

Woosehill Church Magazine



Sharing God's love with the community

September - October 2023



**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,

Lots of bits and pieces in the magazine this time - I thought up to the deadline that I wouldn't have enough material to fill the pages, and then came Elaine's very timely article, aptly celebrating Creation-tide and Harvest. So thank you Elaine (hotfooting it from holiday!) and all who contributed. I am always willing to receive your contributions and welcome new ideas from all the church family.

Do read about events planned within our church, parish and our town especially those concerning the wider environment and climate change, important issues that affect all of us and our future generations.

Don't forget too that we are hoping to develop some Green initiatives in our own church as featured in the last magazine - talk to one of the stewards or to Soba.

I have set the next deadline a little later to allow for Christmas dates to be included - sorry to mention this in September!

*With every blessing,
Val*

Next deadline: 20 November 2023
Articles and notices as usual
preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

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God's Generosity



By the time you read this article we will have celebrated our Harvest Festival; once again, as a worshipping community thanking God for his generous gifts from the world around us.

As we prepare for this great season of thanksgiving, we wonder what might be our guiding thoughts this year. When it comes to the Harvest service, we know, it is not just having the traditional hymns and prayers or perhaps organising harvest suppers and auctions of fruits and vegetables and food items brought in by the people and donating the proceeds to charities.

Harvest celebrations go beyond what happens in the churches. If we pause for a moment, in all what we are going to celebrate and thank God for this year, we may realise there is something that needs to be taken seriously: our approach to God's generosity.

The book of Deuteronomy conveys to us a special message.

When the wandering people complained to Moses, despite God's continuous provisions for them, that they were better off when they were slaves in Egypt, saying they had better food to eat, to the rebellious people, God declared what was in his mind. Perhaps this is one of the most powerful messages for us from the whole of the Bible.

What is in God's mind becomes very clear as he declared through Moses to the wandering people *'...I call heaven and earth as witness against you that I set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing...'* [30:19^a]. The choice is clear. There is good and bad, but he wants his people to choose what is good: *'...therefore, choose life, that you and your descendants may live...'* [30:19^b].

God's offer is so unique. Moses made every effort to convince the people that God's generosity should not be taken for granted.



Perhaps this should be our focus as we celebrate our harvest thanksgiving this year. In the light of the struggle of the farmers and food producers at home in the recent years, and several failed agreements of the World Trade Organisation, that has taken away the glimmer of hope from farmers in poor countries, we remind ourselves of God's pledge for us. God, in his love continues to provide essential sustenance to his people.

As we celebrate harvest festival this year, rejoicing and thanking God for the world that he has given us that sustains and nourishes us. It is indeed God's free gift for us all. In order to appreciate the uniqueness of God's creation, his generosity should not be taken for granted.

Greetings and warm regards,

Soba Sinnathamby-

A Harvest Prayer

Loving God,

Thank you for the many ways in which you provide for us:

Food, family, friendship,

Housing, health, happiness,

And ways to use our time and talents.

We lift to you too the ways in which we remain in need of these things.

God of generosity,

May your kingdom come.

A Prayer from the Trussell Trust





Encounters with God

**Come and join us for a guided Quiet Day,
a chance to explore how we encounter God
through some different types of prayer**

Saturday 21st October 2023

10:15 am – 4:00 pm

St Mary's Church, Winnersh

**Tea and coffee will be provided;
bring your own lunch.**

**Donations towards the hire of the building
will be requested.**

email mary.cassidy@spauls.org.uk to reserve your place



Elaine's Patch



Spirit Island

Recently I was fortunate enough to spend 10 days in Western Canada, fulfilling a long-held ambition to experience the majestic Rocky Mountains. We travelled around various locations, but our favourite by far was the town of Jasper, where we went in a cable car up to 2,230 metres, got close to elk, moose and a bald eagle on a wildlife “safari”, and visited one of the most special places I have ever encountered: Spirit Island on Lake Maligne (pronounced muh-leen).

