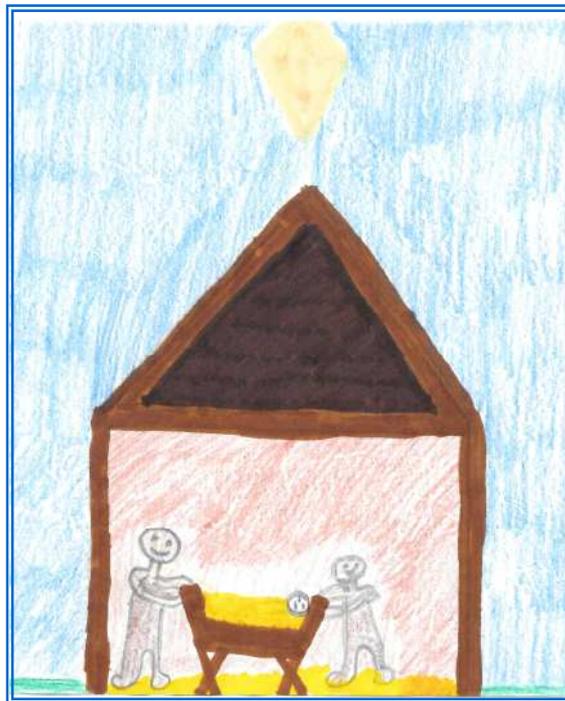




Woosehill Church Magazine

December 2015



*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,

It's that time of year again when our church is filled with the joy of the Advent and Christmas season; a time when we especially invite families from our local area to experience the Woosehill Welcome and to share in our worship.

This is also a very special issue of our magazine, in which Elaine writes her farewell message to us. During most of the life of our church, even before it had its own building, Elaine has been central to our worship here at Woosehill. Her celebrated performances at the Crib Service and Holiday Bible Club and her welcome song for newly baptised babies and children will be long remembered, as well as her dedication and commitment after Haigh's retirement as we waited for the appointment of new clergy.

I have always felt a deep sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit during Elaine's prayers of intercession and her sermons/talks have always given me something to take away with for the coming week.

Elaine we wish you and Pete every blessing in your new life, your new church are very lucky to have you! Do keep in touch with all your friends at Woosehill,

With love and God Bless,

Val

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
17 January 2016

Articles as usual preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com
Or to me in church

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor and contents	2
Elaine's Farewell Elaine Steere	3-5
A new curate for the parish Richard Lamey and Julie Mintern	6
Iain Robertson - a tribute Elaine	7
Our new charity	8-9
Worship Consultation notes Steve Bottom	10
Dear God ---	11
Winter Fuel Appeal	12
Thank you! Rachel Paine	13
Shopping bags News from Quench	14
Yeldall Manor	15
Pastoral letter Rev. Catherine Bowstead	16
Church and parish notices	17
Regular meetings	18
Services diary	19
Christmas services	20



Elaine's Farewell

"Parting is such sweet sorrow..."
William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
For the sake of auld lang syne?"
Robert Burns, *Auld Lang Syne*

"I am, and always shall be, your friend."
Mr Spock, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*

My initial encounter with Woosehill Church was in the summer of 1985 when, newly moved to the area and heavily pregnant with my daughter Kate, I waddled into the hall at Hawthorns School where the church then held services. The first thing I saw as I entered was Linda Hardyman smiling at me (she was on welcoming and hymn book duty that Sunday), so you will perfectly understand that I stayed for the next thirty years.

Probably because the newly-built estate was filling up with families who all had young children, in our early years there seemed to be hordes of children in Sunday Club. When it was time for them to leave for their classes you had to be careful not to be trampled by the stampede, and the rows of chairs seemed very sparsely populated afterwards. They contributed a great deal to the spontaneity of the worship and the very close relationships which developed between the families in the congregation. Also, of course, it was praying for the two young people suddenly and simultaneously diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses, just after we had moved into our new building, which drew us together as a community of faith and deepened our commitment as we saw our prayers miraculously answered.

