



Woosehill Church Magazine

December 2016



*We are on Chestnut Ave, just around the corner
from The Hawthorns School.
All are welcome.*

Find us on our website
woosehillchurch.co.uk



Dear Church Family and all other readers,

What's in a name? It seems that for Woosehill church, the name Patrick has a special significance. Having said a sad goodbye to Patrick 1 (henceforward to be known only as Paddy to avoid confusion!), we are now set to welcome Patrick 2 and are delighted that our vacancy has been so promptly filled. We look forward to getting to know Patrick and Helen and giving them the traditionally warm Woosehill welcome early in the new year.

Meanwhile it's that time of year when our church is filled with the joy of Advent and the Christmas season; a time when we especially invite families from our local area to share in our worship and celebrate Christ's coming to the world. There is something for everyone, the old and the young and everyone in between, from Toddler Praise and Christingle to Midnight Service on Christmas Eve and much, much more!

In the words of the Iona Gathering song:
'All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place'.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas season,

With love,
Val

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Sunday 22 January 2017
Articles as usual preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com
Or to me in church

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Letter from our Rector

I am delighted to announce that, following the interview process in October, the **Rev'd Patrick Mukholi** has been appointed as Associate Priest (Transition Minister) in the Parish of St Paul, Wokingham with a specific focus on Woosehill Church and its mission. This appointment is for an initial period of three years.

Patrick is married to Helen, a carer, and Jonathan (Jon) is their 25 year old son. Patrick studied Agricultural Engineering at Nairobi University and served the Kenya government for eight years. The call to ministry led to Masters degrees from both Africa International University and the University of Aberdeen. He has previously served the church as a Youth Work Team Leader in Oxford and a Bible School Principal in Mombasa. Currently he is serving as a Pioneer Minister in Penhill, Swindon within the Diocese of Bristol. He has engaged in moving the Church forward in mission and outreach by working in local schools and the community- specifically, through assemblies, messy church and faith exploration courses. He thoroughly enjoys preaching and teaching young and old alike and helping people find and recognise opportunities to live out their faith.

Patrick says:

"I am excited about the opportunities in mission and ministry which this role in Woosehill presents. From what I've seen the Parish has people who have a deep curiosity about what God is doing in the world and are seeking to listen to the leading of the Spirit. I sense a hunger to grow in knowledge of the Lord of the mission and to make Him known.

I very much look forward to digging into the transforming work that God is already doing in the Parish (especially the Coffee and pastries at Café Church, plus other activities in places like Ye Olde Leathern Bottel).





I still enjoy playing Table tennis, but I am now a spectator of football rather than a player. I always enjoy supporting the local underdogs."

It is hoped that Patrick and Helen will move into the parish in December and that Patrick will be licensed at Woosehill Church on:

Thursday the 5th of January 2017 at 7.30pm

by the Bishop of Reading

Please pray for Patrick and his family in this time of change and new challenge. Pray too that we will welcome and support them, and continue to pray for Patrick once he is in post. Pray too for the people of Penhill as our exciting news is their sadness.

Richard

Rev'd Richard Lamey





Pastoral Letter December 2016

Revd Catherine Bowstead

Dear Friends,

Have you started writing your Christmas cards yet? Is it a task that you enjoy or do you find it a chore? I wonder how much attention that you pay to the message printed inside the card. Do you like "Happy Christmas", "Merry Christmas" or "Season's Greetings"? The final of these salutations reminds me of something that the Apostle Paul wrote in a passage that we looked at during an evening service at Rose Street a few weeks ago:

"Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season, correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction." (2 Tim 4:2)

It can be difficult for us to share our faith because we do not wish to offend, or we lack confidence because we do not have all the answers, or perhaps we just don't know what to say. Paul's words should give us encouragement to simply share what is going on in our own lives for we can all tell others of what we have seen and experienced. Evangelism is not about having all the answers, or being able to persuade anybody of anything. It is just about sharing openly about what is happening in our own lives. We don't have to persuade anybody, all we are called to do is speak about what happens for us and what we make of it. When Paul says "be prepared in season and out of season" or "be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable", he is not saying that we have to relentlessly force the topic regardless of what is going on. Instead he is saying that there is no point trying to work out whether this is a good time or a bad time - don't try to be too clever. Just share your Christian experience naturally by talking about the faith part of your life as freely and naturally as you would talk about any other part of your life.

One of the best proofs of faith and best advert for Christianity is a faithful life and when we allow people to witness us living a faithful and fulfilling Christian life, they might respond with interest and curiosity to what we



say about our faith. And we do well to remember that the power for living a faithful and fulfilling Christian life does not come from our own efforts, but from a living relationship with God. Like all relationships this has to be nurtured, strengthened and made real and we do this through regular personal prayer and worship with other Christians.