The photo in no way does justice to this tiny island, which is more of a peninsula in the summer when the water level of the lake is low. Part of its serenity comes from how remote it is; we took a “cruise” down the entire length of the lake to reach it, which took nearly 40 minutes, leaving behind all the kayaks, pedaloes and hikers around the shore after about half that time. The boats stop one at a time at the lake shore next to Spirit Island for 15 minutes only, during which time the passengers can get out and stand on the water’s edge or walk around a viewing boardwalk but not actually step on the island itself, because it is considered sacred space by the indigenous First Nations tribe of that area, the Stoney people.

As we approached it, we were told its remarkable story by our tour guide on the boat.

The background to all this is that before we left for our holiday, I had begun preparations for our Harvest service here at Sherfield-on-Loddon, which was to be a Café Church held at the Community Centre. We had plans to make it a celebration of the fact that our church had recently been given a Bronze Eco Church Award, which involved demonstrating that we were both looking after our premises in an environmentally friendly way and raising the awareness of climate change and care for creation in our worship and teaching. All this was constantly on my mind as I gazed in awe at the beauty of nature at its wildest in Western Canada, and it resonated with what we learned at Lake Maligne about the relationship between the Stoney people and their former land, from which they had been evicted in the early 20th Century as white settlers took control in the area.

As we drove around the forests of Alberta, we had noticed that in some areas the immense pine trees had been burnt in wildfires and were standing scorched and lifeless; apparently it takes many years for them to actually fall over after they die. Traditional wisdom, backed up by scientific research, says there are benefits to small, occasional wildfires: they can clear away sick vegetation, encourage new growth, and help to balance the ecosystem. However, if a fire is too large or burns to a greater heat than normal, it can do serious and long-lasting damage to the delicate balance of nature, and this had happened near Lake Maligne in 2015, when many acres of forest were destroyed by a huge fire reaching temperatures never experienced before. Nobody is quite sure if this extreme effect was due to climate change, but there are strong suspicions it might have been. Even after eight years, the tragic aftermath is still all too evident as you drive towards the lake.

On the boat we heard that a short while after the 2015 devastation, the company who run the boat tours were contacted by elders of the Stoney tribe, who now live on a reservation east of the Rockies. They had heard about the destruction of the forest in their old grounds and respectfully asked if they could be given passage to Spirit Island one day when there were no tourists around, so that they could conduct healing ceremonies on behalf of the



ravaged land. They felt that only then could regeneration of nature truly begin.

The directors of the company (who had previously been unaware of how special this island was to the indigenous tribes) were only too pleased to grant this request, feeling honoured to join the elders as they transported them down the lake. The ceremonies took place, and the boat company took the decision that from then on nobody would set foot on the island except the Stoney elders, building the boardwalk to enable visitors to observe but not touch a place which was so obviously holy to this ancient tribe.

The beliefs of the First Nations of North America are obviously very different from our own faith, but they are steeped in tradition and deeply held. What we have in common is awareness that humankind has a responsibility to share the Creator's love for this beautiful, complex, fragile world, and to protect it as much as we can. The Stoney tribe believed their ceremony would help to heal the wounds left by the devastating wildfire, and although no instant miracle has taken place, the land is slowly recovering. Our own prayers can release God's healing power into places where exploitation and negligence have damaged nature, and if we follow his guidance, I do firmly believe our campaigns and actions can make a difference in the quest to save our world for future generations.

I know what my Harvest message this year is going to be....

Elaine Steere - Licensed Lay Minister



Greenbelt

The Lameys and Colin and Val Weedon and Lynne Judge all had an excellent time at the **Greenbelt Christian Festival** at the end of August and we were thinking that it would be great to take a small group of people from the parish to the next one- 22-25 August 2024. The Lameys took a tent, Lynne took a camper van and the Weedons were in a local B and B and they would all be happy to talk about their experience of the weekend. A lot of other people have been before or would like to go- so why not make 2024 the year? There are programmes for children and teenagers as well. There are religious talks, and charity talks, and talks about fighting poverty and climate change, and comedians (Milton Jones was great), and loads of music, and communal singing, and small groups and you can do as much or as little as you want to. Do talk to us, do look it up and do come along!

www.greenbelt.org.uk



‘We’re somewhere artistry meets activism, where the political meets the practical. We’re somewhere to come together once a year, where we’re as likely to dream up a better world as we are to dance and debate, to pray and to party.

