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of prayers and promises Christ offered to his disciples before he was crucified [John: 14-17].

The work of the Holy Spirit does not start somewhere out there. It starts in us. To be able to understand and experience the work of the Holy Spirit, we have to open ourselves for the Spirit to come and dwell in our hearts. Without the personal *heart warming* experience, we can only be spectators of the wonderful and powerful way the Spirit works in this world.

In the mean time we ask ourselves hard questions: Are we really the bearers of the Spirit in our hearts and minds? Have we really been touched by the Holy Spirit?

We continue to pray that the Holy Spirit may fall afresh on us always, and that we will be witnessing the Golden time here and now.

With warm regards and every blessing,

**Soba Sinnathamby-**





## Vision for Woosehill

As our church begins to move forward to a time when we can freely worship together, we have had to face some uncomfortable truths. Our church family has dwindled and a change of ministry during the difficult time of a long lockdown has added to the challenges. We are called to re-energise to become again the place where we love to worship.

Back in March a letter from Richard was emailed to everyone, below is the introduction as a reminder of what he said:

*"2021 is going to be a time of change, adjustment, and reflection for every part of society and every Church. On top of that, Woosehill has seen a change in part of the ordained leadership of the Church with Patrick leaving and Soba arriving in September. Some people have moved away over the last 18 months and others have changed their Church. Some things we used to do might not be coming back, and there are other things we need to start doing in response to the need of the community and ourselves. All of which makes this season a key time to be intentional and deliberate about the next steps we are called together to take. The Staff and Stewards (and Soba and I) are committed to using the time from March to the end of August, as we come out of the current lockdown and, hopefully, are able to do more and more things, to position ourselves ready for the Autumn and for the new opportunities which are all around us. It is about rediscovering our purpose and our joy. It is about reminding ourselves what is special about worshipping at Woosehill and being part of an LEP. It is about being confident in the faithful God who keeps his promises always."*

Since then three working groups have been formed and have started working on the tasks and their reports of work undertaken so far are to be found on the following pages. Not everything will be resolved or working perfectly, further work will be required. These groups are not 'exclusive clubs'; all are welcome to join and to contribute to these important and valuable discussions.



Woosehill Church

## Moving Forward

In his sermon of 9th May, Richard has a special message for us:

*We are dealing with change in the context of a global pandemic and the way in which we have been obliged to press pause on so much of daily life. We are becoming something new. Patrick has moved on and Soba is here, and behind that simple change of personnel is a change of balance and relationships between the parish and the Circuit which we need to keep on navigating. Other members of Woosehill have moved away in this last year, or moved Church, or can do less at Church because of new personal circumstances. Others are coming on board. We are not the Church we were five years ago or even one year ago. There are things in this we regret or lament- things and people we still want to journey with- but if we are to become the Church God is calling us to become then we need to turn our faces forward to follow where God's Holy Spirit is leading as well.*

*We are, as you know, part way into having three main conversations about how to come out of Lockdown well at Woosehill- how we regather the congregation, how we reconnect with the world immediately around us, how we make sure that our worship is everything it should be. These three groups have a deliberately short lifetime, and will aim to complete their work by the end of August, by which time they will have hopefully lined us up for the next, longer conversations, about what comes next and how we follow, how we become.*

And so we pray:

**Dear God, we pray that your Holy Spirit will guide and teach us as we seek to build upon the gifts we already have, as individuals and as a church. Enable us to become a better and more active and prayerful version of us. Give us eyes to see what you are doing, in our individual lives, in our church and in our neighbourhood. Transform Woosehill Church, we pray, to become an engaging, effective, inspiring and flourishing body in tune with your dreams and desires for our local community.**

**We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen**



## Reports from the three working groups

### **Group 1: “Regathering the Congregation” led by Steve Lewis**

Group 1’s task is to actively reconnect together all those in the Woosehill Church family. Ensuring that everyone knows what is happening as we return to worship together and feels part of that journey. A key aspect will be listening and understanding the concerns, stories, and experiences of everyone and where necessary ensuring these are considered and acted upon.

