Woosehill Church Magazine

Sharing God's love with the community



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Woosehill Church Magazine

Dear Church Family and all other readers.

The UK and Commonwealth will celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a 4-day Bank Holiday from 2-5 June 2022. Churches are an ideal place to bring communities together for these national celebrations, which end on Pentecost Sunday. In our own church we start off the festivities with a Bring and Share Jubilee picnic at Tadpoles on 25 May when the children will be presented with a gift book produced by Hope Together to commemorate the event. This will be followed by a BBQ for the whole church family on June 5 after the service - do join us.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the reign of your servant Elizabeth our Queen, and for the example of loving and faithful service which she has shown among us. Help us to follow her example of dedication and to commit our lives to you and to one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

With every blessing,

Val

Next deadline: 17 July 2022 Articles and notices as usual preferably by e-mail to: valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

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Partners, not just Donors

Christian Aid Week began on Sunday 15th. I thought I might perhaps share with you some of my thoughts about charitable giving.

A few years ago, when I was having my hair cut, my hairdresser, a young girl, asked me what I was going to do later that morning.



I told her that I was going to collect the Christian Aid envelopes that I had slipped through the letterboxes in my neighbourhood a few days ago. She was a bit surprised and said that the people were not so good at giving. There may be an element of truth in her statement. I told her that in my previous rounds, I had a couple of residents telling me to my face, they did not want to give anything at all; and there were a few who found excuses not to give, like their envelopes being misplaced. But there were a lot who gave whatever they could. Some took the trouble to dash into their houses, the sooner they saw me from a distance - some of them were waiting for buses, some chatting with their neighbours. Quite a lot of them had their envelopes ready, tucking them out of the letterbox. She agreed in the end that there are people who give.

This is perhaps the experience of most of the collectors. People give, whatever they can - sometimes with delight, sometimes with a soft sigh. Being charitable is an essential part of humanity. Besides, it is Christian responsibility. It is one of the ways of serving our neighbours. Prompted by God's love and concern for us, we find ways to express that. We reflect that on others who are in need. Often, we count how much we are blessed and feel how grateful we should be to God. So, we give.

It is fulfilling as well. When we get to hear the real-life changing stories of the beneficiaries through the charities we support, we feel that we are not just givers, but real partners in the lives of so many people.

In all this we see that giving is not an end in itself. There is someone out there to receive what we give, materially or otherwise. There may be some who receive help without realising from where and how that is coming to them. But most do. They receive every little gift with gratitude and appreciation. At that instance, the `counting of blessings` is triggered in their hearts. They begin to experience and wonder God's love and concern for them. Those who are touched by the goodness of others, would always want to share something of it with some others. In this manner, it finds its own way forward, like an endless chain. The chain increases all the while, looping and spiralling, touching many more people all over the world.

With prayers,



Pilgrimage

Dear Friends,

I wonder if you watched the TV programme *Pilgrimage* on BBC 2? It's an interesting watch as 7 celebrities representing a variety of religious beliefs travel together, by foot and sea, the I600km from St Columba's birthplace in Donegal to the



Abbey on Iona that he founded. On the way they share their faith stories and talk together, and they each emerge from the experience challenged and changed.

At its simplest, a pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a sacred place. Ever since the disciples rushed to the garden on Easter morning to see the place where Jesus had been buried and was now no longer present, people have travelled to places where significant spiritual events have occurred.

Pilgrimage became popular in the Middle Ages when the three main pilgrimage destinations were Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela. Such a pilgrimage would have been for pious or penitential reasons but in the later Middle Ages pilgrimage became more of an industry with many making the pilgrimage of behalf of others as well as for their own spiritual benefit. After the reformation, interest in pilgrimage declined in England but in recent years interest has surged again, and many thousands of people each year make the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. But other pilgrimage sites are popular too such as Iona, Canterbury, Holy Island and Walsingham.

Mike and I along with my brother and sister-in-law, have just completed a pilgrimage walk. We travelled along part of the St James' Way and walked 62 miles from Reading Abbey to Winchester Cathedral over 5 days. The walk is linked with the Camino Ingles in Northern Spain and continues to Southampton, where ancient pilgrims could catch a boat to Spain and continue their walk to the shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela.

Before we started the walk, I was not sure that I would be able to complete it as I've never attempted anything quite like this before. So, I was thrilled (and very pleased with myself) that I managed it and we all felt an enormous sense of achievement when we reached our destination at Winchester Cathedral.

We began each day with a pilgrim prayer and our route included a number of churches where we could collect stamps for our pilgrim passports. The ancient churches along our route became our places of destination and shelter and I was struck by the holiness of places where faithful Christians have worshipped for centuries.

