

Woosehill Church Magazine

July – August 2026



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

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Or follow our livestream services on YouTube**

Dear Church family and all other readers,

A slightly slimmer version of the magazine this time, partly because of fewer contributions, but also because your editor is melting over a computer in a very hot upstairs bedroom, so I make no apologies for a heatwave, climate change themed edition of the magazine.

The work on the church to make it attractive for lettings continues over the summer however and there are work parties for all ages and abilities!

If you know of any groups looking for regular meeting rooms do talk to Lynne or one of the stewards.

This is not just about restoring lost income – significant – but also to make our church a visible, welcoming place in the community.

Have a good summer!

With every blessing,

Val

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A Message from our Minister

In the last full week of June, we hit the highest temperature in Wokingham since records began.

On 24th June we saw 38 degrees, we cancelled

Tadpoles for that day for the safety of all those who come and all those who help. If that week and the recent heatwave freaked you out, then that is probably the right response. We're seeing the direct effects of all the warnings we've had about climate change and the earth heating up for the past few years. And heat like this is unfortunately going to become more common with each year unless we do something. So what can we actually do?

Well, no surprises, but I'm going to start with prayer! But focused prayer. Pray for all those most affected by the heat – people who are elderly, whose medical conditions make the heat more difficult to cope with, people living in flats or buildings where there is no escape from the heat, people looking after young children, those on medication which makes them more susceptible to the negative effects, those who are neurodivergent, those who work in hospitals or care homes or hot kitchens or schools or in full uniform....the list goes on. Pray too for the inventors who are looking at alternative forms of energy which don't pump more carbon into the atmosphere, whose creativity is coming up with solutions that will need investors and leaps of faith to be put into action. Pray for those in power, our MP's, our government, our world leaders, that they are held accountable to their promises and put the health of our planet ahead of profit. Pray for social media content creators, that they can use their platform to positively influence people

with good solutions, to think differently, that they encourage those who watch to live sustainably. There's so much that we can pray for, that we need to pray for.

Other than praying, what else might we do? Sometimes it's easy to get stuck along the lines of feeling so small, that our actions are inconsequential in the scale of things that need to change that we end up thinking there's nothing we can do. But action and doing something, no matter how small can make us feel better and help our situation at the same time. One of my favourite psalms is psalm 8, with the lines:

***When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?***

A reminder of our smallness in the universe yes, but a perspective that doesn't lead to powerlessness, rather one that reminds us of how precious all of creation is to God, human beings included. The next few verses tell us this, as well as showing us the responsibility we have to care for the earth and every creature:

***Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.***

As part of this looking after and caring, there are things that we can all do. They may be small, but every small bit can add up to a big change, as Tesco often tell us, every little bit helps! We are at a point where every little bit matters, every bit of extra carbon dioxide that we can save from being emitted will help.

Which means that the actions we take to reduce our impact may well feel like drops in the ocean, but those drops gather and collate from a puddle to an ocean. We need systemic change, we need brave and confident UK leaders who will transition away from fossil fuels, invest in sustainable energy and transport. And our leaders need to know that we both want and support any positive action they will take. Contact our MP, Clive Jones, and tell him what kind of change you would like, tell him how the recent heatwave impacted you, tell him how you're feeling, tell him that we are a community that needs to look out for one another, whether or not we personally feel the impact, that we are a community that needs to care for and protect our planet and support any climate initiatives he wants to introduce.

We can also think about our own lifestyles, thinking about what we can do to be more sustainable. Consider if you can eat 2-3 more vegetarian meals a week, reusing and mending what we can where we can. Check who you bank with and see what their policies are on investing in fossil fuels. I'm now changing my bank after using the website 'Bank Green' and finding out that mine is one of Europe's biggest investors in fossil fuels and are failing on climate responsibility.

If you fly a lot, consider not doing so, or more sustainable ways of travelling, even if it's just one journey that will make a difference.

The Bishop of Reading has a podcast called "Common Ground: Conversations on Faith and the Environment with Bishop Mary." (found wherever you listen to your podcasts!) The first episode has our very own Chris Merchant in conversation due to his role in climate work at Reading University and is well worth a listen. He is also part of a group which has organised and hosted The People's Emergency Briefing, and we're working on having another in Wokingham, so do watch this space.