I will always be grateful for the generosity of my friends at church who put up with my raw and often chaotic attempts at leading services and preaching, once I had decided to follow in the much-respected footsteps of



John Alder and train to become a Licensed Lay Minister. Everyone was endlessly patient, positive and encouraging, no matter how cringeworthy my fledgling efforts turned out to be!

I have so many favourite memories of my time at this church that I couldn't even begin to list them all. It was a great privilege to lead the Alpha courses and see people find a new or richer faith, especially when we prayed and shared together on our Holy Spirit Days. Weekends Away and Holiday Clubs introduced me to a whole new understanding of exhaustion, but were fun and rewarding and inspiring as well. One of the most fulfilling things has been to work on all these teams with wonderful people overflowing with enthusiasm and ideas, who so wholeheartedly gave their time and talents.

I think if I have to choose one factor which has made the life of our church so special, I would have to say that it is the contribution to our worship by our amazing Music Group. Being able to experience singing joyful, expressive Christian songs has meant that we constantly surf along on a wave of praise, and has given depth and vitality to our worship. Even before they started playing most weeks, as they have for about three years now, they lit up those Sundays once a month when we all worshipped together.

I do feel passionately (although I know this view is not popular at the moment) that it is important for the whole congregation to share praise, prayer and teaching on a regular basis, and some of my happiest memories of services at Woosehill have been in an All-age format. If churches in this increasingly secular society want to draw in members of the community who do not have a formal religious background, surely it is important to offer them worship which relates to their own experience of life? However, perhaps it is time to do some rebranding; recently I went with other members of our congregation to a course specially designed by the Anglican Church to encourage growth, which was led by a very extrovert vicar from Yorkshire (no, really!) who, when talking about styles of worship, referred to All-age services with a disparaging smirk, going on to say



that instead of this (implication: outdated) approach his own church in Wakefield had developed a very successful new format called a Proclamation Service. The Proclamation Service format, when he went on to describe it, apparently included drama, vibrant music, quizzes and activities, examples taken from real life to explain spiritual ideas....all the elements, in fact, of an All-age Worship service! So it would appear that if you rename your inclusive all-age service (using a word which hasn't been used all that much in the English language for about a century), you can claim it as your own revolutionary idea, and make it part of your cutting-edge outreach programme!

There are not very many Woosehill members left in our congregation now who joined the church in its earliest days and remember when we met in the school and shared both Anglican and Methodist ministry on a part-time basis; many have moved away to other areas over the years, as I am doing now. One of the effects of being new, a bit experimental, and inevitably under-staffed was that the church started out actually much more like a family than a congregation, and has continued like that ever since. I love the fact that everyone knows everybody else, that we all contribute in some way to the day-to-day needs of the fellowship, and that whatever happens to us we face it as a team. I really hope and pray for that closeness to continue into the future, even if the church gets bigger in numbers.

The support I have received from my friends at Woosehill during the demanding times in my life has been incredibly precious to me, and I will miss you all so much. You have been an amazing fellowship to love and pray with, and I will never forget you.

Elaine



“New Curate for the Parish”

“Julie and Keith Mintern spent Harvest Festival Day in the parish, meeting people from all three Churches, coming to two services and enjoying the Harvest Lunch and entertainment. Julie has agreed to become the Assistant Curate from July 2016, following on from Peter Day and Deborah Davison, and living at Brook Close as they did. It is a very exciting appointment and we are hugely looking forward to her arrival. Please pray for her as she completes her initial training at Cuddesdon, and please pray for them both as they begin to think about moving to Wokingham.”

Richard



Thank you for your warm Harvest welcome! Keith and I very much enjoyed our day. Thank you to all those who entertained us, helping us feel at home and most importantly for getting us to the right places on time! Richard has asked me to write a word or two of introduction:

Born in Battersea I grew up in John Betjeman’s Metroland where, apart from my family, there were three inextricably intertwined major influences upon my life: a season ticket, the Girl Guides and a bike!

