

**THIS MONTH: JULY 2009**

## **RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH**



Dear Friends

### **Half of 2009 gone already**

It's hard to believe that half of 2009 has gone already. It has been a busy six months in the life of the church. I suppose we all know the experience of being busy without much organisation or purpose. However, although we have undoubtedly been busy, I think that we have also been organised and purposeful and I am grateful to the church stewards and all those who share with me in the leadership of the church. Once again we were greatly blessed and encouraged on the Sunday nearest my birthday. Thank you both to those who remembered my birthday and to those who said how helpful they found the services that day. It was good to welcome a number of people coming forward in the morning service but, whether we came forward or stayed in our seats, in any event it was good to share in the fellowship of prayer.

### **German visitors**

We have received greetings from Nicola Hoch who is now back at home in Gottenheim near Freiburg im Breisgau after an academic year in Plymouth. This month, we welcome Anna Bareis from Lauffen am Neckar, the new parish where her Father, Pfarrer Gunter Bareis, has been minister since last September. We recall the visit of the German students from Heubach in October 2006 with great affection and are glad that Anna is back with us again for nearly four weeks. Shortly after Anna goes home, Katrina Brand will be going home to Wurzburg in Bavaria. Katrina has been with us most Sundays since January and has tolerated quite a lot of good-natured leg-pulling from the Haley family. We wish her every success in the future.

### **Thank you for your support**

Sincere thanks to everyone who supported the visit of Revd Steve Wild to Millbrook Methodist Church on Saturday 13 June. I think about 40 people made the journey across the Tamar from Plympton for the evening celebration. In the afternoon, Steve spoke about making the local congregation a community that was easy to join and, after an excellent tea, in the evening Steve spoke to a well-filled church, illustrating his address with photographs of new evangelistic initiatives around Cornwall and several people came forward to show their dedication or rededication to the ministry of the gospel. I am also grateful to our church stewards and other willing helpers for working hard to make the funeral service and buffet for family and friends of the late Mrs Dorothy Ann Searle a fitting occasion. We set ourselves high standards with attention to little details and I am pleased to say that we consistently meet these.

### **A very special privilege**

I am really honoured to receive an invitation to be an assisting minister at an ordination in Wolverhampton. Our ordinations take place at the time of the Methodist Conference under the direction of the Conference. This is a privilege that I have shared on two previous occasions (2000, Halifax and 1994, Harrogate). Methodist ordination services are great events and no organisational detail is missed. Ministers are even told what to wear (black cassocks but no white preaching bands). When I was first a circuit minister, I wore grey and blue shirts as well as black

ones but then I developed a preference for rabat waistcoats (shirt fronts) and the two I had were both black. The black gown (sometimes called a Geneva gown) was the dress of the scholars of the Reformation and the ministers of Reformed Churches (pretty much synonymous with Protestant Churches) traditionally wore black. In the Highlands of Scotland, most of my colleagues were very soberly dressed and I followed suit except that the minister before me had always worn cassock, gown and bands to the services and I did not normally do that. At my welcome service in 1999, the Chairman of the Scotland Synod even expressed disappointment that I was not wearing an academic hood. However, times change, and although I tend not to wear robes on Sundays and have worn mainly black clerical dress, despite my commitment to the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, I will not always be in black in future.

### **Congratulations!**

We have been so pleased to have the Streeter family with us for several years. When Gary and Jan first joined us I promised that we would simply welcome them as fellow Christians and I like to think that we have done that. We tend to pray for Gary in the Sunday services a little more when he is away from us. This is a mixed blessing as Gary's work as an MP, with many official engagements, takes him and Jan away from us more than they would like. However, Gary keeps in touch, sometimes from overseas, and I am privileged to minister to all the family and to count them as friends. We have shared with the family in sad times (the illness and death of Jan's Dad, Cyril Stevens), through times of pressure (the protracted controversy over Parliamentary expenses) but now we are delighted to share with them in a joyful occasion with the wedding of Tamsin and Rob. We wish God's richest blessing on Tamsin, Rob, Jan, Gary, Joan and all the family.