We were founded a long time ago by a bunch of misfits in a field. We’re still in a field. And we’re still somewhere that welcomes anyone and everyone.’



Foodbank



The Trussell Trust supports a nationwide network of more than 1,200 food bank centres and together we provide emergency food and support to people locked in poverty, and campaign for change to end the need for food banks in the UK.

Harvest is an important time for food banks, with many churches and schools choosing to donate non-perishable food as a way of supporting people who are in need, whilst also celebrating God's provision.

Harvest food collections will play therefore a vital part in keeping our food banks stocked and able to help individuals and families who are in need over the coming months.



Don't forget the Bank the Food app. which will update you about urgent needs in our own area - it is really useful.



Remember

He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty (Luke 1: 52,53 NRSV)

Loving creator God and Lord of all
We know that you hold close to your heart
The hungry and the poor,
The vulnerable and the marginalised.

You bring down powerful people from their thrones.
You invite us to join you in your global mission to bring about justice and equality, dignity and love.

You challenge our choices and our lifestyles.

You challenge our vision and our hearing.

As we daily make our selfish choices to buy this or that luxury,

You see those whose choices for the basics have been taken from them.

As we dither about what we can do about fossil fuels

You see those whose homes are being washed away.

As we debate about whether gender justice really matters

You see women who are excluded from owning land.

As we look for the best of education for our children , you see those who never get to survive infancy.

Lord open our eyes and ears to see the world that you see.

To hear the voices that you hear

To listen to the people who ache for justice

To rage with them

To hope with them



To trust and work with them for a better tomorrow
Even as you fill the hungry with good things
May we not be among those who are sent away with empty hands.
In Jesus name we pray. Amen

*(Liz Hughes is a retired Presbyterian minister and Chair of Christian Aid Ireland .
This prayer was read recently by Ruth in our time of Intercession)*



Quench Christian Bookshop at Holme Grange Craft Village

September is the month of New Beginnings for many people with children starting school or heading off to a new one and young people starting uni or apprenticeship programmes. For many churches, September sees the start up of new activities or the relaunch of old ones, and dare we say it...thoughts are turning to Christmas!! We are here to help you with ALL of those!

It seems crazy to be talking about Advent Calendars and Christmas in the midst of a heat-wave, but we need to get our order placed for this year's Real Advent Calendar ASAP, so please do let us know if you wish to order any.

You can email us on admin@quenchshops.com, give us a call on **0118 9776715** or pop in and tell us! New design, same great price of £4.50. Treat the kids (or yourself!) to The Christmas Story with added "yum"!





News from Tadpoles

In a new venture we decided to break up the long summer holidays with a picnic on an unexpectedly beautiful day in the middle of August.



We used the day as a fundraiser for Breast Cancer Now and they provided really nice materials for an afternoon of fun and games. We also had a return of our popular Mouse Hunt!

Everyone brought their own picnic and this was supplemented by some yummy cakes and scones. A good time was had by all and £157 donated to our chosen charity.

We have now restarted our weekly Wednesday morning sessions and are welcoming new families to replace those who have gone on to school or nursery. Sue, Ruth and Val continue to lead the group and we have a regular band of wonderful volunteers.





Tithing Gifts

Part 8 in the series exploring the charities who benefit this year from the allocation of our tithing gifts, this month we focus on Yeldall Manor, an appropriate choice as they will be the recipients of some of our Harvest gifts.

We have supported this local charity, based in Wargrave for many years and its monthly prayer diary is circulated by Lynn Smith every month along with our confidential prayer chain. (Do ask Lynn if you would like to receive these)

Yeldall Manor is a residential drug and alcohol treatment centre for men struggling with addiction. They welcome and value applications from men from all walks of life, background, ethnicity, culture and faith.

Their website states:

‘We want all those affected by addiction to heal, transform and thrive.’