The ticket took me back and forth to school but also introduced me to our great capital city and its riches such as the National Gallery, the Royal Academy of Music and the opportunities to sing and make music. That ticket also took me to Northwood where the Girl Guides met in a church hall. It was in the labyrinthine church hall buildings that my fascination with the big questions of life and death, meaning and truth began. Peering through the door linking into the church I resolved to explore and that was the beginning of my story, my journey of faith and love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I must have cast a strange figure – a young girl attending alone twice a day on Sunday! But, come the afternoon I was found regularly on my bike, cycling to the other great love of my young life – the tennis club where I relished the sense of belonging and community whilst at the same time playing a sport I loved. All that is a long way from where I find myself here in 2015 married to Keith, presently



living in South Oxfordshire, worshipping at St Peter's Didcot, studying at Cuddesdon, preparing to be ordained in July and thrilled to be moving to Wokingham. Yet, my past is reflected in my calling to serve God, to be part of a transforming community at the heart of the place where we will live and serve. I am excited to be part of your churches – women, men and children whose lives have been changed and transformed by Christ and who have been brought together to serve the world.

Along with Keith I still sing. I don't play tennis any more but all our six grandchildren are lively and, according to their Granny, very active in the music and sport department!

Julie Mintern

A gentle man and a gentleman

Like many of us, I can't say I knew Iain Robertson very well, but often you don't have to know someone well to see what they are like. I always enjoyed talking to Iain over coffee after the service, not least because he was one of those people who, when you have a conversation with them, actually listen to what you are saying and respond to it, rather than just wait to get in the next bit of what they want to say! It was good to share his gentle wisdom, dry sense of humour, and glowing love and pride in his family.

The time Iain and Jan joined our church was one of transition for us; we were struggling financially, and the staffing situation was uncertain. Somehow the fact that they came into our community then, bringing their lovely smiles, their calm acceptance of all that we were, and those two adorable bright children, was an important part of the way we pulled together and re-established our identity. As time went on, when Iain had conquered his nerves about standing up at the lectern and joined the rota of readers, that sweet smile and friendly "Good morning" with which he always began his reading became a highlight of the service for all of us! And of course in the past year, the dignity with which Iain faced his illness has been a lesson in courage to us all.

So goodbye and thank you, Iain. You were a jewel in the crown of our fellowship, and we loved you and will never forget you.

Elaine



OUR NEW CHARITY

Kolkata, the city of joy! This city can boast of its rich history, cultural heritage and diverse people groups; and yet it also tells a sad story of the neglect and apathy of mankind. Among the masses that make their way on the busy, overpopulated streets of Kolkata, a vast majority live on the sidewalks and pavements, without access to basic amenities. Down crooked side-streets and in the spaces between buildings, another world exists. Here, in these pockets, are communities that suffer great deprivation and struggle to survive from day to day. *"...a million coal-fires burn; smoke gets in your throat and eyes and heart and soul in turn.."*

The marginalized and underprivileged communities of this city endure tremendous hardship everyday. Most of them live in the midst of drug abuse, sexual exploitation, dysfunctional families and rising infection of HIV. The children are the worst victims and suffer silently; voiceless and without rights. They are subject to every abuse and are truly the city's poorest residents.

Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta, the new Woosehill charity, is a Charitable Trust, registered in 1985, serving the poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities within, and outside, the city of Kolkata, India.

"Let each one have his dignity and a chance to be on the road... to freedom."

Our Vision

A movement of affirmed and empowered communities and individuals who in turn hold out hope and dignity to others.

Our mission

Our activities through the various departments include listening, befriending, counselling, awareness and education, health care, prevention, intervention, treatment, rehabilitation, training, capacity building, advocacy and campaigning on behalf of the homeless, hand rickshaw pullers and ragpickers, self-help groups and job skills development. Our aim is to improve the quality of life of the individual and re-integrate him into society as a contributing, self-respecting citizen.

Four decades ago, in the winter of 1971, a young couple, Vijayan and Premila Pavamani, felt deeply constrained to be of service to the distressed and suicidal in the teeming metropolis of Kolkata. They trusted God and in a step of faith placed an advertisement in the Statesman Newspaper inviting people in distress to either



telephone them or come to their home in the compound of the St. Paul's Cathedral.

