Woosehill Church Magazine

October 2026

Sharing God's love with the community

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Dear Church family and all other readers,

September marks the official start of the church year in the Methodist church, whilst in the Anglican Church it is not until Advent Sunday, but for us at Woosehill Church it starts now with a newly refurbished church (ongoing) and the search for new lets to balance our books as well as spread the Gospel message in our community.

There is a lot to read in this issue as well as good news to celebrate.

The next issue will be for Advent and Christmas so get your Thinking Hats on now!

With every blessing,

Val

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A Message from our Minister

Money, money, money…

At the end of September, I preached on money, and much of what is included here was said then. And in a similar vein, let's start this article with the same theme as the sermon, with gratitude. Thank you, everyone, for all that you do and give for our church. It is so evident at the moment, given the fresh paint everywhere and the new ceiling tiles. It feels simultaneously like a spring clean and a fresh start for the new school year! And it was fun to come together and work as a team to spruce up our building, both for ourselves and for those who hire the church. Thank you, everyone, for all that you already give to this church and this community, whether it's financial, or giving your time and skills, whether it's a little or it's a lot. Everything counts, everything is valuable and recognised. All that we do here, we do out of love for God and one another, and out of trust that God who has always provided for us, has already given us everything we need to flourish.

It's no secret that churches need money, churches always seem to need money for something! Regardless of what that specific something is – be it a new roof, new lights, repairing damage, paying for clergy or staff – the reason behind all those things is the same. It's also no secret that since the school club have stopped using our building, we will struggle financially if nothing else changes as they gave us almost 50% of our annual income. But whilst we need to find a way to replace that income, it isn't the reason we need it. We need it so that we can continue to be a place where God is worshipped, where people can find a worshipping

community to belong to, and where the Good News of Jesus Christ is preached and proclaimed and lived out as a blessing every single day.

So, let's think a bit about specifics. Our monthly income is about £4400, and our outgoings are about £5500. Meaning that we are currently spending £1100 more each month than we can afford to, and that just isn't sustainable. Some of our costs might be surprising to you, they certainly were to me! The majority of our outgoings is spent on ministry and associated costs. But did you know that because we're not domestic, we have to pay £170 a month for our rubbish to be collected? We pay £537 on gas, electricity and water, which rises with inflation just as it does for our homes. We also need insurance, licenses to play the music and project the hymn words, internet, cleaning, fire safety, charitable giving, putting money aside each month for a mandatory inspection called a quinquennial which makes sure our building is still OK. All of these, plus the small things like printing, add up. We have a defibrillator outside, which is exactly the right thing to do and may save someone's life, but this month, for the first time in 5 years, we had to replace the battery and the pads, which cost us £370.

I'm not sure about you, but I think most of these are hidden costs, things that don't immediately come to mind when thinking about what we might spend money on as a church. Certainly, things that I rarely think about until, of course, we have to because our income is less than our outgoings. The answer to balancing our books isn't simply asking everyone here to give more each month. If you *can* give more and you'd like to increase your weekly or monthly giving, then that would of course be wonderful, and will be very gratefully received. But we need to think a bit more long term, more sustainably.

We've spent money improving our building because 1. it needed it and 2. this will hopefully increase the number of lettings we have, which is an ideal way to boost our income and be part of our local community. We need about 14 hours more a week of hires to break even. So, if you know anyone who runs a course or a group or activity who might like to hire one of the rooms or spaces in the church, please tell them! If you have a couple of hours once a term to spend sending out invoices to hirers and helping out our hard-working treasurer, please speak to me or Lynne. If you have a suggestion for fundraising that would bring in more people than just the people who are already in our congregation, let's hear it!

But most importantly, we all want to see our congregation grow in numbers. Primarily because we know what we have found in Jesus and in a life of faith, and in particular in this church, and we want other people to know that too. In Jesus, we find ourselves, we find hope, we find unconditional love, we find meaning, we find peace which passes all understanding. In each other we find support and friendship and people to journey with. In this church we hear how much God loves us and wants only the best for us. All of these things are things I want to share with as many people as possible, and if they happen to also give money then that's the icing on top of the cake of salvation.