### **A date in Halifax**

Earlier in the year Revd Peter Pillinger, who will be Chairman of the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District from 1 September, asked if I would speak at the AGM of the Voice of Methodism Association (VMA) in Halifax in July. VMA started in 1963 as a traditional Methodist response to the Anglican-Methodist Conversations of the time. In the early years, VMA tended to emphasise what it was against but more recently, under new leadership, the organisation has a much more positive emphasis. I have decided to speak on 'The Essence of Methodism'. These days, denominational differences seem to be much less significant than other groupings within the Christian church but that does not mean that many of the things that Methodists have traditionally emphasised have suddenly become unimportant. Universal grace, the priesthood of all believers, the completeness of each local church as a gospel community, scriptural holiness, regular use of the means of grace, and the importance of the small group for discipleship and fellowship are all important emphases in 'The Essence of Methodism' – that's as much progress as I have made to date – perhaps I'll let you know about the rest in due course!

### **Two colleagues retiring**

At the end of this month we mark the retirement of two of my colleagues. Revd John Carne, a good friend of long-standing from our days at Wesley College, will retire as Chairman of the Plymouth and Exeter District. This will be marked by a special service at Sidwell Street Methodist Church, Exeter, on Tuesday 21 July at 7.30 pm. We wish John and Valerie well as John takes up an appointment for one year at Haslemere before they retire to Dawlish. Also at the end of this month, Revd Robert Saunders, the minister I have served with longer than any

other, will retire as superintendent of the Plymouth and Devonport Circuit. Robert has not really been fully well for three years but has recently been off work since March. I am doing my best as 'acting superintendent' and realise the burdens that appointment brings. We wish Robert and Marion well as they retire to Dobwalls.

### Summer visiting

With many of our regular activities taking a summer break, the holiday period enables me to catch up with some friends in their own homes. I have about 15 people that I regularly visit at home. If you know of a member who would appreciate regular home visits or I have yet to see you in your own home, then please contact Monica in the office so that I can arrange to call.

Yours sincerely

John Haley

### SHOWSTOPPERS HOLIDAY CLUB

The Ridgeway Methodist Church Holiday Club this year will run from Monday 27 July - Friday 31 July (10.00 am - 12.30 pm). All school age children are very welcome. Cost £1.50 a session. If you would like to help in any way please speak to Miriam as soon as possible.

### A WEEKEND TO MARK IN YOUR DIARY: 25-27 SEPTEMBER

We had already planned a visit from the previous director of *Eurovangelism* when the financial crisis hit the world. We must give as much support as we can, as charitable donations have decreased and the poorest people in the world are suffering most. Our harvest weekend coincides with the national *Back to Church Sunday* campaign and the local mission group has planned the following events: Friday 25 (evening) Barn Dance; Saturday 26 (morning) Oasis Coffee Bar; Sunday 27 (morning) all-age service followed by lunch and a fuller presentation by Gary Cox. Further details nearer the time - but please book these dates now! A great opportunity to invite others to share the celebration and fellowship, and share our blessings with people in great poverty and need.

Carol Sharman

### July Diary

Wednesday 1:

10.00-12.3  
7.30 pm

Coffee followed by Lunches  
Steward's meeting

Thursday 2:

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship: Judith Goodridge

Saturday 4:

8.30 am  
10.00- 12.00  
3.00 pm

Monthly Prayer Meeting  
Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)  
**Wedding of Rob Oaten and Tamsin Streeter**

Sunday 5:

10.30 am  
7.00 pm

**Revd David Hull**  
**Mrs Val Marriott**

Monday 6:

No Minister's Bible study this week

Tuesday 7:	10.00 - 12.00 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group: Diane James (Diane With Love)
Wednesday 8:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by Lunches
Thursday 9:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: AGM
Saturday 11:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: St Lukes (Ladies' Group)
<b>Sunday 12:</b>	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)</b> <b>(Includes rededication of Pastoral Visitors)</b> <b>Revd John Haley</b>
Monday 13:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible study (Acts, unit 10)
Tuesday 14:	10.00 - 12.00 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group: AGM (followed by refreshments)
Wednesday 15:	10.00 - 12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 16:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Mrs Baker
Saturday 18:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam, Kim and Steve)
<b>Sunday 19:</b>	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Miss Catherine Stead</b> <b>Miss Judith Walker</b>
Tuesday 21:	2.15 pm	Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome) No Ladies' Group: Next meeting Tuesday 8 September
Thursday 23:	2.00 pm	Women's Fellowship: Afternoon Tea at Pam Tibbs 6 Ridge Park Road
Saturday 25:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril & others)
<b>Sunday 26:</b>	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Mrs Janet Dobinson</b> <b>Mr Brian Hart</b>

**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 August *This Month* to the office by 21 July please.