

**THIS MONTH: JANUARY 2009**



**RIDGEWAY  
METHODIST CHURCH**

Dear Friends

**Who are you following?**

It always amazes me the things that people will display in the windows of their cars. Some are witty, some are in poor taste but a few are memorable. One I remember from years ago simply said this, "Don't follow me, I'm lost!"

Most of us are not leaders, we are followers. We look at those pictures from years ago and wonder how we ever chose to live with the hairstyles and clothes that we were wearing – we did it because it was fashionable, we were followers (if not dedicated followers) of fashion. Following is important to many of us – perhaps we follow a particular football team, entertainer, writer, or political party.

January and the New Year are times to take stock, to review and to plan. If that's how it is in the wider world it is also the same in church, where one of the traditional themes is Jesus calling the first disciples. It might come as a surprise to know that Jesus was not the only rabbi to call disciples (students, apprentices) – no self-respecting rabbi could fail to have some followers. So, around the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee there would have been many competing voices, all compelling the listeners to follow.

Whether we realise it or not, we are following someone or something – but who are you following? Sport, music, literature, politics have an important place in today's society – but in the really important matters of life, the overall framework of right and wrong and matters of life and death, who are you following.

The first disciples started to follow Jesus when he began to preach, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.' The fishermen of Galilee were busy, courageous, alert and strong. They needed all these characteristics to live out the kind of lives that Jesus was calling them to live but they were not equipped to be perfect disciples all at once – they needed to learn, to succeed (sometimes), to fail (often) and to keep going (always) in their commitment to being followers of Jesus.

Someone has wisely said that even a long journey has to begin with a first step. The journey of following Jesus has to begin with a first step too. Unlike the first disciples, we know how the life of Jesus unfolded – first with his preaching, teaching and miracles in Galilee and Judea, later with his betrayal, crucifixion and death but then with his resurrection, his appearing and his ascension. Jesus began preaching the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’. This is the kingdom in which he reigns. It is this that makes Jesus someone worth following.

### **Membership and annual covenant service: 4 January, 10.30 am**

Because of the way it began as a society, which was joined by becoming a member, the Methodist Church still has a formal list of members. These members are issued with a ticket of membership. If you would like to know more about becoming a member of the church please speak to the minister or one of the church stewards. Being a member is nothing more than being a disciple of the Lord Jesus in the context of a local Methodist Church. Our annual Covenant Service gives us the opportunity, at the beginning of the New Year, to reaffirm our commitment to being a disciple of Jesus. Discipleship does not mean that we have no faults and failings. Discipleship means confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and therefore being committed to worship, Holy Communion, fellowship and service, prayer and Bible study, and responsible giving. It means working out our faith in daily life, the offering of personal service in the community, the Christian use of our resources, and the support of the Church in its total world mission. Fellowship means nothing more than being disciples of Jesus together – can I invite you to share that journey with us in the coming year?

### **Pastoral visiting**

I am sorry that the virus that caught so many people in December, including me, meant that I was not able to do as much seasonal visiting as usual. I very much missed being able to do that. Jane, my secretary, was also off work unwell from 10 December onwards but hopefully will return to the office on 6 January. Thank you to everyone who helped with all the Christmas arrangements, publicity, decoration and the less-exciting task of clearing things away. If you would like me to call on you in January please be in touch through the office and I would be very pleased to arrange a convenient time to call.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year.

*John Haley*

## Minister's Bible Study: 10 studies from Monday 10 January

Following the success of our last course, we are looking forward to a new series of studies on Christian Doctrine. 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.

### Monthly diary

Please would leaders of all groups submit the information necessary to complete the monthly diary to the office by the due date.

## January Diary

Saturday 3:	8.30 am 10.00-12.00	Monthly Prayer Meeting Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)
<b>Sunday 4:</b>	<b>10.30 am 7.00 pm</b>	<b>Revd John Haley (Covenant Service) Mrs Alfreda Rogers</b>
Monday 5:	7.30 pm	No Minister's Bible study
Tuesday 6:	10.00 - 12.00 7.30 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group: Welcome back!
Wednesday 7:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 8:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship
Saturday 10:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar
<b>Sunday 11:</b>	<b>10.30 am 7.00 pm</b>	<b>Revd David Youngs Revd John Haley (with Youth Band)</b>
Monday 12:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (Christian Doctrine week 1)
Tuesday 13:	10.00 - 12.00 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group: Eileen Line
Wednesday 14:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 15:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Peter Hayden Davies
Saturday 17:	10.00 - 12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Local Mission (Pat)

**Sunday 18:**

**10.30 am**  
**7.00 pm**

**Miss Catherine Stead**  
**Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)**

Monday 19:

7.30 pm

Minister's Bible Study (Christian Doctrine 2)

Tuesday 20:

10.00 - 12.00  
2.15 pm  
7.45 pm

Patchwork Group  
Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)  
Ladies' Group: Revd Stuart Clarke (Plymouth Street Pastors)

Wednesday 21:

10.00 - 12.30

Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 22:

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship: Alfreda Rogers

Saturday 24:

10.00-12.00

Oasis Coffee Bar: Cystic Fibrosis (Ladies' Group)

**Sunday 25:**

**10.30 am**  
**7.00 pm**

**Revd John Haley (BB/GB enrolment service)**  
**Mrs Brenda Youngs**

Monday 26:

7.30 pm

Bible Study Christmas Party (Christian Doctrine 3)

Tuesday 27:

10.00 - 12.00  
6.30 for 7.00 pm

Patchwork Group  
Ladies' Group Meal at New Country Inn

Wednesday 28:

10.00 - 12.30

Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 29:

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship: Marion Yelland

Saturday 31:

10.00-12.00

Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam, Kim and Steve)

**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](mailto:admin@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk)

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Information for February's *This Month* to the office by 20 January please.