Jesus told his disciples that he chose them, that he appointed them to "go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." We very much want our worshipping community to be among the fruits of our labours that will last. We know that there is so much good that comes out of this church, lives that are changed through a relationship with God and one another. And we want to continue to have a positive impact on our neighbours through the love and hospitality of Tadpoles, Bible Study

Groups, Sip n Share, Crib Service, Coffee, Craft and Chat, hosting Hawthorn's School Nativity Play, being a welcoming space for Rainbows, Brownies, Cubs, Choir and other groups who use our building. To continue to be the church, here, in this place, we need to think about money carefully. We need to think about ways to raise money, ways to give money, ways of being sustainable so that we can continue to offer the building, space and time we already do.

Whatever you give, however you give, when it really comes down to it, **the reason we give back to God and the church is because God in Christ gave up everything that we may have life, and have it abundantly.** There is, and never has been, a gift greater than this. Gratitude breeds gratitude, just as generosity breeds generosity. So, for all that we already have, thank you Lord. For all that is to come, thank you Lord. For all that we are able to give and share, thank you Lord. For all the gifts and talents of this congregation, thank you Lord. And for the difference you make in our lives, we pray that we may have the resources to continue and to share what we have found with others.

Rev'd Cara

"Lord, thank You for giving us the gift of Your church—a place where we can worship, grow, and serve together. Thank you for the imperfect people and spirits united by Your grace, for the comfort in times of need, and for the joy of walking this journey in fellowship. Help us to continue shining Your light and loving one another well."

A Message from our Methodist Minister

Dear Friends,

We have come to that time of year when we celebrate our Harvest Festival. We do so with traditions that we have inherited, and which provide a sense of the continuity of which harvest speaks. We remind ourselves of God's promise to Noah that seed-time and harvest would not fail, and we rejoice that we have the food and resources to bear witness to its truth.

Yet as our experience of the harvest changes, so does our celebration. That is nothing new: in a preface to *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Thomas Hardy recognized that the harvest scene of which he wrote could not be appreciated by "those accustomed to the sixpenny loaf of the present date, and to the present indifference of the public to harvest weather." Similarly, I remember sack loads of coal being poured through the hole in the pavement down into our basement coal bunker. The traditional placement of coal in the harvest display, however, does not reflect many people's present experience. A solar panel wouldn't be the same, of course, but then our tins of baked beans and packets of rice do not look like the rows of apples that adorned the walls of the church of my childhood, or the melon and marrow that seemed to be an obligatory part to the display each year.

Indeed, given that Harvest Festival is, essentially, a celebration that the same provision has been made this year as every year, the rate of change seems out of character. Although the observation has taken place for thousands of years, harvest festival in church is less than two hundred years old.

Traditions have grown, some customs have become prominent, others have been forgotten. New ways of celebrating have emerged, and through it all God's provision from the land and sea has continued. Once more, we are delighted to do as the first Hebrew settlers in their promised land were instructed, and "celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house." (Deuteronomy 26:11, NRSV)

Wes

***Creator God**, we thank you for the fertility of the earth, the rhythm of the seasons, and the wonderful abundance of food that sustains our lives. Help us never to take these gifts for granted, but to live in daily gratitude and mindful stewardship of your world.*

News from Tadpoles

We are back!

Although quite a few children left at the end of the summer term, several of those families are still with us with a younger sibling….

and although we don't advertise, the vacant places have almost all been filled and it's lovely to have babies again.

Our craft theme this term so far has been Harvest, giving a chance to publicise our Harvest Festival. Most of our experienced crafters have left us so the little ones are a work in progress with much assistance from parents and grandparents – for whom Sue's Wednesday craft is a real treat!

It has been great to have Bernadette helping out when we were short staffed and also to welcome back Otis's Nanny Yvonne to help with craft now he is at school.

Same crisis, uneven burden:

How climate change falls hardest on women

The climate crisis is not gender neutral. Its impacts fall unevenly on women and men, not because of biology, but because of the social, economic, and legal inequalities that shape women's lives. This is especially true in the Global South, where women face multiple risks rooted in their different roles, their relative powerlessness, and their restricted mobility.

Women perform the bulk of agricultural work in many countries, labouring in the fields where extreme heat is increasingly dangerous. When that heat destroys crops, women and girls are often first to suffer food shortages, not because they need less, but because they have less power at the table.

