

THIS MONTH: FEBRUARY 2009



RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Friends

The big day has finally arrived and I am sure that our whole congregation and church community are rightly joining in prayer for the USA and President Barack Obama. Barack Obama was born on 4 August 1961 in Honolulu, Hawaii. His mother, from Kansas, was of Anglo-Irish descent and his father was from Kenya. After winning the Democratic presidential primary in South Carolina, Barack Obama gave his famous 'yes we can' speech.
(<http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/01/26/obama.transcript/index.html>).

"When I hear the cynical talk that blacks and whites and Latinos can't join together and work together, I'm reminded of the Latino brothers and sisters I organized with and stood with and fought with side by side for jobs and justice on the streets of Chicago. So don't tell us change can't happen.

"When I hear that we'll never overcome the racial divide in our politics, I think about that Republican woman who used to work for Strom Thurmond, who is now devoted to educating inner city-children and who went out into the streets of South Carolina and knocked on doors for this campaign. Don't tell me we can't change.

"Yes, we can. Yes, we can change. Yes, we can."

As many of our friends across the Atlantic greeted the inauguration of their forty-fourth President with renewed hope, we should be thankful that things can change. Barack Obama was just two years old when, on 28 August 1963, Martin Luther King delivered his famous 'I have a dream' speech:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that [all men are created equal](#).'"

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood."

While it is not quite yet the case that the descendant of a former slave has become the President, no person of goodwill can fail to be moved that the United States has taken a great step towards the

fulfilment of that dream but even the most optimistic person must realise that there is a long way to go before that vision is fulfilled. The machinations of government and the self-interest of individuals will conspire to frustrate it. However, that must not allow us to descend into apathy or cynicism.

The Psalm writer is neither falsely optimistic nor cynical when he writes:

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them - the LORD, who remains faithful for ever.

(Psalm 146:3-6)

This commitment to praise the LORD (notice the four block capitals which indicate the proper name for God, traditionally translated 'Jehovah') requires the believer not to be dependent on any man. Real salvation is not found in humanity but only in God, which the Christian believes God has accomplished in Jesus and particularly in his death upon the cross and his resurrection. The blessing of God comes to those who look to him for help. This God is not just any 'god' but the God of Jacob – the God who made promises to his people, the God who is the creator of heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. While it might seem that even the best people disappoint us and let us down, this God remains faithful for ever.

Yours sincerely

John Haley

Shekinah Mission

For many years we have supported the Shekinah Mission. Since 1992 this mission has sought to support the homeless, alcoholic, drug addicts, lonely and elderly people of Plymouth. The Mission requires food and household donations all year round. Please see the poster in the vestibule listing items which would be gratefully received. Please note that all food products should be unopened.

Alcoholics Anonymous

The Plymouth Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous will be holding a public meeting for all members of the community who come into contact with alcoholics during their professional life on Thursday 5 February. For further details please see the programme on the notice board in the vestibule.

Slum Survivor

Some of the young people will be taking part in Slum Survivor from 13 to 15 February. Slums will be created in the front of the church and the young people will be taking part in a number of challenges helping them to understand more about the lives of street children. They will be sponsored to raise money for Soul Action for projects working with street children. Your help would also be appreciated in other ways - more information will be available nearer the time.

Tuesday 17:	10.00 - 12.00 2.15 pm 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome) No Ladies' Group: (half-term)
Wednesday 18:	10.00 - 12.30	No Coffee or lunches (half-term)
Thursday 19:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Sheila Merrin
Friday 20:		No dance workshop - to be rearranged when possible
Saturday 21:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril)
Sunday 22:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Major Pamela Smith Miss Judith Walker
Monday 23:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study
Tuesday 24:	10.00 - 12.00 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group: Audrey Williams
Wednesday 25:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 26:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Revd Ambrose Wright
Saturday 28:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Boys ' Brigade (Katie Martin)
Sunday 1 March:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Revd John Haley (Holy Communion) Mrs Kate Konrad

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

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

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Information for March's *This Month* to the office by 17 February please.