The next day they were overwhelmed when over 60 people from various strata of society turned up. Everyone was warmly welcomed with a cup of tea and each one received empathetic listening. To the surprise of the couple, most of them not only went back helped and comforted but also came back to volunteer their services for others in need. It was a small window to the city opening a cross section of human problems that only confirmed the need for such a service.

Over the next few years, as The Calcutta Samaritans grew, Vijayan and Premila founded The Arunoday Midway Home in 1978, the first residential rehabilitation centre for recovering addicts and alcoholics in India, and the Calcutta Emmanuel school – a free school for the poorest children who cannot even dream of education.

In 1985, they founded Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta as an umbrella organization to host projects that fight poverty and social injustice.

EMC works in close partnership with its sister organizations: The Calcutta Samaritans, Arunoday Midway Home and The Calcutta Emmanuel School.

On August 20th, 2006, Vijayan Pavamani tragically passed away at The St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson, Maryland, USA. His demise was a devastating loss to his family and colleagues and all who knew him. But his infectious compassion and selflessness to help people in need has now also become the core belief of the workers and leaders of EMC. Premila, the co-founder, is now designated as Executive Director of EMC.

This information is taken direct from the charity's website: emcalcutta.org

Congratulations!

To Simeon on his winning entry for the Woosehill Christmas card competition, displayed on the cover of this magazine!





An edited summary of the Worship Consultation meeting

Held on 5 October 2015

Review of recent services

Positive comments were made about a number of recent services: specifically the Baptism service on 16 August; the open air service and Catherine Bowstead's first early Communion service held the day before the worship consultation meeting. We also reflected on the last services help by both Nick Thompson and Debbie Davison which had been lovely services if a little emotional.

Future services and the preaching plan

Catherine's first formal service at 10am on 18 October took the form of a Desert Island Disc style service enabling us to get to know her as she starts her ministry at Wokingham Methodist and Woosehill. Woosehill Church also hosted the parish Evensong service at 6:15pm on Sunday 18 October.

November saw services celebrating All Saints day on Sunday 1st, followed by Remembrance Day the following week. We repeated last year's act of planting the crosses on the ground between the Church and the Chestnut Ave. The evening service on 22 November was at St Nicholas' not at Woosehill.

A number of changes have had to be made to the preaching plan that was originally published and circulated to the rota and magazine. As a result, there is a little confusion as to who is preaching at which service and no single point of reference to check the accurate plan.

6 December is now confirmed as a visit from a team who will present and promote the Bible Society 'Open the Book' initiative to open up Bible stories to young people. The team represent Wokingham Baptist and other Churches and have been presenting the material at local school assemblies.

Thoughts and Ideas

Plan more services outside the Church building and make sure they are well publicised. They are likely to attract people who may find the different nature of the service very attractive and may otherwise not attend the Church.

Need some thought about how we can maintain an accurate and up to date preaching plan that can accept changes brought about by holidays or sickness, and make sure that everyone who needs to know can get the most accurate



information.

We will continue with the video at the start of the main 10am services to help create a worshipful atmosphere. There is a need for new readers, some training will be offered for anyone who volunteers.

Mike suggested a new service format with all the songs from a single songwriter such as John Wesley, Stuart Townend, Graham Kendrick etc. The idea was received positively, we will definitely plan one in as a trial.

Steve Bottom - Worship Co-ordinator

Next Meeting – 8th February 2016

Dear God

When a little girl wrote to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, asking God how he got invented, he replied like this, answering on God's behalf:

'Dear Lulu,

Nobody invented me, but lots of people discovered me and were quite surprised. They discovered me when they looked round at the world and thought it was really beautiful or really mysterious and wondered where it came from. They discovered me when they were very quiet on their own and felt a sort of peace and love they hadn't expected. Then they invented ideas about me, some of them sensible and some of them not very sensible. From time to time I sent them some hints - specially in the life of Jesus - to help them get closer to what I'm really like. But there was nothing and nobody around before me to invent me. Rather like somebody who writes a story in a book, I started making up the story of the world and eventually invented human beings like you who could ask me awkward questions ---'

Taken from **TEN** by John Pritchard, former Bishop of Oxford, a book reviewed by Brenda in a previous issue.