Established in 1977 by a Christian family and supporters, over four decades’ experience in the sector has enabled us to develop quality services and interventions. Our counsellors are regulated by counselling bodies and are qualified and experienced in dealing with complex issues. Many of our staff have extensive experience in the substance misuse sector and some of them have themselves been in recovery for many years.





We are a Fairtrade Church

Did you know next year marks 30 years of the FAIRTRADE Mark in the UK?

Throughout 2024, there will be lots of ways to celebrate this major milestone. And to shake things up a little, **Fairtrade Fortnight is moving!**

In 2024, Fairtrade Fortnight will take place 9 – 22 September.

The move will give us all more time to prepare and celebrate 30 years of farmers powering positive change in communities all around the world.



‘Thanks to being with Fairtrade, we have the tools to fight against the effects of climate change.’

Albeiro 'Foncho' Cantillo, Fairtrade Banana Grower, Colombia, speaking about just one of the ways his co-operative have been using income from years of Fairtrade sales to build a sustainable future.

But don't worry if the new dates don't work for you. Throughout 2024 there will be lots of special ways to shout about the difference choosing Fairtrade makes. **Look out for more details soon.**

For 30 years, Fairtrade has worked because millions of us come together everyday to choose a fairer future. We come together when we shop, when we campaign, and when we spread the word on Fairtrade.



Evensong Sermon Series

'Continuing the theme of 'People Jesus met', our guest preacher on 15th October at 6.15pm at St Paul's is Rev'd Samson Kuponiyi. He is curate in Burnham, currently on placement in the Benefice of Colnbrook and Datchet. He trained with Cara at Cuddesdon and will be preaching on Luke 10: 38-42, 'Jesus visits Martha and Mary.'



--- and here is a great quote from Nadia Bolz-Weber with which Richard opened and closed our service of Holy Communion here at Woosehill on 17th September when we focussed on the theme of forgiveness.

“Christianity is basically a spiritual pyramid scheme of forgiveness. It’s bonkers. It’s not fair. It’s not what we would likely come up with, but it’s the most true, most beautiful thing in the world.”

Nadia Bolz-Weber (born April 22, 1969) is an American author, Lutheran minister and public theologian. She has a great talent for speaking words of wisdom in a down to earth accessible way.

A Reflection on Our Lord's Prayer

I cannot say **'Our'** if I live only for myself in a spiritually watertight compartment.

I cannot say **'Father'** if I do not endeavour each day to act like His child.

I cannot say **'who art in heaven'** if I am laying up no treasure there.

I cannot say **'hallowed be Thy name'** if I am not striving for holiness.

I cannot say **'Thy kingdom come'** if I am not doing all in my power to hasten that wonderful event.

I cannot say **'in earth as it is in heaven'** if I'll not serve Him here and now.

I cannot say **'give us this day our daily bread'** if I am dishonest or if I am seeking things by subterfuge.

I cannot say **'forgive us our debts'** if I harbour a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say **'lead us not into temptation'** if I deliberately place myself in its path.

I cannot say **'deliver us from evil'** if I do not put on the whole armour of God.

I cannot say **'Thine is the kingdom'** if I do not give to the King the loyalty due Him as a faithful subject.

I cannot attribute to Him the **'power'** if I fear what men may do.

I cannot ascribe to Him the **'glory'** if I'm seeking honour only for myself.

And I cannot say **'forever'** if the horizon of my life is bounded completely by time."

Shared by Doreen from her daughter Libby - Unattributed, seen on Facebook,



A Reflection from a Parishioner



An **anonymous writer** from the St Paul's congregation writes...

I went out in the garden to cut the grass (overdue) and pull out some weeds (ditto). Sitting on the grass in the shade pulling out some of the **MANY** creeping buttercups in what passes for our lawn - more moss and other plants than actual grass - I was fascinated by the way it (as I discovered the name says it does) **CREEPS**, sending out thin, delicate shoots through the grass and other plants. These shoots put down fine roots every 15cm or so and once the root is down it doesn't matter if the runner is broken - a new plant is settling in! It struck me that this is how mission, at its best, works in the church - tentative, weak perhaps, missionaries venture out, set a little root in place (contact with people) and keep moving on and rooting more. It doesn't matter if the link is broken if the Holy Spirit is at work.

