

THIS MONTH: JUNE 2008

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

Our Pentecost service

Preachers will know that sometimes when you look at a scriptural text that the outline of the sermon just comes to you and everything seems to flow so fast that your pen or typewriter can hardly keep up as you try to get your notes down on paper. Then there are those other times! My preparation for our Pentecost service (Sunday 11 May) certainly came into the latter category. I had a busy week and, as is often the case, preparation for Sunday was pushed into Saturday, a day I try to keep relatively free in theory but is often lost to preparation for Sunday in practice. My average sermon preparation time is five hours and as my work did not begin in earnest until after I had attended our excellent Flower Festival, Janet and the children went out leaving me in my study, sitting at the desk and feeling uninspired. The text to which I was drawn, *'For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline'* (2 Timothy 1:7), was not the most obvious passage for Pentecost and I struggled and wrestled to get any form to the sermon that would not qualify it for my epithet, 'it was like a plate of spaghetti' (it did you good but it was hard to unravel the end from the beginning). Many of you will recall that I divided our congregation into enquirers and believers. Enquirers want to know if God can do anything about the needs in their life, the brokenness, the hurts, the disappointments and mortality. Meanwhile, believers, who entrusted their life to Jesus, sometimes years ago, might realise that they have steadily clawed it back, bit by bit, until sometimes it is more of a mess than it was in the first place. It was on that basis that I asked members of the congregation to come forward indicating their desire either to dedicate (for the first time) or consecrate (having previously dedicated) their lives to God. When two or three came forward I was encouraged and was rather worried when I heard myself say, 'we are going to sing the song just once more because I think in a moment that many more people are going to come forward'. And that's just what happened. We were all encouraged by that and must not allow that momentum to slip either as individuals or as a whole congregation.

Membership preparation group

We had originally planned to have a special event with a visiting preacher in May but that has had to be postponed to next year. We were disappointed because we wanted the weekend to be the climax of a year of work that we have been doing to reach out to people to become disciples of Jesus. On reflection it seems that though our arrangements for a visiting preacher needed to be changed, God still honoured the main

plan which was to give people a focal point and opportunity to express their faith. This still happened on the same Sunday without the visiting preacher – typically dense, it has taken me two further weeks to realise that! We want all those who feel that the time has come to make a public commitment to their faith to have the opportunity to be part of a membership preparation group. This will take the form of four sessions on Monday evenings, each from 6.15-7.15 pm, beginning on Monday 9 June and continuing on 16, 23 and 30 June. We hope to welcome new members in a special service on Sunday 6 July at 10.30 am (if necessary preceding that service with a service of baptism or renewal at 9.30 am). You do not need a special invitation to attend the membership preparation group – just come. Also, if you would really like to attend but cannot do so on Monday evenings, do not hesitate to speak to me or one of our church stewards and we will ensure that we make alternative arrangements. In the four groups we will consider 'believing and belonging', 'being a Christian' and 'testimony and witness'. If you feel that you are interested but cannot join us in June we anticipate repeating the process in September but, again, it is very helpful if you let us know.

Latest medical news

Following the intervention of my MP, Mr Gary Streeter, my hospital appointment for lithotripsy (an ultrasound procedure to break up kidney stones) was rescheduled for Wednesday 28 May. Your thoughts and prayers are appreciated. I hope that if I am feeling better in June that I will be able to return to my regular programme of home visits for members that cannot come to church regularly. I am grateful for everyone's understanding. Since mid-May, I have also been suffering with brachial neuritis. This is a condition similar to sciatica but affects the arms. I have had a particularly painful episode in my left arm. The advice I have received is that this is largely brought on by stress and overwork. I am happy to say that my time as acting superintendent (a role I fulfilled for 11 months) is now over so I am hoping to get back into my more regular routine and take things a little steadier over the summer period.

Birthday celebrations

Every so often my birthday falls on a Sunday and it just so happens that this year, my 50th birthday, falls on Sunday 15 June. We plan to serve birthday cake after the morning service and then friends are kindly arranging a birthday tea at 5.30 pm which will be followed by the evening service at 7.00 pm. All are welcome.

Yours sincerely

John Haley

June Diary

Sunday 1:

**10.30 am
7.00 pm**

**Revd John Haley: Communion
Dr John Birkett**

Monday 2:		
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 6)
Tuesday 3:		
	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.30 pm	Church Council Meeting
	7.30 pm	Crosstalk Circuit Prayer Meeting at Stoke
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group: Geoff Blake-Lobb
Wednesday 4:		
	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 5:		
	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Outing to Morewellham Quay
Saturday 7:		
	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)
	4.00 pm	Wedding of Richard Prynne and Hilary Marlow
Sunday 8:		
	10.30 am	Mrs Janet Dobinson
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 9:		
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 7)
Tuesday 10:		
	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.30 pm	Men's Fellowship: Walk at Jennycliff
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group: Pam Kempson "History of Beads"
Wednesday 11:		
	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 12:		
	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Malc Halliday
Saturday 14:		
	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam, Kim and Steve)
Sunday 15:		
	10.30 am	Revd John Haley
	5.30 pm	Tea to celebrate John Haley's Birthday
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 16:		
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 8)
Tuesday 17:		
	11.00 am	Ladies' Group: Outing to Sidmouth
	2.15 pm	Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)
Wednesday 18:		
	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 19:		
	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Revd Joe Dickinson

Saturday 21:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril)
Sunday 22:	10.30 am	Revd Doug Rix
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley: Communion
Monday 23:	6.15 pm	Membership Group (in the creche)
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 9)
Tuesday 24:	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.30 pm	Men's Fellowship at Elburton: Louise Carter "Apostleship of the Sea"
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group: Peter McMullen "The Camera Never Lies—But!"
Wednesday 25:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
	7.30 pm	Church Council Meeting
Thursday 26:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Members' Afternoon
Saturday 28:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Latin Link (Jo and Matt)
	2.00 pm	Wedding of Bob Bazley and Cathy Jolly
Sunday 29:	10.30 am	Mr Colston Swift (All Age Service)
	12.30 pm	Shared lunch followed by a short service at 1.30 pm to celebrate the forthcoming wedding of Jo Sitch and Matt Sinton-Hewitt
	7.00 pm	Revd John Haley
Monday 30:	6.15 pm	Membership Group (in the creche)
	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 10)

**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 July's *This Month* to the office by 24 June please.