Winter Fuel Appeal 2015

Last year, thanks to your donations, the Wokingham Foodbank was able to help 46 families heat and light their homes through the coldest months of the year. Families that are finding it difficult to feed themselves and their children also can't afford to heat and light their homes, and turn to us for help.

Can you help us help them?

If, like me, you receive Winter Fuel Allowance but don't really need it, please consider donating some or all of it to help those families who are worst off this winter.

We will reserve your donation to help families who are referred to us by local care agencies, social workers and medical personnel. When referred the family brings their pre-payment card to the foodbank and we load credit on it for them to use to pay for fuel.

No money is given out.

Families who live in cold, unlit homes will struggle to survive this winter.

Physical and Mental Health suffers.

Children's education suffers.

Relationships suffer and breakdown.

Your donation will help alleviate this suffering.

You can donate online by going to our special winter fuel page:

www.localgiving.com/appeal/winterfuel or by sending a cheque to:

The Wokingham Foodbank, Winter Fuel Appeal,
10 Rose Street, Wokingham Rg40 1XU

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



Are you
sitting
comfortably?



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



Thank You!

Hi All,

Just to let you all know that I am now happily settled into life in Eastbourne. My new school is lovely; everyone is so friendly and helpful. It has been great fun moving into my flat, Dex (the pug door stop) is proving very useful when we want to keep the lounge door open. Thank you also for the vouchers, James and I had a lovely day out at John Lewis in Tunbridge Wells spending them alongside other vouchers I had received at school. We have bought lots of things for the kitchen and bathroom to make the place look homely.

I miss all of you at Woosehill especially the YOW members, we did have great fun on Sunday evenings. My mum was always so surprised by how much we managed to eat!! On a positive note I am already making lots of new friends and getting to know acquaintances better. So far I believe every weekend is booked with something up until Christmas!

Look forward to catching up with everyone when I next pop up.

Thank you
Rachel xx
(Paine)





Woosehill Church Shopping Bags

This Christmas, why not treat yourself or your loved ones to a Woosehill Church shopping bag... They're very snazzy. We gave them away (full of invitations to services!) at the Hawthorns Fair, as a way of raising the profile of the church. But we've kept a few back...

If you'd like to buy one, they're for sale at the very reasonable price of £4. All the proceeds then go back to the church, so you'll be helping out AND have a new snazzy bag to take around Morrison's.

Paddy will bring them to the Advent Carol Service and then to subsequent services until they're all gone!



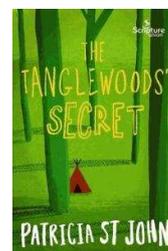
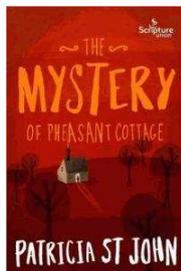
News from Quench at Holme Grange Craft Village



Great books for 8-11 year olds

Many of you will have grown up on the delightful stories of Patricia St John. These beautiful books, which have stood the test of time, have now been republished by Scripture Union with a new look to appeal to today's generation of children.

"Where the River Runs" is also available, with other titles to follow.





Yeldall Manor at Christmas – how you can help

“One Christmas Eve, when I was on drugs, I got arrested. I spent all of Christmas in a police station and the next four years in prison...

This year, I’m excited about Christmas at Yeldall and know I’m going to spend it in a safe place with friends.”

Some residents will have good memories of Christmas, some bad. We hope to make this year one to remember for all the right reasons.

We want it to be a time spent with friends, in which the true meaning of Christmas is remembered.

So, as well as Christmas turkey and all the trimmings, presents around the tree and silly party games, there will be time to go to church to rejoice in Jesus’ birth and to just relax and enjoy the atmosphere.

When Father Christmas gives out the presents, each resident will receive a ‘Christmas stocking’ filled with little gifts such as;

Toiletries: deodorant, shower gel, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shaving gel

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

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 would appreciate these by Monday 21st December.

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 more information, please contact
suehedger@yeldall.org.uk / 0118 940 1093.



