

THIS MONTH: JUNE 2006

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

Ministers' sabbaticals bring additional tasks for other members of the church community – and writing this particular message is among them. I have taken on the challenge this month; the July newsletter will bring a 'letter from America' from John Haley, and the stewards will be taking a turn in August.

The Christian Journey

The Christian life has often been likened to a journey or a race. In any journey, it is necessary to know where you are and to make sure you are on the right road – and get back onto the right road if you have got lost somewhere along the way. There is no sense in rushing headlong down the *wrong* road: the fastest marathon runner won't win the race if they go the wrong way. A traveller will never reach their destination (whether two miles or two thousand miles away) if they are so single-minded about going forward they don't notice that it is time to turn onto a different road.

Other people can help us, but we cannot assume that because someone appears to be going the right way it is automatically a good idea for us to follow them. Some years ago when we were on holiday in Denmark, another family followed our car for about 30 miles from the ferryport to the place where we were staying. They had decided that, because we both began by going in the same direction, we wanted the same ultimate destination. Happily, they ended up where they wanted to be – but this seems rather a risky strategy!

The Christian on a spiritual journey has a 'destination' in mind – to become more Christ-like, to grow closer to God, and to become better equipped to serve Him both as an individual and as a member of a church community. However, the route we need to take in order to reach that destination is not always easy to identify. We know that we want and need to share Christian fellowship and pastoral support with others; to worship and pray; to study and understand God's word, and to apply it to our lives. We know that we want to help the church community grow stronger and wider. Working out how to achieve this is never easy. There are times when we need to pause to work out where we are, and which direction we ought to be going in. We need to keep referring back to the roadmap for Christian living that we find in the Bible – and trying to make sense of the tricky areas and the parts that didn't look quite like this last time we were here!

However, once we have established where we are and which road we should be on, we should not remain standing still. Standing still will (obviously!) not take us anywhere. Instead, we should be seeking to move on in our journey - to grow in grace and holiness.

The review of the church's midweek devotional life that is currently being undertaken is an attempt to make sense of where we as a church are now, and how we are going to get from there to where we *want* to be. A healthy church needs spiritual nourishment throughout the week – just as we wouldn't be physically nourished by eating only one meal each week, so we are not spiritually nourished by one time of teaching and worship each week. Midweek groups are an important way of encountering

and interacting with God's word; together with the Sunday services and our own private devotions, they are important for the Spiritual health of the church community. The spiritual life of the church is an institutional journey – but it is made up of, and contributes to, all our personal journeys.

Church membership

Last autumn, a series of classes was run for those people considering becoming Members here at Ridgeway; these classes were designed to help people think about what it means to follow Jesus and whether membership was a commitment that they wanted to make. Confirmation and Membership are among the ways in which individuals can make a public acknowledgement of their faith, and express a sense of belonging to the church community. Next September, there will be another series of membership classes leading up to the reception of new members in October. If you are not currently a member at Ridgeway, this is something that you are invited prayerfully to consider over the next few months as you contemplate the route you may be called to take in your journey of faith in Jesus and service to Him. More information will also be available later in the summer.

24/7 Prayer

Our week of 24/7 prayer, which ran from 19th to 26th May, has been a time of personal enrichment for many as well as a time of corporate spiritual renewal for the church. The opportunity to pause in our daily and weekly routine to spend time in prayer is a reminder to us all (and especially those of us whose work in and for the church takes up a large part of our week) that it is easy to get so caught up in the work of the Lord that we may begin to overlook the Lord of the work.

Our time of prayer has been shared with others across the Plymouth and Exeter District of the Methodist Church, who have been praying between 12th and 26th May as part of the national *Pray Without Ceasing* project. Our time of prayer has also been shared with those from other Christian traditions: on 24th May we hosted the *Plympton Churches Festival of Prayer* and welcomed friends from a number of other local churches through our doors to share an evening of prayer together.