Group 1 has met twice and has started to formulate ideas and plans. It was agreed that just sending out emails and “cold calling” people may not be the best way of making contact and getting our message over. There has been very positive feedback on the delivery of Palm crosses to everyone and “goody bags” to Tadpole children; it was therefore decided a “goody bag” for everyone in the congregation would be a good way to make contact. We will try to keep secret what will be in the goody bag so as not to spoil the surprise! But it will include a welcome back letter, details of the Church reopening timeline, activities related to Church events and possibly a small gift to welcome everyone back.

In addition, there are plans for several Church events and special services to help us all reconnect as a Church family. Details of these events and services will be in the goody bag and/or advertised separately, so keep an eye out for emails and posters advertising them.

Soba is also contacting people to introduce himself and get to know everyone. This is in addition to the work being done by Group 1 and will progress at its own pace. Alternatively, why don’t you give him a call?

So let us pray:

***I pray for my local church community - help us to draw nearer to You in this season, Lord. And help us to listen carefully for the conversation that You want to have with us.***

## **Group 2 : “Contacting those on the Edge of the church”**

The group comprising Doreen M, Lynne P, Sue F, Ruth S and Lynn S have met once and had a lot of discussion about what was meant by this challenge. We all agreed that we should be contacting both those in the church groups and those who live on Woosehill. We should start planning now and start implementing things as the Covid restrictions are lifted. Our actions should be taken alongside the congregation returning. Some members of the congregation might not wish to return for some time and must not be pressured to do so.

There is a need in the community and we must meet this need.

We need to get our outreach groups back up and running, socially distanced and as Covid restrictions allow. We need to follow the Government guidelines and adapt our programme to suit.

Members of the group will contact those who run our current PMC Groups and other outreach initiatives before our next meeting. It may be that some group (possibly the singing) start by just meeting socially. We have 3 PMC groups currently; it was decided that a 4<sup>th</sup> would be a good idea so that there is one on every Thursday morning. It was suggested that this could be a sewing group, attendees bringing along whatever project they have on the go, ideas can be swapped but that the emphasis would be on socialising; Ruth is looking into this.

The group thought that it would be a good idea to print a postcard letting both past attendees and the residents of Woosehill know what is available. The card could also have service details, contact information and could have input from other groups. We felt that we should say that we are here for all Woosehill residents – that we can facilitate Christenings, Weddings and Funerals as well as prayer and support.

There was also a talk of bring & share lunches, coffee in the car park, singing in the car park, these ideas need to be developed before they are advertised and in line with covid regulations. There were also ideas such as prayer through Facebook but not quite sure how to make this work – we welcome input from others.

There will be crossover with other groups but hopefully we can move forward together. Our second meeting is scheduled shortly, so watch this space - your church will need your support if we are to reach the local population as well as our own church family.

**Lynn Smith and Lynne Paine**



### **Group 3: “Reimagining worship” - with Lyn Brown in the chair**

I am part of the group looking at our worship at Woosehill, especially how we envisage our Church worship as we look ahead, God willing, to post pandemic times. What an opportunity this has provided for us to look closely at our services, and hopefully to add some new exciting ideas, and lose those things that were really not working for us.

The group includes Richard, Soba, Doreen and four Church members. We have met twice now and the conversations have flowed in a very positive way. To give you an idea, some of the questions we have tackled so far include “ What makes Woosehill worship unique? What words describe it at its best? When was the last amazing service we held? What stops our worship being amazing? As you can imagine, our discussions have been varied, interesting and meaningful. We will continue to meet frequently until August to talk about the other facets of our worship life including our music, special services and opportunities, our children and youth ideas, and much more.

One thing to share is that we hope to hold a day of thanksgiving and prayer to mark the lifting of COVID restrictions. This would mean opening our Church for our whole community to come and perhaps light a candle, sit quietly or maybe pray with someone. Watch this space, and keep an eye on Facebook!