**Pastoral Letter December 2015****from Revd Catherine Bowstead**

Dear Friends,

I wonder how your preparations for Christmas are going. Are you looking forward to the celebration and enjoying all the preparations? Or do you find it a chore? I admit I find myself in the first group as I really enjoy celebrating Christmas and all the preparations that go with it. All these preparations, though, can be a distraction from the real meaning of Christmas; the extraordinary occurrence of our God becoming incarnate, coming to earth as a tiny, vulnerable baby in order to save us. This Emmanuel, "God with us" is our reason for hope as Christians, for it means that God shares our human identity and is alongside us as we journey through this life and beyond.

So how can we celebrate "Emmanuel" this Christmas? How can we remind ourselves and our neighbours that God is with us?

Of course we must be mindful that for some people this Christmas will be particularly hard as they mourn the loss of a loved one or if they face an uncertain future – to them the message of "Emmanuel, God with us" should be particularly pertinent and we pray that in the midst of their sadness they might know God's presence and peace.

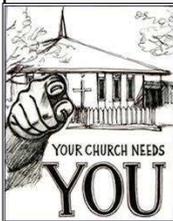
Soon after Christmas we celebrate New Year. It's a good time to reflect on the past year with all its joys and sorrows and look forward to the year ahead. Early in the year we will hold our Covenant Service (**at Woosehill on January 17th**), when we recommit ourselves to God and his service. None of us knows what the future may hold so we trust in God's love and guidance.

As we journey on, let us not forget that God is with us, for His presence will continue to guide us, inspire us and transform us.

May you enjoy a peace filled Christmas,
With every blessing,

Catherine

Edited from Catherine's letter on the Wokingham Methodist Church website



VOLUNTEERS

Our Church is very dependent on the wonderful volunteers who do so much - from ad hoc working parties who maintain the fabric of the church and surrounding area, to those involved on one or more of the rotas which ensure that the Church, (and services), run smoothly. However, a couple of the rotas could do with a few extra names on them! Could this be you? In particular, *we are urgently seeking volunteers to count the collection occasionally* – if you could help with this, or are interested in finding out more about the volunteer roles in the Church, please have a word with a steward.

CONFIRMATION

We have the Bishop coming on Tuesday 17th May 2016 for a confirmation - here in Woosehill Church!
It would be lovely to have a gaggle of Woosehill folk as part of that. If you've not been confirmed and would like to be - please let Paddy know.

FIRST STEPS

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
10th December,
14th January,
11th February,
10th March

Please come along with your pre-school children for **songs, stories, craft activities** and **refreshments**.

For more information call Rev. Richard Lamey 0118 327 9116
or Liz Gallagher 0118 989 1176.



**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.

Contact: patrick.s.king@gmail.com

Tuesday

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

Contact Rev'd Patrick King patrick.s.king@gmail.com

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 Patrick King: patrick.s.king@gmail.com 0118 9773397

Rev'd Richard Lamey, The Rectory, Holt Lane 0118 3279116

richard.lamey@stpauls.org.uk

Louise Cole, Senior Steward, 0118 9772239

louise.cole@sky.com

St Paul's Parish Office, Reading Road, Wokingham RG41 1EH

0118 979 2122 (Parish administrator Becca Lamey)

office@stpauls-wokingham.org.uk

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



Services diary

You probably noticed that although the type of service on the back page of the last magazine was broadly accurate, the clergy preaching at those services was frequently not! Circumstances change over the time covered by the magazine, necessitating a change of clergy, so for this next period we are listing only the normal pattern of services for your information and you will just have to turn up to find out who is leading the service! Keep an eye out in the newsletter for more up to date information too.

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 at Woosehill Church

Saturday 12th December

4pm Christingle Service (*family worship
celebrating the meaning of Christmas*)



Monday 14th December

From 8pm Beer & Carols (*at Ye Olde Leathern Bottel,
led by our music group*)

Wednesday 16th December

10am Toddler Christmas Service (*all are welcome,
and there is coffee afterwards*)

Sunday 20th December

7.30pm Candlelit Carol Service (*get into the festive
spirit as we sing all the favourites!*)

Christmas Eve

4pm Crib Service (*where the children dress up to
help us tell the story of the Nativity*)

11.30pm Candlelit Midnight Communion

Christmas Day

10am Christmas Communion with carols