Heatwaves also drive spikes in domestic violence. Studies consistently show that men – particularly in disadvantaged communities with inadequate housing and no cooling – cope poorly with heat stress, directing their aggression towards women. In fact, the link between rising temperatures and partner violence is now well documented across many countries, rich and poor.

Prolonged heat often brings drought. In communities without piped water that means longer treks for women to fetch water, gather firewood, and forage for food, compounding their heat exposure and physical exhaustion.

Then there is flooding which damages clinics and severs roads, leaving women with reduced access to maternal and reproductive healthcare precisely when they need it most.

In rapid-onset disasters, like cyclones, women and children suffer disproportionately high death rates, often because early warnings never reach them in the fields.

As climate-driven disasters of all kinds push millions into migration and refugee camps, women face heightened vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and trafficking.

The answer to all this is not complicated: include women in disaster planning and climate policy. Globally, women are taking up climate leadership, from grassroots organisations to UN negotiating tables.

Adaptation policy and disaster preparedness are slowly beginning to reflect the insights of those who understand the risks firsthand.

Bangladesh's Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) is the clearest, most cited success story. Until 2006, the ratio of women to men in the CPP volunteer corps was 1:3, and women were receiving very little early warning information despite being at the highest risk of dying in cyclones.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief set out to recruit and train female volunteers to close that gap. Today, women make up about half of the CPP's volunteer corps, a programme that includes roughly 76,000 volunteers overall, run jointly with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

Female volunteers can go door-to-door reaching women in the community in ways male volunteers can't, especially significant where social norms limit women's contact with unrelated men. In the Rohingya refugee camps, for instance, female volunteers focus on raising awareness directly among women, while male volunteers work at community level.

One final gender difference to ponder: women in high-income, though not low-income, countries are consistently more concerned about the climate crisis than men. Why is that do you think?

Joe Human July 2026

News from WOW

Our WOW group for ladies of the church has as usual had some good and varied social events.

In July a good crowd enjoyed the popular Pimm's Evening which Lyn Brown has hosted in her garden for several years. It was a pleasantly warm summer's evening to spend in Lyn's lovely garden.

In August Linda Hoskins organised a group to do the circuit of Dinton Pastures with coffee on the terrace overlooking the lake. After the extreme heat, we enjoyed a breezy sunny day and lots of chat.

More to come:

October 9	Wade's Skittles Evening	Ruth Smith
November	Pudding Evening	Amy Truluck
December	Floral Decorations	Lynne Paine / Linda Hoskins

The Woodwooses of Woosehill?

Our Woosehill is variously spelt Woosse Hill, Wosse Hill, Wos Hill in 1607 'Rentals and Surveys'.

One view is that the name Woosehill might come from 'wasan', a stream, a name derived from 'wase' = mud.

Another view suggests it comes from woodwooses.

Woodwooses are mentioned frequently in the literature of the late Middle Ages. What were woodwooses believed to look like? They are often illustrated not only in manuscripts, but carved under the hinged seats called misericords, or on bench ends. At St George's Chapel Windsor a woodwoose, bearded and covered in thick hair or fur, is shown desperately fighting a giant dog and using a club and shield.

What is a *wodewose*? Well, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the creature as 'a wild man of the woods; a satyr, faun'.

Sometimes, woodwooses are shown in evil roles, sometimes good ones. At Beverley St Mary, Yorkshire, St George on a charger is attacking a woodwose.

In Schwerin in Germany, two brasses commemorating two bishops show:

1. A woodwose abducting a fair damsel.
2. Eleven Wooses including a King Woose having a picnic in a forest clearing

Woodwoses are even mentioned in the Bible, (though not in any Bible likely to be on your bookshelves), in the Wycliffe Bible of the fourteenth century in Isaiah 34 when wodewoses are referred to alongside dragons!

In 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' they join with other weird creatures in killing Aslan.

Why should Woosehill be thought to be the 'Hill of wooses/ woodwooses' rather than the 'Hill of the muddy stream'? Well, other names in the area, such as Fox Hill and Bear Wood certainly derive from animals.

Perhaps Mr Walter, when he planned St Catherine's in 1845/6 recognised a link with Woosehill for just beneath the gutters and roof line nearly half of the carved stone heads could be said to be heads of woodwoses.