The trap so easily fallen into is to settle down and not keep spreading - then pulling up the bigger root may leave a hole in the ground and nothing more to feed the beetles and bees! Confused metaphor, perhaps, but that's my thought for the day - keep moving outwards and leave God to work on the rooting!!



Thanks and Praise

Congratulations to Hannah (nee Murgatroyd) and Tim Bull on the arrival of Rosemary Eve (Rosie), a precious new granddaughter for Doreen and Pete, born in the middle of August.



Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank You for the precious little lives of all new-born babies, little toddlers and young children, knowing that each one is special to You and was known in Your heart, even before conception.



It's been an incredible year!

We could not have engaged so many young people or delivered to many schools without working together as a team. **Thank you to our amazing Soulscape Team** which includes staff, volunteers and trustees! **Thank you to all the schools and their staff for working** with us and **thank you to all the young people** who have been engaged with us and been willing to share their experiences and stories.

"Alone we can do so little, together, we can do so much"

Hellen Keller



Join us on October 14th for an autumn evening of live music, dancing, and great food

Bring your friends and enjoy a relaxed evening of fun, while raising money to support Berkshire's brilliant young people. The evening starts at 7pm where you'll be greeted with a complimentary drink and canapés. Then enjoy South East Asian street food and live music by the talented FLASHBACK BAND!

The Walter Climate Change Lectures

A new series of lectures by guest speakers offer conclusive evidence for climate change and the likely impact it will have on all aspects of our lives. All lectures at **7pm, All Saints Church Wokingham RG40 1YA**

14th September

The Challenge of Climate Change

Prof Sir Brian Hoskins

21st September

Responding with Faith to the Climate and Ecological Crises

Hannah Mann

12th October

Wokingham Borough Council: *Climate Emergency Action Plan*

WBC Officer

31st October

Energy Efficiency and Climate Action: *transforming homes and businesses for a sustainable future*

Simanand Gandhi-Jeyaraj

23rd November

Our changing climate: *past, present & future*

Prof Chris Merchant

Booking: scan QR codes overleaf or email
thewalterlectures@spauls.org.uk

Anyone for (table) tennis?

Does everyone know that Woosehill Church has a table tennis club?

It meets on most Friday evenings from 7.30 - I say most as it is dependent on somebody being available to open up and help set up. It has recently lost one of its stalwarts - Ian Fletcher. Ian is, and will be, sorely missed and it would be great to see the club flourish in his memory.

With that in mind everybody is welcome, indeed positively encouraged, to come along to give it a try - no obligation and no skill necessary. There are 2 table tennis tables available - equipment provided.



WOW

News from WOW

The Autumn schedule for WOW includes a pub quiz, a book/film/play review evening and a wreath making workshop. This group is open to all ladies of Woosehill Church, talk to Lynn Smith if you wish to join us. It is a very friendly social group

Parish events

The **Parish Bazaar** is from midday on Sat the 11th of November. Please put the date in your diary now.

Woosehill meetings

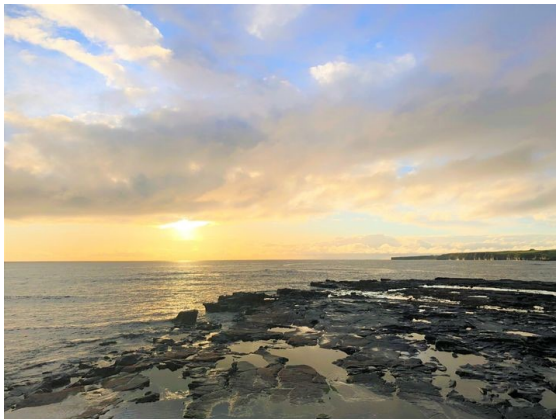
We continue to livestream our 10am service on our Woosehill Church YouTube channel, the link also advertised weekly on our Facebook page, newsletter and website woosehillchurch.org

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

Yielding Prayer

May I live this day
Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word,
Gracious in awareness ,
Courageous in thought ,
Generous in love.



John O'Donohue Matins from Benedictus



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

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