We walked on some wonderful ancient paths, we appreciated some stunning views, enjoyed lovely hospitality, and learnt some valuable life lessons along the way.

I learnt the importance of the simple necessities of water, nourishment and rest. I gained confidence as we completed each day's walk and realised that I would manage the next day's too. I learnt not to look too far ahead but to concentrate on just the next destination. Above all I was reminded of God's presence with me – not just on this walk – but as an ever-present companion through the journey of life.

Maybe you could make a pilgrimage too, the journey need not be long and could even be in your imagination. Use this prayer of St Teresa of Avila to help you.

Lord, grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by you, always follow your plans and perfectly follow your holy will.

Grant that in all things great and small,

I may do whatever you require of me,

May your will be done in time and in eternity, by me, in me and through me. Amen

With every blessing

Catherine

Rev'd Catherine Bowstead

Superintendent Methodist Minister





Giving

We are all noticing the rising price of everything from petrol and energy to the food we eat. This is also unfortunately true for the cost of running our church at a time when we are also experiencing a drop in income due to people moving from the area or the Church.

We are very grateful to all of our congregation who give regularly and welcome the extra bonus of gift aid from taxpayers, basically a bit (actually quite a lot) extra for nothing.

All we are asking is, please can you review your giving; this may mean things stay as they are but if you can afford to increase your giving or indeed start regular giving, we would be very grateful. If you require the church bank details or a gift aid declaration form, please email treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com

In this increasingly cashless society we are also looking in to purchasing a card reader to allow everyone to be able to give for things like refreshments, donations at groups or just a bit extra now and then when they can, by card.

Thank you for reading - from the Staff & Stewards team

Prayer For A Cheerful Giving Heart

Lord, I thank You for what You have given me, so many blessings that I cannot begin to count them, they are without number. Lord, I pray that You would develop in me a giving heart that glorifies You, a cheerful heart that desires to give back to You a small measure of the over-abundance that You have poured into my lap.

Source: https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-for-Giving



Thursday groups at Woosehill Church

We have relaunched our Thursday morning groups since Easter and advertised this in the Wokingham Word - you may have seen it there.

New leaflets are now on the table at the back of the church - please feel free to give to anyone you think might be interested. We will also hopefully have some leaflets in the library and Wokingham information centre.

Woosehill Church – Thursday Morning Groups

Are you feeling lonely or would you just like to get out a bit more now that Covid is more under control? If so, then Woosehill Church's Thursday Morning Groups may be just the thing for you. Come along to as many or as few as you want.

On the **first** Thursday of each month joining in with our singing group 'Sing Something Simple' can't fail to lift the spirits.

Our knitting group Woolwam operate on the **second** Thursday of each month. So bring along your needles and wool for a cuppa and a natter.

On the **third** Thursday we change the knitting needles for sewing needles, for any type of needle craft. You can still have a cuppa and a natter!

Finally on the **fourth** Thursday, bring along your pencils and paints (we can supply some bits) to join our Art group.

All of our groups are informal and friendly, starting at 10am. For more information email <u>stewards@woosehillchurch.org</u> or visit our website at https://woosehillchurch.org/ and look under the "Church Groups" heading.





A Poem from Cara

(inspired by this picture taken in Devon)



I met God in the middle of a field and she said,

Honey, I've been waiting for you.

And I said why did you not try to find me before, I could've used you, you know?

And she gazed across the valley with such tenderness and said,

My darling child, do you see those lambs, those calves, those piglets, those goslings, those foals?

Do you see how they move on wobbly legs, running together before they scurry back to their mothers?

Do you think any amount of rushing could've made them learn how to walk any faster?

And I said no, I didn't, they had to do it in their own sweet time.

And she considered each of the plants and trees growing and said, My dear one, do you see how each of the trees is budding when they're meant to? Do you see how each leaf is unfurling when it's ready?

Do you see how in a few months it will be time for one harvest, then another, then another and another so that each crop will taste it's best and keep you fed?

And I said yes, I saw how the timing made sense so that nothing was wasted and there would be enough for the days ahead.

And she came next to me as we stood, side by side, delighting in all she had made and all she had declared good and she said,

Honey, I've been waiting for you to be ready to just come and chill with me awhile, I've been waiting for your heart to be still.

And I said, yes, I know, I've been waiting too.

Rev'd Cara Smart

Lord speak to me......

In the blowing of the wind
In the rustling of the grass
In the sound of the sea
In the beating of my heart
In the stirring of my spirit
Speak Lord
I am listening

Iona Community Prayer Neil Paynter





Who's the Big Person?