It was once suggested that hairy woodwoses really existed in medieval times, but perhaps it is best to leave the poor Wooses where they can best thrive – in the world of the imagination as we wander the forest land bordering Woosehill.

Ed: A heavily edited version of The History of Bearwood by the Rev'd Haigh Etches, formerly of our parish. Thanks to Linda Hoskins for passing on to me.

I have the original booklet if anyone is interested in the further history of Bear Wood. Val

Refurbishing our church

Such a lot of work was done during August, often during scorching hot days, to smarten up our church ready for the new lets that we hope will help our financial deficit since JAG moved out at Easter. Whilst some of the work has been completed by professionals, much has been done by a willing band of volunteers. The results are impressive!

During this time, we had to be resourceful in our services, as the work to decorate the Sanctuary was under way, with a service outside on

a very breezy day, and another surrounded by ladders and paint pots with scaffolding next to the cross – perhaps appropriate?

Huge thanks are due to those who turned up and transformed our church.

Church Family News

It's always good to have a good news story and Ruth and Ed did it in style when they celebrated their Golden Wedding in late August. They married in the notable heatwave year of 1976 – and it rained!

We send our belated congratulations to both of them.

If you have a special family event coming up, do let us know.

Tree Talk

A neighbour of ours has been researching oak trees on the green in Bedfordshire Way after attending a talk given by the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association. This prompted him to look at others on Woosehill, and I mentioned that there is one next to Woosehill Church that might be of interest. He went to have a look and below is his response.

The tree here ....

Is an Oak (*quercus sp*.) with a girth of 4.34 meters, which makes it about 215 years old.

It is termed a Maiden tree, which means it is of seedling origin, single stemmed and has not been decapitated.

It has a Classification of Notable - Worthy of recognition but not a Veteran tree.

I believe a notable tree becomes a veteran when it starts to decay and slow down but is not yet ancient!! Hmmm…

Roland

Editor Note: WDVTA is working to ensure that Wokingham's veteran and other significant trees are properly identified, protected and managed - and to increase public awareness of their beauty and contribution to the borough's heritage and amenity.

Music group

Wasn't it great to have a full music group again for one of our August services? Let's hope we have more of these! Many thanks to all our musicians.

Psalm 100:1–2: *"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs."*

Tithing 2026

The Tithing committee met in July and agreed the following giving which has been agreed by Church Council.

	2025		**2026**
Church Urban Fund	50		0
Link Visiting Wokingham	250		250
Methodist Overseas Missions	50		0
Soulscape	1500		1500
Yeldall Manor	500		500
Wokingham Food Bank	300		300
Embrace the Middle East	500		500
Barnabus	100		0
Bishops Fund			500
All We Can	100		0
Total Allocated Tithing	**3350**		**3550**
Amount to give	3100		3500

Promised
Church Charity

It was decided to cut the parent church charities and give to the Bishops Fund which supports a number of different charities based on need.

Fairtrade Fortnight

We go to press almost at the end of Fairtrade Fortnight and just a little too early to report on our Harvest Festival and associated Fairtrade Great Bake Off!

It is more than 10 years since Woosehill achieved Fairtrade Church status and indeed it is time to renew our commitment.

To achieve official Fairtrade Place of Worship status through the Fairtrade Foundation, we need to fulfil these main goals:

Use Fairtrade Products: Serve Fairtrade tea, coffee, and sugar wherever possible at after-service refreshments and church-run meetings. Expand usage to items like biscuits, fruit, or even cotton altar linens when possible.

Promote and Educate: Integrate Fairtrade into the life of the church by celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight, hosting stalls or coffee mornings, and weaving themes of global justice into services and prayers.

Engage the Community: Connect with local groups, schools, or wider town campaigns to spread awareness about ethical supply chains.

I think we will qualify for renewal.

'Thank you for supporting Fairtrade this Fortnight and joining us to demand business that's fair to people and planet.'

People. Planet. Pay. Do it Fair.

Developing faith and prayer

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.

Church Contacts

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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 on 22 November- as usual to valerie.weedon@btinternet.com**

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 9-11am 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: tadpoles@woosehillchurch.org

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

Other information: stewards@woosehillchurch.org