The Lord has a plan for us at Woosehill Church, and with His help and guidance we will make it happen. Please hold the outcomes of all 3 of our groups in your prayers, that the Church on Woosehill will truly be a place where God’s love is shown in all its diversity and richness.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29 v11

**Lyn Brown**

***““Afflictions quicken us to prayer,” observed John Newton, the former slave-ship captain best known for writing the hymn Amazing Grace.***

***“Experience testifies that a long course of ease and prosperity, without painful changes, has an unhappy tendency to make us cold and formal in our secret worship; but troubles rouse our spirits, and constrain us to call upon the Lord in good earnest, when we feel a need of that help which we only can have from him.”***

## And now for a surprise guest contributor!

### Pilgrim's Progress



I had a tip-off that there was an excellent sermon, given on 9<sup>th</sup> May, which could be accessed on the website of a certain Woosehill Church, so I settled down to enjoy it. Actually “enjoy” is an inadequate word for words which touched and inspired me, realigning my understanding of a challenging piece of scripture and guiding me in the way I should relate it to my future thoughts and actions. Using the words of Jesus in John 15 about loving one another, bearing fruit, and being chosen, Richard spoke of our being pilgrims on a lifelong journey of faith, and how with God’s help we are constantly “becoming” more loving, more fruitful, and more confident about being the cherished objects of God’s choice.

This message was exactly what I needed to hear at this time, as I navigate a new path in my journey. At the end of last term I retired, after more than twenty years as a Science Technician (and lately, Senior Technician) in four wonderful, very different schools. Happy as I am not to have early morning starts and exhausting days, I miss the teamwork of being at the heart of a Science department, and am wondering how to replace the sense of identity and purpose my job gave me. Then, at the same time, Pete and I have moved from Oxfordshire to Sherfield-on-Loddon, just north of Basingstoke, to be close to our family and be able to take a more active role in the lives of our delightful grandsons. It seems that this is a new stage of becoming for me.

The five years we lived in Oxfordshire enriched me in many ways, not least of which is that I have added some wonderful people into my jewel casket of friends and acquired two precious Goddaughters. It has taught me a lot, too, and changed my attitudes towards people whose circumstances and upbringing has been very different from my own. Through hearing about the neglect and abuse suffered by my friend Alice I have realised the courage it takes to break out of that vicious cycle and raise your own kids with care and kindness. Through seeing the pastoral team at the last school I worked at deal with compassion with damaged teenagers who were throwing all their anger and pain at them, I have learned that there are difficult, often unsolvable problems in society from which we should not hide away. If I had not had these experiences, I might have taken an easy and manicured path on the next stage of my pilgrimage; now I am aware that there is a steeper one which is calling me.



Now, more than ever, I also recognise the long-term lessons I learned from my thirty years at Woosehill Church. I have recently been a witness to (and occasionally a victim of) the way people in churches play politics and seek to control rather than empower each other. This makes me more fully appreciate the way Woosehill, founded by a group of Christian friends and continued in an open, encouraging environment in which all are valued, puts into practice exactly what Jesus was instructing his disciples to do in John 15. "Loving one another" shows itself in the support and humour shared by the whole community; "bearing fruit" comes when that community steps out together in faith, even if, as I remember happening many times, we were actually praying we were going in the right direction even as our feet landed on the ground!

When I was at school (just after the dinosaurs died out) we would frequently sing the hymn "Father, hear the prayer we offer" in my Quaker Head Teacher's assemblies. I often wondered if she chose it because she realised that being in the terrifying Miss Tallant's English lessons was the educational equivalent of treading the steep and rugged pathway! I have a lot of respect for the wonderfully-named Love Maria Whitcomb Willis' lyrics, which bravely remind us that our Christian experience isn't meant to be just an emotional conversion followed by comfort and fulfilment (as I feel some modern worship songs imply), but a pilgrimage over some pretty rocky terrain sometimes.