Keep praying and hold onto hope. The recent heatwave was scary, the idea that this will become our normal is scary, and fear for the future is very real. Doing something positive is a way of holding onto hope and stopping us feeling overwhelmed. God is with us in all of our actions, big and small. We can help to be the change our climate needs. Christians are meant to model God in the world: the love God has for each of us, the care God affords to all creation, and the power of transformation and salvation that comes from this. If we carry on living unsustainably then we are not good witnesses to the salvation offered to us through Jesus.

Salvation comes through the healing of the whole of creation, us included. Change is never easy, but we do it together and with the help of God.

Rev'd Cara

A Message from our Methodist Minister

Dear Friends,

The big film release of this summer appears



to be *The Odyssey*, a retelling of Homer's epic poem about the ten-year return of Odysseus from Troy to his home in Ithaca. An all-star cast and Oscar winning director, a length of nearly three hours, and a story that is still being told well into its third millennium, are all ways in which the film can be described as "big", but we might add that the adventure reminds us of some of the truths that we tell ourselves, and of which we need to be reminded from time to time.

In Homer's story, Odysseus leaves Troy with twelve ships, but by the time he arrives home all his comrades have perished, and he reaches Ithaca alone. However, this is never the story of an individual. Back in Ithaca, there are key roles to play for Odysseus' son Telemachus, his wife Penelope, and other servants of his household. The *Odyssey*, moreover, is a story of gods against gods, with divine power and mythical beasts employed on both sides. All through Odysseus' tale, he has been contributing to something bigger than the story of his own misfortunes.

Achievements are usually made through teamwork, where each part of the team plays its proper part. In the Greek epic, as on the sports field, and in the Body of Christ, we need soldiers and seers, goalkeepers and strikers, the foot and the eye, and everything else. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, in his poem *Ulysses* (the Latin version of the name "Odysseus") imagines Ulysses unable to settle back down to the life of King of Ithaca. He remains restless, and in need of some escapade. Ulysses recognizes that he and Telemachus are very different and have

different parts to play. “He works his work, I mine.” Or, as St Paul puts it, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?” and the list of rhetorical questions goes on (1 Corinthians 12:29, NRSV.)

At our recent church council, we were challenged to think of ways to raise the profile of the church in Woosehill. Ideas came from all quarters, and the task of distilling them, and putting some into practice, remains the work of us all. We all contribute in our own ways, so that the result will be the God’s work in this place, with all of us on the team. In the spirit of “He works his work, I mine” what is my contribution? And yours?

Wes



From the Diocese

Learning to live with an unusual weather forecast

As extreme weather becomes more familiar, churches are finding practical and hopeful ways to respond. Hannah Mann, Environment Programme Manager, explores how we all need to learn to live differently.

The impact of the heatwaves has been seen in all corners of British life; in the small ways, the big ways, the comical moments and the serious.

I've heard many tips on keeping cool; from putting bed sheets in my freezer, purchasing a 'cold' water bottle and sitting at my laptop with feet in a bucket of iced water.

More seriously, many of our church schools, along with others across the diocese either closed fully or partially to keep children out of the dangerous school temperatures in classrooms that are unprepared for this kind of heat. 11 people in Oxfordshire, including children, died after swimming in open water during the May heatwave. The impact on heat-related deaths in the UK was 2,700 across May and June.

While sleep deprivation may seem mild in comparison, 65% of us couldn't sleep, 86% of us reported our homes felt too hot, and 1 in 10 reported that our working conditions felt unsafe.

Creation groaning

And the sorts of things we are experiencing, nature is also feeling – water, shade and food are much harder to come by for our co-habitants, whose normal patterns of living are disrupted and food supplies out of sync with when they need to be accessing the food. This has serious

implications for all our birds, mammals, insects and fish. We hear echoes of [Romans 8](#) in what we are seeing all around us, as God's creation on earth – God's people, creatures, and land - seem to be groaning.

These are the summers of now, of tomorrow, and the future.

