

THIS MONTH: JANUARY 2010



RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Friends

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

Many of you will know that this verse is part of a section that sums up the people’s response to the evangelistic preaching of the Apostle Peter on the first Christian Pentecost. Some churches have a scripture verse for each year – especially if they publish a church calendar. It is not something I have done before but I suggest that this should be our verse for the coming year. It is a verse to which we all need to respond.

The insights of people who are experimenting with ‘new ways of being church’ are very challenging. This is something that the church leadership team (stewards and assistant stewards) has recently been considering. While for many years it has been a common criticism that the church has adapted the message but kept the same format, we know that we must seriously consider how we can keep the message but adapt the format. The way that we are seeking to do that is through ‘Café Church’.

There is no one way of using the insights of the *Fresh Expressions* movement and the various ways groups of local Christians are using the Café Church model. What we are seeking to do is to bring the New Testament pattern and the Café Church concept together – through evangelism, teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. In some of the special outreach events that we have organised in recent years we have already used the Café idea in evangelism – now we seek to extend that to four other areas of the life of the church community.

Three years ago, some of us were able to attend the *Peninsula Gospel Partnership* teaching day at St Leonard’s Church, Exeter, where the speaker was Phillip Jensen, Dean of St Andrew’s Cathedral, Sydney. One of the memorable things about that day was a renewed awareness that congregational growth goes in waves and that it is necessary always to be ready to push on to the next stage of growth. In 2008 we had a year of exceptional growth, receiving 11 new members. However, though we were blessed and encouraged in many ways in 2009, our growth had clearly begun to tail off and we must have the vision to go ahead again. We believe that the insights of Café Church, coupled with our faithfulness to scripture, are a helpful way to proceed.

I am encouraged and challenged by the number of church members who remind me how important it is that we are a more prayerful church community. In January we shall be holding our monthly prayer meeting as usual but on 6 February from 8.30 to 9.30 am we shall hold our first monthly ‘Prayer Café’. New Testament Christians were also devoted to

the Apostles' teaching. For a trial period, we are going to use the fourth Sunday evening of the month (beginning 24 January at 7.00 pm) as a 'Teaching Café'. We hope this will give us 20-30 minutes of Christian teaching using our data projector and printed notes. However, it will not be a traditional Sunday evening service. If we feel that God is blessing these new ventures we shall look to extend the format to enhance our fellowship – please start praying now that we will be guided as to the right way ahead.

Covenant service: Sunday 3 January 10.30 am

John Wesley borrowed the idea of the Covenant Service from the Puritans and held his first Covenant Service in 1755. It is a time in which we renew our Christian commitment and pledge ourselves afresh to God. Many Christians do this regularly but it is good to have a formal time 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 but it is to remind the members of the commitment that they made when they were received into membership and it has always been the expectation that every member will make a very special effort to be at the Covenant Service.

Hospital chaplaincy

Following his appointment to Rampton Hospital, Revd Jon Bush has moved from being the Senior Advisor for Pastoral and Spiritual Care in NHS Plymouth based at Mount Gould. Jon was the co-ordinator of a small team of chaplains (nearly all Methodists) of which I was one. I have been invited to co-ordinate that team until Jon's successor is appointed, a responsibility that will take four hours a week.

Happy New Year!

As always, we appreciated the cards and gifts that friends in the church community sent to us over the Christmas period. Many of our members work very hard to ensure that our Christmas programme is well organised (this includes decorating the church with flowers and candles), something for which we are all grateful. The New Year brings us fresh opportunities for spiritual growth and service and we seek God's blessing as we go forward together.

God bless

John Haley

CELL GROUPS

During the spring, groups will be led by Simon Rogers (Wednesday/Fridays evenings in the lounge), Stella Smith (Wednesday evenings) and Pat Stead (Tuesday afternoons). The final two groups will meet in the homes of cell group members. If you would like further information on the groups please see one of the leaders

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

If you are interested in Christian work among prisoners the next meeting of the Plymouth Prison Fellowship is on Tuesday 12 January at 7.00 pm at Engage Church (formerly Carmel Pentecostal Church), St Levan Road, Ford (near the junction of St Levan Road and Bartholomew Road).

January Diary

Saturday 2:	10.00 - 12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lidia)
Sunday 3:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Revd John Haley (Covenant Service) Miss Catherine Stead
Tuesday 5:	10.00 - 12.00 3.00 pm 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Cake café Ladies' Group: Members' Evening (Christmas treats)
Wednesday 6:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by Lunches
Thursday 7:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)
Saturday 9:	10.00 - 12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam, Kim & Steve)
Sunday 10:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Revd David Youngs Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)
Monday 11:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible study (Promise to Fulfilment, 1)
Tuesday 12:	10.00 - 12.00 2.15 pm 3.00 pm 7.30 pm 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome) Cake café Men's Fellowship: Mr Edwin Dobinson Ladies' Group: John Boulden (Plympton - now and then)
Wednesday 13:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by Lunches
Thursday 14:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: TBA
Friday 15:	7.30 pm	The Lyfe Bible study (in the lounge)
Saturday 16:	10.00 - 12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril and others)
Sunday 17:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Revd David Hull Revd John Haley
Monday 18:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible study (Promise to Fulfilment, 2)

Tuesday 19:	10.00 - 12.00	Patchwork Group
	3.00 pm	Cake café
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group: Brian Gerry and friends (Musical evening)
Wednesday 20:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by Lunches
	7.30 pm	The Lyfe Bible study (in the lounge)
Thursday 21:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: TBA
Saturday 23:	10.00 - 12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Local Mission (Pat and Jane)
Sunday 24:	10.30 am	Revd John Haley (Parade Service for all - age)
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 25:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible study (Promise to Fulfilment, 3)
Tuesday 26:	10.00 - 12.00	Patchwork Group
	3.00 pm	Cake café
	7.30 pm	Men's Fellowship: Elburton Methodist Church
	7.00 pm	Ladies' Group: Meal at the Hunting Lodge
Wednesday 27:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by Lunches
Thursday 28:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: TBA
	7.00 pm	Pedestal - Flower arranging practice (in the crèche)
Saturday 30:	10.00 - 12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Girls' Brigade (Lynne & GB Officers)
Sunday 31:	10.30 am	Mrs Janet Dobinson
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley

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 February *This Month* to the office by 26 January please.