So, as I settle into my new home, area and circumstances, I know that God will be my strength in hours of weakness, and that in the future, as he has in the past, he will also be my guide in my wanderings.

**Elaine Steere**





## Tadpoles al fresco

Our Tadpoles group continues to flourish and we have a good team putting together a programme of activities for the families who attend our Wednesday morning sessions at the far end of the car park as well as on the grass at the side when it is dry enough. So far the weather has been pretty kind to us, although we are able to use our closed group Facebook page to alert members to cancellation if a rainy morning is forecast. We are becoming used to sprinting for cover under the porch when there is an unexpected downpour!

Sue Youle is planning some great themed mornings and together with Ruth we have had some varied craft sessions. As the group size increases we are following a more structured programme, with craft and free play, followed by music and story time. Keeping the group to safe and manageable numbers means we are holding a small waiting list. Families bring their own rug to sit on and on which they have their own dedicated play activity which varies from week to week. We have had gardening/planting, animals/farm weeks and flowers - and I understand we can look forward to a 'jungle' week!

We have recently been pleased to welcome Soba to visit us and see what we are about and are grateful to the whole team for providing refreshments, activities and conversation as we continue this joyful and successful outreach.





## Calling all knitters!



Provided government guidelines permit, our Tadpoles team are planning on putting on a fun event on one weekend towards the end of term. We have borrowed an idea from Gill Wilkins at St Paul's who in turn borrowed it from a visit her grandchildren had made to a National Trust property - it's a Mouse Hunt!

The plan is that knitted mice are hidden around our outside area to be ticked off on a photo sheet when found, with a prize for all at the end. The mice below are rather tasteful, but as all the mice need to be different (and we will give them snappy names) we welcome an assortment of stripes, spots, in fact variegated in anyway you please. Any spares can be given away as part of the prizes.

I think that there are patterns readily available online, but let me know if there is difficulty finding them - mice approximately life size please as any larger may look too much like the rodents for which I am phobic!

Trusting that increasing freedoms will remain, we would hope to serve refreshments from the church door and make this a community event.

**Val and the Tadpoles team**

## Church Charity for Next Year



Each year we give a tenth of our donated income to a selection of charities chosen by the Tithing Committee. The church always has a main charity which we support financially and with prayer. We have supported our current charity Embrace the Middle East for over 3 years, so it is now time to choose a new charity. The tithing committee will be meeting over the summer and they will decide who we support going forward. They welcome any ideas as to which Christian charity we support next. This can be a local charity, a national charity, or an overseas charity.

Please let Soba or Doreen know if you have any suggestions by mid-June. Thank you.

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## Wedding bells!

From the parish of Fremantle Western Australia, we are delighted to read this news:



**TOAST TO FR PATRICK & SARAH** All are welcome to stay after the St John's service on Sunday morning to raise a glass to Patrick and Sarah to congratulate them on their recent wedding, and to wish them the best for their marriage!





## Second Sight

Sometimes, you need the ocean light,  
and colours you've never seen before  
painted through an evening sky.

Sometimes you need your God  
to be a simple invitation  
not a telling word of wisdom.

Sometimes you need only the first shyness  
that comes from being shown things  
far beyond your understanding,

so that you can fly and become free  
by being still and by being still here.

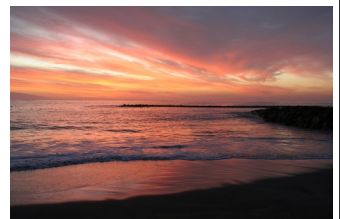
And then there are times you want to be  
brought to ground by touch  
and touch alone.

To know those arms around you  
and to make your home in the world  
just by being wanted.

To see eyes looking back at you,  
as eyes should see you at last,

seeing you, as you always wanted to be seen,  
seeing you, as you yourself  
had always wanted to see the world.

**David Whyte**



## EasyFundraising reminder



**EasyFundraising** is a way for the Church to gain extra income from your online shopping at no cost to you, and is simple to use. It's safe to use as you still buy from the retailers' own web site with all the usual security and delivery information available. By going to the retailers' web site via EasyFundraising they will record your visit and make a small donation to the Church if you purchase something.