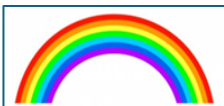
Learning to live differently

This type of weather is here to stay, so learning to live with it is going to be vital – both in the short term, and in the longer term. There are many organisations, local authorities, research institutes, and government committees exploring this question – looking at how our climate and our weather is changing and understanding what sort of response is needed. The [National Trust](#) has been looking at this for a long time – it turns out that fewer people visit National Trust properties when it's hot, and more properties have to close so that volunteers aren't working in unsafe temperatures. If it is to keep properties and gardens open, the charity will need to make some changes.

A prayer for hot days

So, during these heat waves, I want to thank God for the many organisations – including our own churches – offering help and support as we try and keep cool. I pray that people will stay safe and that nature will pull through.

I pray for those feeling particularly affected – farmers, those living and working in care homes and hospitals, the emergency services, and the many of us living in homes unfit for purpose. And I invite us to reflect on our place - our community and our role within it, as we help one another to live in a changing world.



News from Tadpoles

As we near the end of another successful year, we will be saying goodbye to 7 of our children, one to nursery and 6 to school. Most of them have been with us since they were babies, so it is a special and somewhat emotional event!

We present the children with a book – ‘Wherever you go, I want you to know’ - in a special Tadpoles/Woosehill church tote bag and sing ‘One more step along the world we go.’

Tissues are available!

We will be starting again in September and are trialling ‘Tea and Tissues’ at the beginning of term for those dropping off their child for the first time at Hawthorns, offering a place at church on the morning of September 3rd from 8.30 to 10am.

Watch this space for more news of this new initiative.



Walking with Dinosaurs

I am a (co-opted) member of one of the tithing groups at St Paul's and we meet several times a year for a variety of social activities. Recently we repeated a successful and very entertaining activity from last year - Dinosaur golf. If you have never tried it, it is great fun!

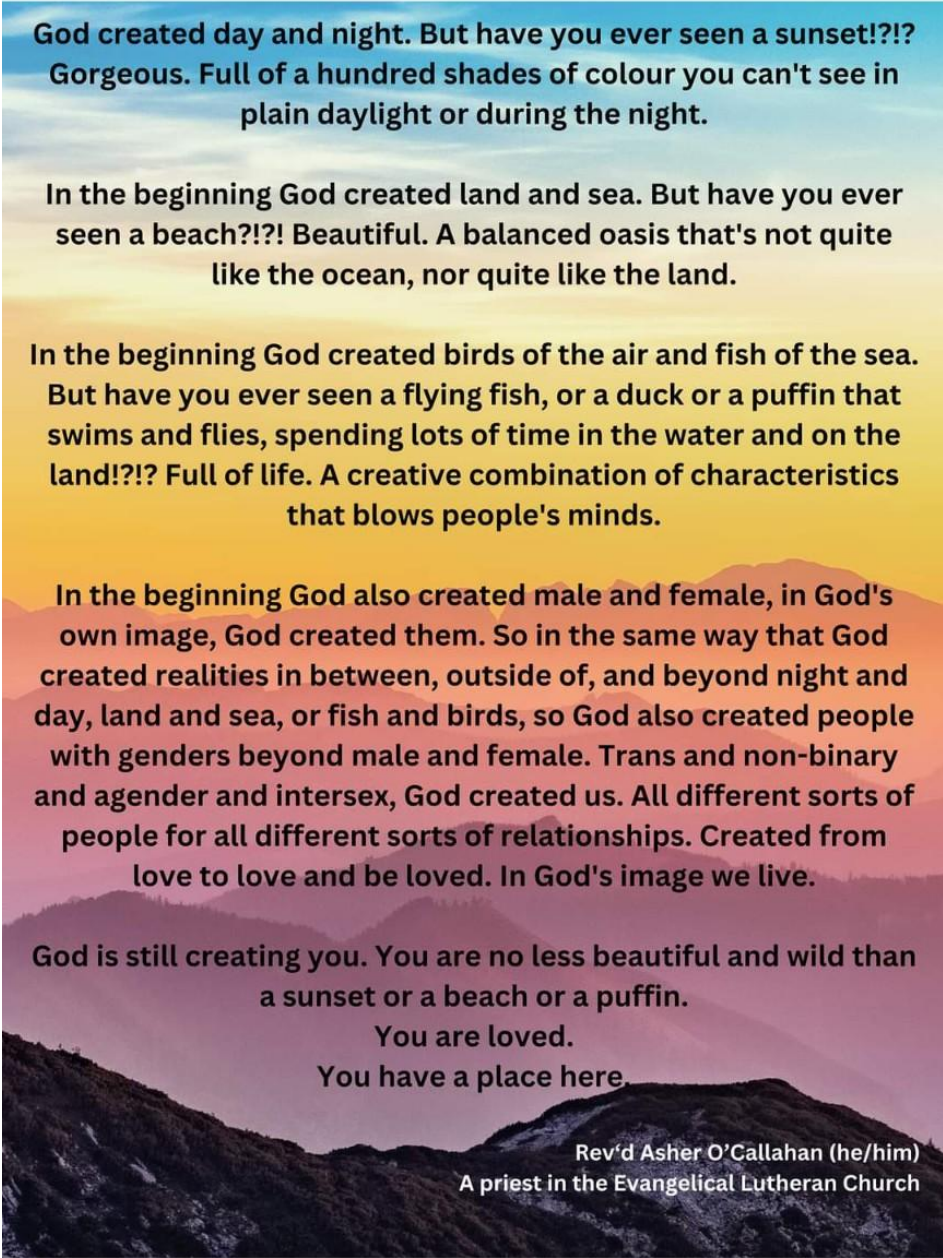
It is located on the Finchampstead Road where there are a variety of golf activities offered, some more serious than others on a well-tended site with good parking. There is a café onsite with outdoor and indoor seating and friendly staff.

