

THIS MONTH: DECEMBER 2008

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

'Christmas comes but once a year'

I don't know what was on Thomas Tusser's mind when he penned these words in 1580 but I think that many of us are probably heartily relieved at the thought that 'Christmas comes but once a year'. Perhaps that is because we have lost sight of the real meaning of Christmas. When we read the Bible we meet people who are remarkably like us and many things about the world in which they lived was not so different from today. They realised, both as a society and as individuals, that life could seem so hopeless and meaningless that they looked for one who would come among them as 'a light shining in the darkness'. The birth of Jesus could hardly have been a less auspicious occasion, as he was laid in Bethlehem's manger, and yet it was here that God entered the world to bring hope and meaning. The great irony of the story is that, for a mixture of motives, those with political and religious authority wanted nothing more than to do away with Jesus but, particularly by his death and resurrection, Jesus showed that 'the light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it'. For Christians, Christmas is not simply a recollection of the birth of Jesus but a personal celebration of the presence of Jesus today. 'For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ' (2 Corinthians 4:6). Everyone is very welcome to all our events for December and Christmas and details are included in the diary section of this sheet.

Bible Reading Notes

Christians believe that God speaks in a very special way through the Bible. Therefore, we encourage people to read the Bible regularly. There is no point in pretending that the Bible is not a long and difficult book. Recognising this, many Christians take Bible reading notes to help them find their way around the Bible, to read a relatively short passage each day and to share with another Bible reader some thoughts on the passage. A separate leaflet is available about Bible reading notes and although using these is not the only way of reading the Bible, the question to ask is whether it is better than the way that you have read the Bible this year.

Invite a friend at Christmas

Recent surveys in the wider community have revealed that many people would go to church if only they were personally invited. In order to help you do this we can provide you with some personal cards to pass to your family and friends as your invitation to attend church with you at Christmas. If you would like some of these, please say how many you could use and we will supply them for you.

Minister's Bible Study

We will soon finish our series of 10 studies on *The Former Prophets*. This has been a very good course and our numbers have grown. We will start a new course, probably on a portion of the New Testament in the New Year. We meet on Monday evenings in the lounge from 7.30 to 9.00 pm and conclude with tea/coffee and biscuits. If we are to develop a new generation of leaders within the

church, we are going to need to equip members for service. The Monday evening Bible studies are a good place for that to happen.

New superintendent minister

Next September the Plymouth and Devonport Circuit expect to welcome a new superintendent minister who will have churches at Woodford and Colebrook in Plympton. The Revd Simon Leigh has accepted an invitation to come and work with us and we look forward to welcoming Simon and Donna into the circuit. Simon is currently minister in the Sutton (Surrey) Circuit with a church at Carshalton. He offered as a minister from the Truro Circuit and still has family in Cornwall.

Happy Christmas and God bless in the New Year

I hope to see you at our Christmas services. If you cannot easily get out but would appreciate my calling on you, please contact the office and I will be pleased to come and see you. My family join me in wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and God's blessing in the New Year.

John Haley

Womens' Network

A Carol service will be held at Ridgeway on 4 December at 2.30 pm. The service will be led by Judith Goodridge and our own minister, Revd John Haley, will be preaching. Following the service there will be a time to enjoy superior (!) refreshments and share time together with ladies and gentlemen from the circuit who have joined us. Although organised by the Womens' Network group, the service is for all those who wish to attend.

Ladies' Group

Our Christmas concert will be held on 9 December at 7.30 pm. We are welcoming the Torpoint Lady Singers, along with David Gower of Shelter Box. Last year we were able to track our box as it made it's way to it's destination. Hopefully we will be able to do the same this year. We encourage all ladies to bring friends and families to the concert - both female and male!!

In search of a home

Florian Bergmann (16 in the coming March) is German and is a member of the local church in Mainz, Germany. He is searching for a home where he would be able to stay for two months during February and March, or perhaps two homes where he could spend a month in each. During this time he would be attending the local secondary school. Friendly, conscientious and an enthusiastic trombone and piano-player, Florian is already able to communicate in English and is keen to improve his language skills. Florian would be delighted to negotiate an arrangement, perhaps with a family with young people of roughly his own age, or with a couple who have some previous experience with young people.

If you are interested, then please contact Florian's parents: koenen-bergman@t-online.de. Alternatively Shirley Roth (nee Holst), who is both a previous member of Ridgeway and a friend and neighbour of the Bergman family, will be more than happy to answer your questions (email: Shirley.Roth@t-online.de).

Keychange Charity

We are a Christian charity that runs care homes mainly in England for the elderly. We have a lovely Home in Plymouth, The Mount Eventide Care Home, and are affiliated to the Evangelical

Alliance and a member of the Christian Care Association. For further information please see the advertisement on the church notice board in the church vestibule.

Used Stamps

Please remember to save your used stamps, especially the Christmas ones, for Save the Children Fund. We also collect aluminium scrap i.e. old saucepans, copper and brass for recycling and to raise money for charity. If you have any old stamps or scrap aluminium please pass this on to Christine Mudge.

December Diary

Monday 1 December:

7.30 pm Minister's Bible study: The Former Prophets
(2 Kings 18-25)

Tuesday 2:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group
7.30 pm Cross-Talk (Stoke): Revd John Haley
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Lin Lomax

Wednesday 3:

10.00 - 12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 4:

2.30 pm Circuit Network Carol Service: Revd John Haley

Saturday 6:

8.30 am Monthly Prayer Meeting
10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)

Sunday 7:

10.30 am Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)
7.00 pm Dr John Birkett

Monday 8:

7.30 pm No Minister's Bible study: (exam week)

Tuesday 9:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group
7.30 pm Ladies Group Christmas Concert (in aid of Shelter Box)

Wednesday 10:

10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches
7.30 pm Stewards' meeting

Thursday 11:

2.45pm Women's Fellowship: Mrs Mary McNaughton

Saturday 13:

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril and Pamela)

Sunday 14:

10.30 am Revd John Haley
6.00 pm Revd John Haley (All-Age Candlelit Carol Service)

Monday 15

7.30 pm Bible Study Christmas Party

Tuesday 16:	10.00 - 12.00	Patchwork Group
	11.00 am	Pre-school Nativity (all welcome)
	2.15 pm	Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)
	7.45pm	Ladies' Group: Revd John Haley (Christmas Message and Carols)
Wednesday 17:	Noon	Christmas Dinner
	4.30 pm	Candlelit Christingle for all the family
Thursday 18:	2.45pm	Women's Fellowship Carol Service: Revd John Haley
Saturday 20:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Local Mission (Pat)
Sunday 21:	10.30 am	Mrs Janet Dobinson
	6.00 pm	Revd John Haley (Candlelit Favourite Carols)
Christmas Eve:	11.15 pm	Communion for Christmas Eve
Christmas Day:	10.00 am	Revd John Haley
Sunday 28:	10.30 am	Mr Mark Pellow
	6.00 pm	Miss Catherine Stead
Sunday 4 January:	10.30 am	Revd John Haley (Covenant Service)
	7.00 pm	Mrs Alfreda Rogers

Church office hours: Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Church telephones: 348178 (office only); 331186 (pre-school and hall)

Church Office: admin@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

Minister: The Revd John M Haley: min@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

Information for January's *This Month* to the office by 16 December please.