

THIS MONTH: JANUARY 2008



RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Friends

I must begin with a special word of thanks to those who worked hard in many different ways to ensure all our Christmas events went ahead smoothly.

A Happy New Year!

I get on well with the man who sits next to me at Plymouth Argyle, a friendship that has been developing over five years. He is very vociferous and often offers his opinion to the referee and his assistants. One New Year's Day he greeted me saying, "Hello John, Happy New Year to you. I've made a New Year's resolution ... not to criticise the match officials." The referee blew his whistle and the game was underway. My neighbour lent over to me and asked, "How long did I last?" The answer: 'about 17 seconds!' That's the trouble with New Year's resolutions – it doesn't seem to take long to break them.

The Covenant Service

John Wesley, founder of the modern Methodist movement that became the Methodist Church, held his first Covenant Service in 1755. In the Covenant Service we renew our Christian commitment and pledge ourselves afresh to God. Of course, this is something many Christians do regularly, nevertheless it is good to have a formal time once each when as a local congregation we do that together. From the beginning, the Methodist Church has had a formal list of enrolled members. This is not intended to exclude those who are not members (no one is ever excluded) but it is to remind the members of the commitment that they made when they were received into membership and it has always been my expectation that every member will make a very special effort to be at the Covenant Service. This year our Covenant Service is on Sunday 6 January at 10.30 am.

Church membership

The New Year gives me the opportunity to remind all members of the basis of membership in the Methodist Church.

All those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and accept the obligation to serve Him in the life of the Church and the world are welcome as full members of the Methodist Church. In the Church: Members are committed to worship, holy communion, fellowship and service, prayer and Bible study, and responsible giving. In the world: Members are committed to the working out of their faith in daily life, the offering for personal service in the community, the Christian use of their resources, and the support of the Church in its total world mission.

The life of every local Methodist Church would be revolutionised if every member made a New Year's resolution to renew their Christian commitment. A member should aim to attend the church every Sunday, to receive communion regularly and to share together with other Christians in what it means to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Our regular pattern of prayer and Bible study enables us to pray and read the Bible together as well as doing that at home in our private prayers and Bible reading. Realistic Christian giving will naturally spring from the devotional life rather than members feeling browbeaten by the church's financial needs. In case anyone should think that being a Christian is only about what we do on Sundays the basis of membership reminds us that we are serve Christ in the church and in the world.

Prayer and Bible study

On the first Saturday morning of each month (at 8.30 am) we have a prayer meeting. The hour passes very quickly and it is a good time to be together. If you have not been with us before then perhaps that could be your first New Year's resolution. This term the Cell Groups (meeting in member's homes) are going to do a series of Bible studies on the theme of Self-Esteem. I am sure these will be valuable to anyone who can attend. Groups meet on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. If you are interested in joining a group please let me or one of the church stewards know. On 7 January, I shall begin a new series of Monday evening Bible studies on Paul's letter to the Romans. You don't have to know anything about the Bible in advance to be able to come. Just come willing to learn and I am sure that you will get a great deal out of the group. We finish at 9.00 pm with tea and biscuits.

The Church's purpose

The Christian community is about making and sustaining disciples for Jesus Christ. All our midweek groups exist for the express intention of making the good news of Jesus known. I have a feeling that these days a lot of people don't really know much about Christianity to decide whether or not they want to be Christians. On 23 January we are beginning a new course called *Christianity Explored*. This will include a meal and a DVD presentation as well as discussion and an opportunity to ask questions. There is a separate leaflet and I hope that everyone will be in at least one midweek group in the life of the church.

Burns' Night: Friday 18 January, 7.15 pm, Boringdon Hall

A separate leaflet is available to book for this event. We anticipate having the traditional elements (addressing the haggis, the immortal memory, bagpipes) and are very pleased to have Revd Alen McCulloch as a special guest. This is a superb opportunity to invite family, friends and anyone who might not readily attend the church to a very special occasion. It helps us greatly if you book early.

News about Pre-school

Pre-school Christmas events went ahead as planned and were a great success. Pre-school staff hosted a farewell supper for Mrs Sue Tozer and presentations were made on behalf of the Pre-school and the church. The church council has appointed Mr John

Scott as Acting Supervisor and Mrs Lyn Peters as Deputy Supervisor. Mrs Sue Heesem and Mrs Angela Best also have extended roles.

Thank you for all the Christmas greetings and gifts that were sent to our home. Janet and the children join me in wishing you all God's blessing in the New Year.

God Bless

John Haley

January Diary

Wednesday 2:		
	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Saturday 5:		
	8.30 am	Prayer Meeting
	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)
Sunday 6:		
	10.30 am	Revd John Haley (Covenant Service)
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 7:		
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (Romans, week 1)
Tuesday 8:		
	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.30 pm	Men's' Fellowship: Carpet bowls
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group
Wednesday 9:		
	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 10:		
	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship
Saturday 12:		
	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Miriam, Kim & Steve)
Sunday 13:		
	10.30 am	Revd John Haley
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 14:		
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (Romans, week 2)
Tuesday 15:		
	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	2.15 pm	Service at Pocklington Rise (All welcome)
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group
Thursday 17:		
	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship
Friday 18:		
	7.15 pm	Burns' Night at Boringdon Hall (see separate leaflet)

Saturday 19:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril & Pamela)
Sunday 20:	10.30 am	Mr Andrew Maxwell
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 21:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (Romans, week 3)
Tuesday 22:	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group
Wednesday 23:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches Christianity Explored (week 1)
Thursday 24:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship
Friday 25:	6.30 for 7.00 pm	Men's Fellowship Christmas dinner
Saturday 26:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)
Sunday 27:	10.30 am	Revd John Haley: All age service
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley: Communion
Monday 28:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (Romans, week 4)
Tuesday 29:	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.30 pm	Men's' Fellowship at Elburton: Eileen Wiley "Garden Birds"
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group
Wednesday 30:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 31:	7.30 pm	Church Council

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
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Information for February's *This Month* to the office by 22 January please.