If you have never been, it's well worth a visit in term time when there is no competition from schoolchildren.

Here are some photos of our visit.



Val



**God created day and night. But have you ever seen a sunset!?!?
Gorgeous. Full of a hundred shades of colour you can't see in
plain daylight or during the night.**

**In the beginning God created land and sea. But have you ever
seen a beach?!?! Beautiful. A balanced oasis that's not quite
like the ocean, nor quite like the land.**

**In the beginning God created birds of the air and fish of the sea.
But have you ever seen a flying fish, or a duck or a puffin that
swims and flies, spending lots of time in the water and on the
land!?!? Full of life. A creative combination of characteristics
that blows people's minds.**

**In the beginning God also created male and female, in God's
own image, God created them. So in the same way that God
created realities in between, outside of, and beyond night and
day, land and sea, or fish and birds, so God also created people
with genders beyond male and female. Trans and non-binary
and agender and intersex, God created us. All different sorts of
people for all different sorts of relationships. Created from
love to love and be loved. In God's image we live.**

**God is still creating you. You are no less beautiful and wild than
a sunset or a beach or a puffin.**

You are loved.

You have a place here.

**Rev'd Asher O'Callahan (he/him)
A priest in the Evangelical Lutheran Church**

News from WOW

Strawberry Tea

The Strawberry tea, ably organised by Ruth and supported by lots of willing helpers, took place at the end of June and was well attended by church members and invited visitors.

There was an impressive array of tempting treats, and it was a very enjoyable event.





Dear friends,

It's a historic moment! Just recently, the Church of England General Synod passed a motion to respond to the call from Palestinian Christians for non-violent resistance to Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine. We welcome this landmark step, but it must only be the beginning.

Embrace worked alongside Christian Aid, Sabeel-Kairos UK and other members of the Just Peace Coalition to support the Diocese of Carlisle in bringing this motion and were part of the team presenting it to Synod. The motion included a series of steps the church should now take to engage more deeply with, and respond to, the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The Methodist Conference passed a similar motion last week and, with the launch of the Just Peace Coalition's ecumenical Time to Act Campaign last month, momentum is really building. The many voices from across the UK church who have campaigned so hard and for so long are seeing hope of united and meaningful action.