Our celebration of Christmas is followed swiftly by celebrations to welcome in the New Year. And on January 8th Woosehill has its annual Covenant Service. Here we have the opportunity of reminding ourselves of God's commitment to us and of renewing our commitment to him. I know that some people shy away from this service, perhaps they feel that the commitment is too big, or that they are not good enough to make the promises because of mistakes that they have made in the past. In the Covenant prayer, at the heart of this service, you will notice that we make our commitment to God because of his commitment to us, God who keeps on loving and forgiving us even though we fail him and who longs for us to become the people he intends us to be as he works in our lives.

There can be a real sense that we start each year afresh and we seek God's will for our lives and our church and we're open to how he wants to use us. We have so many opportunities as God's people in Wokingham and great potential for God to work through us in amazing ways in 2017.

With every blessing and seasonal greetings

Catherine



I Corinthians 13 – a Christmas Version (via email. source unknown)

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust, but giving the gift of love will endure.





Sankta Lucia - Festival of Light

On Sunday 6 November the parish had the privilege of experiencing a taste of Sweden when Dag Bjarnhall, our visiting Swedish priest, led a service of Light to celebrate the feast of Sankta Lucia. Traditionally celebrated on 13th December St Lucy's Day is viewed as an event signalling the arrival of Christmastide, and in Sweden occurs during the prolonged hours of darkness of Scandinavian winters.

Since Dag will not be with us by December we commemorated the day earlier, following the service with traditional gingerbread, made with great, (if rather frenetic) enjoyment in the parish rooms just before the service; saffron buns and mulled wine.

This is the wonderful poem Dag finished his sermon with at the Sankta Lucia service:

A Swedish poem, unknown
"free translation"

Don't let the darkness stop you,
searching for the Light
and when you find it, show it to others
so their longing can meet the light.

Light the light of courage,
in the darkness of fear
Light the light of justice,
in the darkness of corruption
Light the light of faith,
in the darkness of denial
Light the light of hope,
in darkness of despair
Light the light of love,
in the darkness of death.

Don't curse the darkness
Light lights!

(Editor's note: We did have our very own Sankta Lucia for the service, but she did not follow the old tradition of wearing a circlet of real candles!)



The Refugee

God forgive us for our Christmas!
Help us Lord, to blush for shame:
Frantic marathons of spending,
Practised in the Saviour's name!

Food for those who live in plenty,
Gifts for those who have no need;
Christ who came to feed the hungry,
Save us from our Christmas greed!

Save us from our feeble friendships,
From the yearly postal fuss:
Automatic Christmas greetings
Sent to those who send to us!

Save us from the superficial,
Make our Christmas deep and fresh:
Show us in the simple stable
God revealed in Baby-flesh

With the shepherds let us worship,
With the wise men let us see
How through proud and heartless Herod
Jesus was a refugee.

Arnold Kellett 1981



Some light relief for our younger members
(or just to raise a groan around the festive table?)

What sort of insects love snow?

Mo-ski-toes!

What do sheep say to Santa?

Season's bleatings!

Mum, can I have a dog for Christmas?

No, you can have a turkey like everyone else!

What happens if you eat the Christmas decorations?

You get tinsel-itus!

This turkey tastes like an old settee

Well you asked for something with plenty of stuffing!

What's brown and creeps around the house?

Mince spies!

How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?

Deep pan, crisp and even!

What do ducks do before Christmas dinner?

Pull their Christmas quackers!

How do sheep greet each other at Christmas?

A merry Christmas to ewe!

Father Christmas: But you only have one welly on

That's all right - there's only one foot of snow!





HELLO HILDA: Rev'd Rob Hilton

It must be rare for a Methodist minister's sabbatical project to be taken to heart by so many people.

There have been regular Facebook references to the Rev Rob Hilton's dream of building a shepherd's hut as part of his exploration of what it means to be a shepherd. Minister of

Christchurch, Ilkley, he explains: "Having built an ordinary shed dedicated to prayer, I decided to build a mobile one that I can take with me as and when I move. I call her Hilda. As a minister ordained 22 years ago, I found myself reflecting on what shepherding means. Jesus was described as The Good Shepherd and ministers are shepherds of a flock".

"Shepherd's huts are becoming popular as garden rooms or studios. I have yet to find another one used for prayer. Researching how to build my own was an insight into tradition. Apart from the chassis and roof, everything is salvaged material – a valuable lesson in the teaching that God's love can make the best out of anything or anyone. I have appreciated having so many materials given to me. I feel cocooned in the goodwill, encouragement and support of those who gave me bits and pieces."