Walk Thru the New Testament

On June 17 we will be hosting *Walk Thru the New Testament*. Those of you who came to the Old Testament seminar in February will remember how enjoyable that day was, and how much we learned. I do encourage you all, whether you came to the *Old Testament* day or not, to join us to June 17th. The seminar fee is £12, which includes the seminar manual, and we are providing lunch for all those who come. The church has agreed to subsidise the day to enable young people to join us - those aged 11-18 or in full-time education within the Ridgeway church community can come for just £5. If you have not yet received one of the blue fliers with more information about the day, please help yourself to one from the vestibule.

Bible study and prayer are foundations which underpin our lives as followers of Jesus: Jesus prayed and studied Scripture, and expected his followers to do the same. These events in the life of our church help us as we seek to live how Jesus commands, and to become more like him.

God bless you
Catherine Stead

A call to minister

At Ridgeway we are very lucky to have groups of people who, as part of a rota, address the needs of others through the ministry of door steward, crèche helper and coffee helper. Each role is different, and the opportunity is there for each person to bring their own personality to the role. If you would like

to know more, please contact Muriel Duerden (door steward), Jan Smith (crèche) or Pat Stead (coffee).

NCH Step Out for Children

The annual nationwide sponsored walk is on Saturday June 10th. Details are on the notice board. Contact David Collier or John Buttle for more information. Please support children in need by walking or sponsoring a walker. Thank you.

David Collier

June Diary

Thursday 1:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Catherine Stead

7.30 pm House Fellowship at the home of Margaret and Martin Holst

Saturday 3:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Lydia Wood, Avril Baker and Nancy Stephens
(Outreach Mission)

Sunday 4 - Pentecost:

9.30 am Pentecost Breakfast

**10.30 am Revd Paul Smith (Holy Communion and
Commissioning of Pastoral Visitors)**

7.00 pm Deacon Ruth Richey

Monday 5 - Sunday 11: Plymouth and Devonport Circuit Week of Prayer and Fasting

Tuesday 6:

1.00 pm Ladies Group: Outing to Looe

6.45 pm *Crosstalk* Circuit Prayer Meeting (St Budeaux)

7.30 pm Circuit Meeting (St Budeaux)

Wednesday 7:

10.00 - 1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm Prayer Meeting at the church

Thursday 8:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship

7.30 pm House Fellowship at the home of Margaret and Martin Holst

Saturday 10:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Women's Fellowship

1.00 pm NCH *Step Out for Children* Sponsored Walk

Sunday 11:

10.30 am Revd David Youngs

7.00 pm Revd Doug Rix

Tuesday 13:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group

7.30 pm Men's Fellowship

7.30 pm Local Preachers Meeting (Stoke)

7.45 pm Ladies Group: Rev Glen Graham

Wednesday 14:

10.00 - 1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowship

Thursday 15:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship

7.30 pm House Fellowship at the home of Margaret and Martin Holst

Saturday 17:

9.30 - 5.00 *Walk Thru the New Testament*

10.00 - 12 noon Oasis Coffee Bar: Kim, Steve and Miriam (Youth Mission)

Sunday 18:

10.30 am Revd Andrew Earl

7.00 pm Revd Andrew Earl

Monday 19:

7.30 *Living Faith* Bible Study (5)

Tuesday 20:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group

7.45 pm Ladies Group: Mike Turner

2.15 pm Service at Pocklington Rise (Catherine Stead). All welcome

Wednesday 21:

10.00 - 1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 House Fellowship

Thursday 22:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship

7.30 pm House Fellowship at the home of Margaret and Martin Holst

Saturday 27:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar - Pat Stead (Church funds)

Sunday 25:

10.30 am Mrs Janet Bell (All Age Service)

7.00 pm Miss Catherine Stead

Monday 26:

7.30 *Living Faith* Bible Study (6)

Tuesday 27:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group

7.45 pm Ladies Group: AGM followed by music with Anne Brindley

7.30 pm Men's Fellowship (Elburton): Revd Robert Saunders

Wednesday 28:

10.00 - 1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowships

Thursday 29:

2.45pm Women's Fellowship: Outing to Mount Edgcombe

7.30 pm House Fellowship at the home of Margaret and Martin Holst

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 July's *This Month* to the office by 22 June please.