To make you smile



Parish news

Mothers' Union at St Paul's

The Mothers' Union group at St Paul's have a speaker from Yeldall Manor coming on September 3rd at 2.30 pm in the Parish Rooms and all are very welcome to attend.

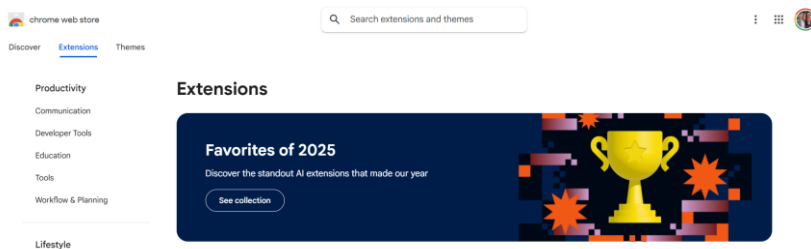
Easyfundraising – get the habit

I know that several people are very willing to sign up for this but haven't managed to do so. Lynne has given us a guide – talk to her if you need more information! (Editor: We don't use Chrome, so it was a bit challenging!)

Get money for the church each time you shop with many online sites. The best way to remember to use it is to add it as an extension to your browser so that it automatically comes up. The bit that looks like a jigsaw piece is where your extensions are stored, if you click on it, it will display them.

To add a new one

1. Open a new window and type Chrome and this will take you to the Chrome Store



- 2.
3. Then where you see “Search Extensions & Themes” at the top type Easyfundraising.
4. Easyfundraising Donation Reminder will come up with an add box
5. Because I already have this on my laptop, the next bit is guesswork but once added Easyfundraising comes up when you go shopping at websites that have signed up.
6. You then need to set up your Easyfundraising account and select Woollah Community Church as the cause you wish to support; you will need to follow the questions that come up on the Easyfundraising page.

Women of Woosehill – WOW

Our programme for 2026

Friday 21st August am	Dinton Pastures Walk	Linda Hoskins
September	Scrabble evening	Sue Peck
October	Wade's Skittles Evening	Ruth Smith
November	Pudding Evening	Amy Truluck
December	Floral Decorations	Lynne Paine / Linda Hoskins

For general information about the group talk to Lynn Smith; for individual activities, to the organiser.

WOW Event for July

*******Wednesday 20th July at 7pm*******

Pimms evening with nibbles at Lyn's house.

Contact Lyn Brown for details.

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Developing faith and prayer

Parish Bible study on Tuesday evenings 7.15 - 8.30pm via Zoom

****No meeting in August**

Together in Prayer on the Third Thursday of the month from 8-9pm via Zoom.

Contact Lyn Brown for details.

****Please note: No meeting in July and August**

Church Contacts

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5 Chetwode Close, Wokingham RG40 2LL, 0118 9781756

wesley.hampton@methodist.org.uk

Planning a Wedding, Christening or need to organise a Funeral?

Then please do talk to us.

For more information about any of the above, please email either

Rev'd Cara Smart on woosehillminister@outlook.com

stewards@woosehillchurch.com

Or visit our website www.woosehillchurch.org

****Deadline for next issue Sunday 27th September - as usual to valerie.weedon@btinternet.com – later than usual as I am on holiday**

What's on at Woosehill Church

Sunday services: 10.00am at the church or online via the Woosehill Church YouTube channel or click on the link on our Facebook page.

Quiet service at 6.30 pm on every second Sunday.

Thursday Morning social groups: From 10 am – just turn up

1st, 3rd & 4th Thursday – Free to do any craft activity, jigsaws or puzzles, with refreshments and chat.

2nd Thursday – WoolWAM - a knitting and crochet group.

Saturday Group: Sip and Share

Have you lost someone or are you just wanting company? Then this group is for you. Chat over a cuppa. Every 2nd Saturday at 11.00am. No need to book.

Tadpoles

On Wednesday mornings from 9.00am in termtime. Playtime, craft, coffee and snacks for under-fives and their carers. To register for this group, see the website woosehillchurch.org or contact valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

Church hire Lynne Paine: treasurer.woosehillchurch@gmail.com

Other information: stewards@woosehillchurch.org