EasyFundraising works on any common computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. It will look a little different depending on your device and software, but the principles remain the same. To get started either download and open the **EasyFundraising App**, or use any of the common web browsers and go to

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/woosehillchurch>

If you have used EasyFundraising before simply Login, or if you have not used it before you will need to create an account with your name and email address.

Once you have an account search for **Woosehill Community Church** as the organisation you wish to support. You are now set up to start fundraising for the Church.

You can search for retailers by name, although not every retailer is part of the EasyFundraising scheme. If the retailer you want is there click on their name and when their page comes up it will show you what donations are available, click on the Shop Now button. You will be taken to the retailers' own web site and anything you purchase will qualify for the donation, usually a percentage of the goods value, sometimes a fixed amount donation.

Here are some tips I have found useful to increase the donations to Woosehill Church:

*Comparison web sites such as Compare the Market often make large one-off donations, currently £12.50 if you buy insurance through their site. So, you can support the Church while you are saving on your car insurance.*

*Many web browsers have an **EasyFundraising** add on that will alert you to a possible donation when you are on a retailers' web site, so you don't miss out on donations.*

*You can also "bookmark" it.*

*It's worth shopping around for products that are available from multiple retailers to find the one offering the best donation.*

EasyFundraising often make special offers of increased donations for a period of time, or for specific goods.

Many popular retailers support EasyFundraising, larger ones such as John Lewis, Amazon, M&S, AO.com, plus a lot of smaller retailers if you prefer to look after them too. Currently Woosehill Church is receiving about £200 per year from **EasyFund-raising** donations, let's see if we can beat that in 2021.



## Ride and Stride 2021

What are you doing on Saturday September 11<sup>th</sup>? How about visiting local churches and raising some funds while you do so?

The national Ride & Stride event happens every year and this time we want Berkshire to climb up the league table of successful fundraising counties. Any mode of transport is fine – you could walk, cycle, ride – simply choose a route and find sponsorship from friends and family.

You can go by yourself or in a group, any time between 10am and 6pm and many people make a day of it. We are very fortunate to have so many wonderful and interesting churches to visit, and this year we hope many will be open and offering refreshments – there's nothing like a bit of cake to fuel our endeavours.

Your nominated church will benefit directly as they 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.

More details will be provided closer to the event by your local co-ordinator. Please keep the date free in your diary!

Prue Matchwick  
BHCT Ride & Stride Co-ordinator





**THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND**

A CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN EVERY COMMUNITY

## How should I pray?

When you were at school you were probably taught to put your hands together when you prayed. But in one of his many books about prayer,

Henri Nouwen says that when we pray “we are asked to open up our tightly clenched fists”.

So why not start by holding your clenched fist in front of you, and then slowly opening it up to receive from God the blessings and wisdom God longs to give you.

In this way – your hands open before God – your hand itself can be a basic pattern and reminder of how to pray:

### Using your hand as a model for prayer

#### 1. Thumb

When something is good you give it the “thumbs up”. So start with thanksgiving. Count your blessings. What are the good things in your life?

Thank God for them.

#### 2. Index finger

This is the finger you use to point. Pray for direction in your life; the decisions you need to make; the things for which you are responsible; the things you are concerned about. Pray for direction in our world and for the challenges we face.

#### 3. Middle finger

This is the tallest finger. Pray for the important people who have power in the world; national and local politicians; the Royal Family and other world leaders and their governments.

#### 4. Ring finger

If you are married, you wear your wedding ring on this finger. It is also the weakest finger. It can't do much on its own. Pray for your family and friends. Pray for the people upon whom you are dependent, and the people who are dependent on you.

#### 5. Little finger

This is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. Pray for the poor, the weak, the helpless, the vulnerable, the excluded, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved. Remember those who have died.

