

THIS MONTH: MAY 2008

**RIDGEWAY
METHODIST CHURCH**



Dear Friends

Hail! the day that sees him rise

This year the month of May begins with Ascension Day (Thursday 1 May) but, although this ought to be a major Christian festival, very few Christians celebrate the day. If you are free in the daytime you will be very welcome to join me and the friends at Women's Fellowship for an Ascension Day communion. Perhaps what is important, however, is not that we mark a particular day but that we do not neglect the Christian doctrine of the ascension and heavenly session of Christ.

Some years ago I preached at Christ Church, Ware, Hertfordshire. The vicar at the time was the Revd Canon David Wheaton, formerly principal of Oak Hill Theological College. In his article, *What in Heaven is Jesus doing?* Canon Wheaton asks, 'when do we celebrate the heavenly session? When did you last hear a sermon (or, if a preacher, preach one) on the subject?' The Christian needs to give a thoughtful answer to two questions, 'where is Jesus now?' and 'what is Jesus doing?'

The first of these questions is answered by referring to the New Testament book of Acts. Between Easter Day and Ascension Day, Jesus appeared to his disciples and certain of the women who had followed him. However, after 40 days (Acts 1:3), when Jesus was with the disciples on the Mount of Olives, 'he was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight' (Acts 1:9). This was the last time he appeared to the disciples. His being taken up does not commit the believer to the notion that heaven is a place above the sky but it does help the believer to understand that Jesus is no longer in this world. Jesus has moved into a different dimension, a dimension that we call 'heaven'.

The second question is answered in some detail in the New Testament book of Hebrews. Hebrews is a long and complicated book but it repays careful reading. In short, it teaches that Jesus is praying for his people. By dying on the cross, Jesus has offered the perfect sacrifice (his own blood) for the forgiveness of our sins. Whereas earthly priests presented sacrifices day after day, Jesus presented one perfect sacrifice that needs no repetition. Although we sometimes express Jesus' work in heaven as praying or pleading (Hebrews 7:25) because he fulfilled all that his heavenly Father commanded, there is no doubt that his prayers are always effective. At the Last Supper, Jesus also told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them and would come again so that where he was they may be also (John 14:2, 3).

Where is Jesus now? In heaven. What is Jesus doing? Praying for his people and preparing a place for them.

General Church Meeting

Our general church meeting received various reports and appointed representatives to our church council and elected church stewards. My report to the meeting is printed on a separate sheet. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention on this monthly sheet that Mrs Pat Stead has completed her term of office as steward. I am sure that the whole church community is grateful for all Pat's work and wishes the five stewards who have been re-appointed God's blessing in their continued service.

Medical news

I very much appreciate the help and support that members and friends have been giving to me since I have been less than fully well. I was pleased to be able to return to work but would be unwise to go back to full speed. I believe the next course of action is for me to have ultrasound treatment (lithotripsy). I am a bit disappointed that progress seems to be a bit slow – perhaps it is all designed to teach me patience! For the meantime, special greetings to those I normally see regularly, particularly those I visit in their own homes for monthly communion. As soon as I am fully well, I hope to get back into my regular routine. Thank you for your continued prayers and understanding.

Yours sincerely

John Haley

“LIFE AFTER JO”

In July Jo Sitch will celebrate her marriage to Matt. From June we will need to have in place people who can cover the sound system for us. Jo is happy to train anyone who is interested in this. If you feel this is for you please see Jo or a Steward. Jo has also been responsible for Traidcraft—currently the stock is being reduced and following that purchases will need to be made using the Traidcraft catalogues. If anyone is interested in organising Traidcraft within the church please speak to a steward. Following the Young Peoples service on 29 June, Revd John Haley will hold a “sending off” service for Jo and Matt, followed by a shared lunch. Everyone is invited. Please come and share in the celebration with Jo and Matt.

May Diary

Thursday 1:	ASCENSION DAY 2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Revd John Haley (Communion)
Saturday 3:	8.30 am 10.00-12.00	Monthly Prayer Meeting Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine & Lydia)
Sunday 4:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Revd John Haley: Communion Mrs Val Marriott
Tuesday 6:	10.00-12.30 6.30 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group Dinner at Staddon Heights Golf Club
Wednesday 7:	10.00-12.30 7.30 pm	Coffee followed by lunches Minister's Bible Study (worship 3)
Thursday 8:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Revd David Youngs
Saturday 10:	10.00-12.00 10.00-4.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam) Flower Festival in church
Sunday 11:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Revd John Haley: Pentecost Pam Smith and Revd John Haley
Monday 12:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 4)
Tuesday 13:	10.00-12.30 7.30 pm 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Men's Fellowship at Ridgeway: Harley Green Ladies' Group: Paraguayan Harpist
Wednesday 14:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 15:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Revd Maureen Robbins
Saturday 17:	10.00-12.00 2.30 pm 7.00 pm	Oasis Coffee Bar: World Mission (Beth) Wedding of James Barnett and Tracey Viney One Man's Story with Revd Dr Denis Applebee
Sunday 18:	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Mr Nigel Graham Revd John Haley

Monday 19:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible Study (worship 5)
Tuesday 20:	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	2.15 pm	Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)
	7.45 pm	Ladies' Group: Richard House "The Fire Brigade"
Wednesday 21:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 22:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Members Afternoon
Saturday 24:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril & Pamela)
Sunday 25:	10.30 am	Mr Mark Pellow
	7.00 pm	Mrs Danie Neads
Tuesday 27:	10.00-12.30	Patchwork Group
	7.30 pm	Men's Fellowship at Elburton: Janet Cowland
Wednesday 28:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 29:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Deacon Ruth Richey
Saturday 31:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)

**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 June's *This Month* to the office by 20 May please.