I have a four-year-old Goddaughter, Olivia, whose mother is my lovely friend Alice. Recently, as she was splashing in her bath, she announced to her Mum that she wanted to "Go swimming with Haine" (her version of my name). So it was that during half-term, with a brand new pink frilly swimming costume (hers, not mine,



you will be *very* relieved to hear!), we turned up at Didcot Wave Pool for the Family Fun session.

Olivia is cute, curious and energetic, but she has autism and probably also ADHD, so sometimes her behaviour can be challenging. Alice has always wanted her to experience everything, not letting her autism limit her, so before Lockdown we used to take her regularly to the pool during quiet toddler sessions, and she had begun to really enjoy them. However, after a two-year gap, and with the pool potentially noisier and more active during a family session, we were a little apprehensive about whether she might struggle with a sensory overload. The other potential problem is that I am not exactly Dina Asher-Smith these days and Olivia is a consummate escape artist, so there was a potential for her to dash off and slip on the wet floor/ dive into the deep end/pull off somebody's budgie smugglers before I could catch her....

It was with some nervousness, therefore, that I got us both changed and headed for the pool, whilst Alice and Olivia's baby sister watched from the café next door. It was noisy and busy, but that didn't seem to bother Olivia, because it was far more fun to have a Godmother-splashing session! She wasn't even fazed when the waves were switched on and we started bobbling up and down, instead she just crowed with laughter and soon learnt how to jump into them. In fact, for a while my only problem was that because Olivia didn't want to float but preferred to stay in the shallow end, I couldn't manage what I normally aim for in a pool, which is hide as much of my wobbly body as I can beneath the water line.

Of course, eventually time came for the hardest part of the activity, which was getting my girl to leave an activity she was enjoying and make the transition to the changing room. I was aware that she might get emotional and use

kilometres. Happily, she got involved in a mission to find her pretty pink towel, and soon we were back in the cubicle having not had any meltdowns, escapes or accidents. I was relieved, and very proud of her, but I was also (as a reaction) totally exhausted; this did not make it easy to struggle into my clothes in a confined space and on a wet floor, and at one point I lost my balance and started to topple over. Very quickly a little hand clamped onto my arm, steadying me, and Olivia's voice said "I hold you, Haine". Looking down, I saw her big brown eyes were looking at me with sympathy as she supported me. Once I was balanced again, I gave her the biggest hug and told her she was a very kind, helpful girl.

Just as you think you know most of what life has to show you, it throws you a curve ball, and I certainly learned something new that day. We all know how lesus overturned the expectations in his society, showing just how much he valued children; he held them in his arms, told his disciples to follow their example, and became angry at those who threatened his "little ones". We also know that he demonstrated and taught that you don't always have to come over as strong and capable, but you can reveal your vulnerability and allow others to support you. Perhaps I hadn't quite realised up to now how powerful it can feel to be helped by someone you think you are helping; to appreciate the way love can bind us together as a unit in which absolutely everyone contributes, to the benefit of all.

I am very grateful to my amazing Goddaughter for helping me with this, and I would tell her so....if only I could catch her!

Elaine

"And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

— Luke 18:15-17 (KJV)





St Paul's Church, Wokingham Choral Evensong Sermons 2022

Preaching through the Psalms

Each preacher has been invited to choose one of the Psalms, explore its meaning and then connect it to the world we live in today.

All Services happen at 6.15pm and are followed by refreshments.

May 15: Luke Larner: Psalm 37



Fr Luke is the assistant curate of the civic and country church of St Paul in the centre of Bedford. He is passionate about Jesus and Justice, particularly in the areas of homelessness, peace-making, and interfaith collaboration. A former bricklayer, Luke is currently studying for a doctorate in Practical Theology, researching with Christians involved in Community Organising. He is also a very big fan of Saint Francis.

June 19: Philip Hobday: Ps 34



Philip Hobday has been Vicar of Earley St Peter's, Reading since 2015 and teaches church history, mission and evangelism, and Christian doctrine for the diocese. He studied History at Exeter College, Oxford, before training for ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He was formerly Chaplain of Magdalene College, Cambridge. In his spare time he enjoys drinking coffee and eating cheese.

July 17: Liz Jackson: Psalm 85



The Revd Liz Jackson was licensed as Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire in September 2020. She previously served in Coventry Diocese, where she was Area Dean of Coventry North and Vicar of St Francis of Assisi Church, Radford. With a passion for social justice, Liz previously worked with the homeless, and she works closely with refugees and asylum seekers.