***And finally – lifting both your hands to God in thanksgiving – pray for yourself***



## **Worship at Woosehill**

Our groups are a work in progress, but we hope that an update on progress so far may hearten and inspire you. Your thoughts and prayers are valued. Richard as moderator of the worship group has put together this portrait of 'who we are' from our discussions together:

*Worship is always about bringing the best of ourselves and offering it to God, the one who is worthy of all that we are, mind body and spirit.*

*We bring our history and our present world.*

*We bring our private grief and our secret delight.*

*We bring all that we have been and all that we hope to be in the future.*

*Worship is where we find the point of lively equilibrium, where variety is embraced as a blessing and an adventure.*

*We seek encounter with God and with each other.*

*We are Methodist and Anglican and both and neither.*

*We enjoy freedom and structure.*

*We meet God through music which lifts our hearts heavenwards, whatever the style.*

*Worship reminds us how to be a community, for the community, with the community.*

*We are inspired and renewed by the Holy Spirit.*

*We are rooted in traditions which help us to proclaim the good news afresh.*

*We thirst after the kingdom of God through insights which make sense of our daily lives and through moments of profound encounter with God.*

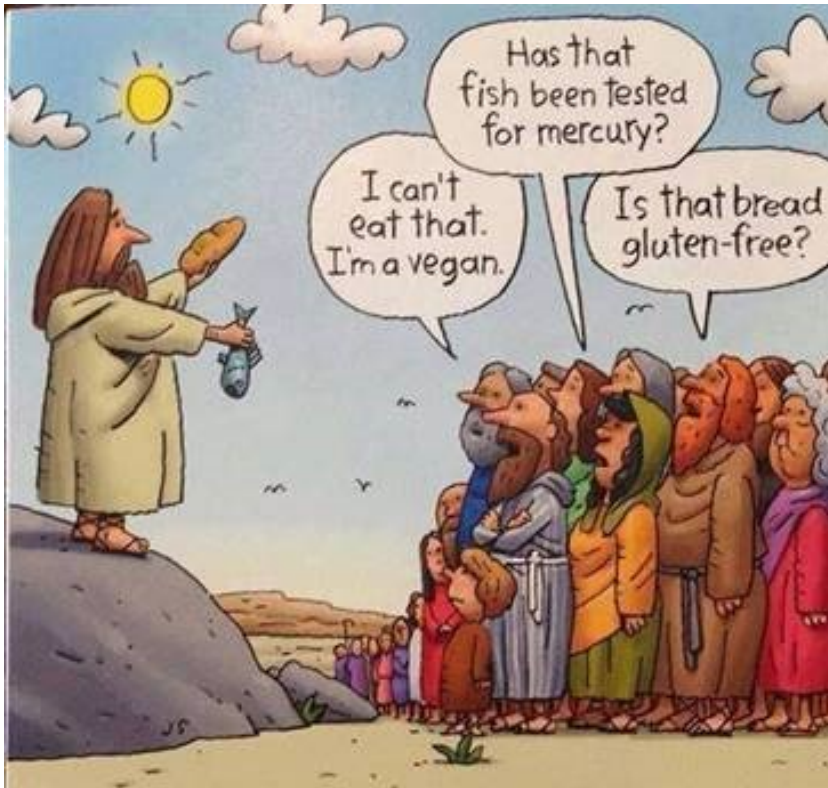
*We are welcoming and inclusive because God is love.*

*Together, we are Woosehill Church.*

*More than that, in worship we learn how to be God's Church for God's community of Woosehill.*



## And finally - to make us smile!



With thanks to Susie Smith for sending in this and some more funnies for future issues!

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### A blessing

Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!



*Romans 15:13 in the Message*



## Woosehill Church Services and meetings

As some of us return to church, 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)

We also at present on Zoom:

**Parish Bible study** on Tuesday evenings 7.15 - 8.30pm

**Together in Prayer** on the third Thursday of the month from 8-9pm  
Contact Lyn Brown for details

**House group** on Monday evenings contact Geoff Peck on 0118 9786711

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