Hilda, who is parked in the Manse garden, is currently kitted out with a comfortable chair; has an electricity supply and a small wood-burning stove. But Rob has an ambition to install a double bed and maybe a small bookcase..... but strictly no TV, phone or Wi-Fi!

A member of his Christchurch congregation comments: "A sabbatical means giving a minister space – to rest, to study. So we all respected that. However, we were all intrigued by his project and kept track of developments on Facebook. We can't wait to meet Hilda!"

Friends from further afield have also been keeping in touch with the project. A contact from a previous church, remarked on Facebook, "In my opinion it is the best use of a sabbatical I have ever seen and is clearly good for Rob in body, mind and spirit."

Whilst Rob has appreciated being left to pursue his dream, his days haven't been entirely spent with Hilda. He has worked alongside shepherds and farmers, and is full of admiration for their dedication and wisdom. Some are modern and hi-tech whilst others are very traditional in approach. "I've worked with dogs, tractors and quad bikes. I've been lambing, castrating, worming, you name it. I'm going shearing next! "

But why Hilda?

Rob explains, "Saint Hilda of Whitby is one of my favourite British saints. She is known for her wisdom and guidance, qualities I'd like to emulate. I am hoping I will eventually have an artistic representation of Hilda alongside my amazing stained glass window of St Colman - another one of those amazing ancient British Saints."



Winter Fuel Appeal 2016

Are You sitting comfortably? If like me you receive a Winter Fuel payment but don't really need it, would you consider donating it?



Are you
sitting
comfortably?



**Help a family heat and light
their home this Winter.....**

Winter is coming... and the weather this year has now well and truly caught up with itself. As the darker evenings draw in and we pull out our scarves and dare I say gloves, thoughts turn to cosy nights in, 'comfort food' and warm clothes. However, this is not a luxury that everyone in Wokingham can afford, and many families are being faced with Eat or Heat dilemmas. With gas and electricity getting ever more expensive, recent house price increases, subsequent rent increases and never ending hungry tummies more and more families are finding they need help from food-banks.

- Families who live in cold, unlit homes struggle to survive the winter; physical and Mental Health suffers.
- Children's education suffers because they can't do their homework; they can't have hot meals,
- They can't have hot baths or warm beds, so they sleep badly.
- Relationships between their parents suffer and breakdowns are common.

Your donation, large or small, will help prevent families suffering this winter.

Please make your cheque payable to: The Wokingham Foodbank and send it to: Winter Fuel Appeal, The Wokingham Foodbank
1 Broad Street Walk Wokingham, RG40 1B

No money is given out.

Donations from those not senior enough to qualify for the Winter Fuel Allowance would also be gratefully received!

Many thanks for your help and support for the Foodbank
Blessings,

David Atkinson

Manager ,The Wokingham Foodbank



Delivering the church magazine can be good fun!!



Thanks to Jo McShane for sharing this great picture

And thank you too to the McShane family for sending in pictures for our Christmas card to advertise our Christmas services.

Copies are posted through the doors of our local Community and this year 3,000 have been printed!

The winning entry by Amelia and Evan is on our front cover.





Book review

One of the books I picked up at Greenbelt was "Soulfulness - deepening the mindful life" The author, Brian Draper is a regular on BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day and according to the cover ' tries to help people of all faiths and none to see the world from a creative and engaging spiritual perspective.' Having attended his talk/workshop as well as reading his book, I have come to realise a number of things:

- How often do I try to do several things at once, none of them very effectively?
- Do I recognise which aspects of my life are good for my soul? (I think my garden and walking in the countryside, especially the Borrowdale valley in the Lake District.
- If I hope to create more soul space, how am I going to do it?

I really like some of his ideas such as:

Sit quietly and breathe

Make a cup of tea slowly and make space to drink it, savouring it sip by sip

Become passionately absorbed in something you enjoy and don't feel guilty

Be kind - to yourself. You don't have to be perfect. Stop judging; give yourself a break

Count ten breaths. It doesn't take long, but opens up a powerful space within you and around you

Perform the miracle of walking the Earth; take it slow

You have more time than you think

Worth a read - I am full of good intentions 😊

Val

The Courage to Change

As long as we continue to live as if we are what we do, what we have, and what other people think about us, we will remain filled with judgments, opinions, evaluations, and condemnations. We will remain addicted to putting people and things in their "right" place.

~Henri J.M. Nouwen



Yeldall Manor at Christmas – how you can help

Once again, Yeldall Manor would welcome your contributions of stocking presents for our residents. After the desperation of addiction, we want to make this Christmas memorable for all the right reasons. You can help by buying a stocking-filler for one of our residents. Suggestions include:

Toiletries: Deodorant, shower gel, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shaving gel (buy something you'd like to receive yourself, so long as you're male!)