News from Tadpoles

Have you seen our newly expanded smart noticeboard near the kitchen? We use it to showcase what we are doing in our Tadpoles sessions which take place every Wednesday morning during term time.

Recently the children were learning about Noah using the story depicted on our Prayer Mat and we made rainbows in our craft activity:





Our group continues to thrive and we are just about at our limit of 20 families, but a number of our treasured members will be going off to school in September so we will be able to welcome more families into the group. We are always glad of help with refreshments and just general welcoming - do drop in for a coffee and see what we are doing!

Val on behalf of the Tadpoles team





And now - the weather

The Greenbelt festival at Boughton House, Northamptonshire returns this August Bank Holiday after missing two years and Colin and I look forward to being there. Their Sunday Morning Communion service for all is always a bit 'alternative' and challenging and this year is no exception:

'We asked writer and broadcaster Andrew Graystone to give us a sneak peak at what's in store for our festival communion gathering for this year...'

"Every day I watch the TV news. There are stories of doom and destruction; wars and rumours of wars; poverty, child abuse, corruption....and then a jaunty bloke in a sports jacket tells me what the weather will be tomorrow. The truth is, tomorrow's weather forecast is by far the scariest part of the news. In fact, much of the chaos and catastrophe in the news bulletin is directly caused by our reckless attitude to the climate. We're just not making the connection. "Listen, hypocrites!" Jesus says in a stinging rebuke to his followers, "You're so smart at predicting the weather. How come you can't read the signs of the times?" (Luke 12:56)

He has a point. So much Christian worship I see seems to be just Christians singing themselves to sleep. Greenbelt should be different. It must be different...and especially when we meet for our Sunday morning communion. As we've started to plan the Sunday morning communion we have been helped by Maximus the Confessor (c580-662). He was an activist monk and theologian from present-day Georgia. An early Christian environmentalist, he described humans as "the priests of creation." Max believed that human beings stand alongside the rest of creation as brothers and sisters, but with a unique job to do. Whilst all of creation praises God with 'silent voices,' humans have been given the ability to give expression to creation's voice. It's our job to lead the singing of creation's praise, and it's our job to express its pain too.

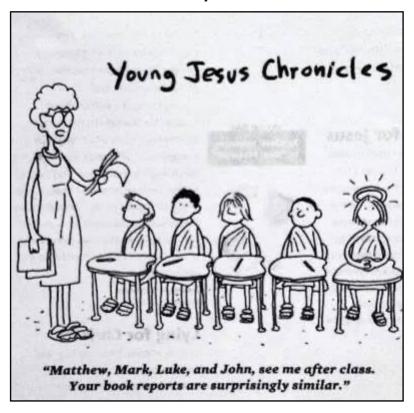
Part of our priestly calling is to imagine the future. Today, the forecast is bleak. Creation is burning up. We are awake to a future of rising sea levels and extreme climates, mass migration and food shortages. We'll meet to express the planet's fear and distress; to give words to creation's grief, and to plead for God's mercy. But maybe we can still find the spiritual imagination to envisage a different world where fear and anger have been transformed into courage and hope; where poverty is ended and all of God's children have safe spaces to live in and clean air to breath. Adults find this difficult to imagine. As usual, we're going to need children to help us.

In our Sunday morning festival communion this year we are going to play out two different scenarios. First, we will throw ourselves forward into the climate emergency of the next three decades. With the help of our neighbours from the world next door we will forecast tomorrow's weather. On behalf of creation, we will grieve for the damage we are doing to the planet and its people. It may not be pretty.

Then, in a Greenbelt first, we will stop everything mid-service. We will re-run the whole scenario. We will ask our God to replace our despair with a wild and counter-cultural vision of the world made whole and consider what it might take to achieve it. And right here, right now, we will commit ourselves to reshaping our lives to fulfil that vision. There's always a chance that we can change the weather.

From Greenbelt Dispatches, via Val

To make you smile





Christian Aid Week 2022

15-21 May



It was good to see our church filled with worshippers from across Wokingham on the evening of Sunday May 15th as we hosted the annual Christian Aid week service.

We paused to reflect, celebrate and rededicate ourselves to the cause of justice rolling down like waters.

For 75 years, Christian aid has lived out the challenge to stand together with sisters and brothers across the world – one global family.

As we look ahead to the next chapters and challenges, we joined in celebration, reflection and recommitment to the cause.

A Prayer for Christian Aid Week

We are united by hope...

In a world of drought, may seeds of hope be drenched by waters of justice.

In a world of inequality, may our hunger for justice bring an end to the scandal of poverty.

In a world of danger, where peace is in pieces, may justice hold hands with love and create an unbreakable bond.