Confectionery: Small bars of chocolate, bags of sweets etc. (but no liqueur chocs!)

Small items of clothing: Underpants, socks, scarves, hats, gloves

Other goods: Pens, paper, games and any other stocking-fillers suitable for men.

If you would like to buy a gift for a resident, please wrap it and add a post-it note to let us know what is enclosed. We need these by **Monday 19th December** please.

If it is easier for you to make a small financial donation, contributions are also welcome towards the cost of our Christmas tree and festive fare.

For many of our residents it may be their first Christmas drug- and alcohol-free for many years.

Thank you so much to everyone who helps to make Christmas special in any way. God bless you!





Covenant Service

Our Covenant service for the coming year will be held on
Sunday January 8 at the 10am service

This year it will be particularly notable as it will be led by John Hellyer, Chair of the South East District of the Methodist Church, who will be joined by our new minister Rev'd Patrick Mukholi at his first Woosehill service.

For those unfamiliar with this Methodist tradition, it goes back to John Wesley's time and it is an annual opportunity to renew our covenant relationship with God. At Woosehill it is embraced by both the Methodist and Anglican strands of our ecumenical partnership and is always a very moving and challenging service, as we renew our covenant relationship with God, saying together the covenant prayer which is both challenging and moving.

MMN News December 2016

An enormous "thank you " to all the church ladies, Mums and Grandmas who have produced these items and so many beautifully knitted blankets and baby layette items over the years. Due to the local representative retiring, this will be our final collection.

Melanie





Come Wassail

Where? At the Tyrrells

When? Thursday 22nd December at 7.30pm
Come and join the music group for carols and mulled wine.



*Wassail! wassail! all over the town,
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink unto thee.*

COFFEE & CHAT
ST PAUL'S PARISH ROOMS
READING ROAD, WOKINGHAM

EVERY FRIDAY
2 - 4pm

At a loose end?
Feeling lonely?
Had a bad week?

Drop in for a drink and a friendly chat

For further information contact:
Becca at the Parish Office on 0118 979 2122
or Susanna on 0118 377 4133

FIRST STEPS

In the children's chapel at St Paul's Church
9.15-10.15am in term time

For pre-school children and their parents, grandparents or carers to introduce the children to church in a relaxed, fun and friendly way.

2nd Thursday of Each Month
8 December
12 January
9 February

**REGULAR MEETINGS****Sunday**

Church services - see Services Diary and weekly newsletter

Youth Group YOW: A place to discuss views, play and catch up with friends
6.30 - 8pm, dates and themes as advertised here and in church.

Tuesday

Fellowship group: Exploring Faith at 8pm in the church.

Wednesday

Tadpoles group: Coffee and play for pre-school children and their carers
9.00-11.00am in term time.

Contact: Val Weedon: 9791156/ 07919062770
or valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

Lunchtime fellowship: meet in the church at 12 noon.

Thursday

Together in prayer: monthly on third Thursday from 8-9pm
Contact Lyn Brown: 9782816

Saturday

Church work party: first Saturday in month 10.30am
Contact John Hoskins: 9792597

Church contacts

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 Becca Lamey)
office@stpauls-wokingham.org.uk

Rev'd Catherine Bowstead

5 Chetwode Close, Wokingham RG40 2LL 0118 9781756
minister@wokinghammethodist.org.uk

From Jan 5 2016;

Rev'd Patrick Mukholi - contact initially via parish office

For room hire bookings contact Tony Sayer on 0118 9786560 or email
tony.sayer@ntlworld.com



Pattern of Services at Woosehill

Keep an eye out in the newsletter for more up to date information too.
You can receive this weekly by email:
contact Alison Lewis at woosehill.church@googlemail.com

1st Sunday:

8.45am Holy Communion

10am Morning Worship

2nd Sunday:

10am Holy Communion

3rd Sunday

8.45am Holy Communion

10am Morning Worship

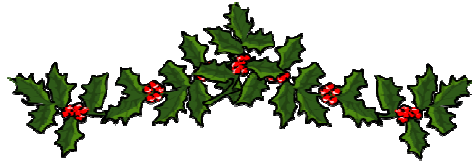
4th Sunday

10am Holy Communion

6.15pm Evening Reflective Worship

(5th Sunday)

10am Café Church



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 10th at 4pm - Christingle Service

December 14th at 10am - Toddler Praise

December 18th at 7.30pm - Carol Service

December 20th at 7.30pm - Carols at the Leathern Bottel

December 24th at 4pm - Crib Service

December 24th at 11.30pm Midnight Service

Christmas Day at 10am - Morning Worship