We are united by hope and we hold each other in this prayer.

News from Soulscape - one of our local charities



Think back, if you can, to when you were II... Did you have a happy first day at your new big secondary school? Or did you feel a bit overwhelmed, lonely, lost or nervous? How you begin can affect your experience of school for a long time.

Mind the Gap is Soulscape's biggest project of the year. We're working with 17 schools across Berkshire this year to help thousands of young people make a more positive start to secondary school.

And we could use **you**, if you'd like to volunteer! Come and make a big difference to a young person's experience.

Who can volunteer?

Anybody! Here are some ideas:

- University students home for the holidays
- Parents of older teenagers who have been through this already
- Former teachers
- People who have helped with other Soulscape projects
- Anybody who cares about young people
- People with no experience but a few spare hours

We'll train you, find you a role that suits you, and sort out your DBS check. You just need a friendly face and a listening ear.

When is it?

We're looking for help with workshops between **20-22 June**, and / or help greeting and supporting the new Year 7s during their first week of school in **September**.

If you're up for it, please get in touch with us on contact@soulscape.org.uk







The money we donate to our current overseas charity is being used to good effect:

The Coronavirus pandemic is having an alarming impact on the numbers of people living avoidably blind.

75% of the world's blindness can be treated or prevented. The challenges accessing eye services or treatments during the pandemic, especially in low and middle income countries, are leading to more people than ever needlessly losing their sight.

Dr Monicah Bitok, CBM Global Inclusive Eye Health Advisor, explains:



"It's been very worrying to see the impact of Covid. In countries where the levels of blindness were already shocking, they are now even more alarming. During periods of lockdown over the past 2 years some eye health units were closed completely, only dealing with trauma cases. But when these clinics opened, patients were required to be covid tested before they came for surgery. Many of these patients cannot afford the journey in the first place from rural areas to the hospital, so to pay for a covid test on top of journey costs was impossible, and as a result many people missed out on vital sight saving operations. For many the damage has been irreversible".

WOW - Women of Woosehill Church

Our social group of ladies is meeting again with a range of activities.

After our May walk led by Amy we look forward to a cream tea organised in **June** by Lynne Paine .



In July, Lyn Brown's popular alfresco evening of drinks and nibbles in her lovely garden returns.



Watch out for more information on these and future get togethers in the weekly noticesheet or talk to Lynn Smith.

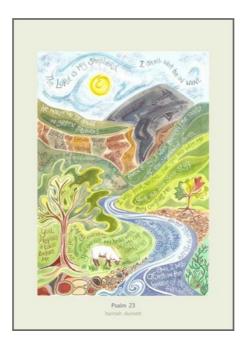
All ladies are welcome to join this friendly group.



News from Quench Christian Bookshop at Holme Grange Craft Village

As I Walk Through the Valley...

A recent visitor to the shop was surprised to discover that the words "as I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." at the start of the rap song 'Gangsta's Paradise' by Coolio, were actually taken from the Bible. What a contrast in the message of these two songs though! Gangsta's Paradise is a song of hopelessness and despair, whilst Psalm 23 is a song of promise and hope. The Psalm is quite possibly the most familiar passage of scripture to many of us, and maybe we can recite it without much thought, but when was the last time you took a close look at it? Seeing the words woven through the beautiful Hannah Dunnett print (pictured) is just one way of drawing us back into this beautiful Psalm.



^{**}Quench currently have a special offer on Pete Greig's new book 'How to hear God - a simple guide for normal people'**

Not to be taken seriously! Squirrel problem at church?

The **Presbyterian** church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they should not interfere with God's divine will.

At the **Baptist** church, the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and, unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The **Lutheran** church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later, the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

The **Episcopalians** tried a much more unique path by setting out pans of whiskey around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol poisoning. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunk squirrels can do.

But the **Catholic** church came up with a more creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

Thanks to Ed for supplying this bit of levity which he received from a fellow Christian.



A FRANCISCAN BENEDICTION

May God bless you with discorrbott

At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger

At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears

To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them And to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness

To believe that you can make a difference in the world, So that you can do what others claim cannot be done To bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.



Woosehill Church Services and meetings

As more 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

Also at the moment 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

Church Contacts

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

Rev'd Richard Lamey, The Rectory, Holt Lane 0118 3279116 richard.lamey@spauls.org.uk

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

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



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

We also now have a reflective evening service on the **first Sunday of each month**, from **6.15 to 7pm** - a chance to be still in the presence of God and one another, with some Taizé chants, Bible reading, candles and time for quiet reflection.

All are very welcome.

