

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



THIS MONTH: MAY 2010

Dear Friends

Identifying our 'shadow mission'

I don't often read the free newspapers that come through our door but a casual glance at *The Mitcham Guardian* in the summer of 1988 gave me the opportunity to form Epworth F.C., a five-a-side football team that I registered for the Sutton Floodlit Five-a-side League. My friend and colleague, Mark Dunn-Wilson, now superintendent minister of the Truro Methodist Circuit, was one of my congregation at the time and we searched for some friends to register eight to 10 players from which we could use a squad of seven for each match. Wearing a green and white strip, we had a good first season and were promoted to a higher division. That summer, I officiated at a lovely wedding service with Paul and Sonya. Paul was a good footballer and I signed him for my team. I also signed his brother, an even better player, and their friend, a very good goalkeeper. However, not long after that a crisis arose.

You would think that forming a five-a-side football team that played for 25 minutes, once a fortnight was not too daunting a responsibility and identifying its mission was simple enough. We didn't have a mission statement but if we had it might have said, 'Our mission is to provide the opportunity for young men to play football and to be as successful as possible within the rules of the competition'. I was a capable secretary/administrator and, joking aside, not a bad player but in my mind I had really formed the club for one reason – to give John a game. In our first season, we had done well, and I was the second top scorer but in our second season I had signed at least seven players who were better than me. Of course, not every player was available for every game, but for one fateful Thursday, I had a big decision to make. Seven players were available who were better than me and, whatever our mission might have appeared to be, it came into conflict with our 'shadow mission' (to give 31 year old John a game). It was a tough call – I dropped myself from the team for that night (gave instructions from the sidelines that made Fabio Capello look like the manager of a Sunday league pub team) and although I played a few more games I was no longer a regular in the side. We won promotion for the second successive year and I handed over the club to Paul, as I moved on to a new circuit.

Recently, a friend lent me a short book that I took the opportunity to read when things were a bit quieter just after Easter, *Overcoming your Shadow Mission* by John Ortberg (Senior Pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California). It was this book that enabled me to describe the progress of Epworth F.C. above and to consider my own part within it. To be fair, I knew all the facts (particularly the crisis of team selection) but would not have previously been able to express them in that way. However, I think it should challenge us to think about our mission, as a church and as individual Christians.

In common with many other Methodist Churches we have a mission statement. "At Ridgeway Methodist Church we aim to worship God in a way relevant for today and share His unconditional love as it is revealed in the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. We acknowledge our need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who enables us by our words and deeds to witness for Jesus both in our community of Plympton and Plymouth and throughout the world." The statement pre-dates my arrival as minister of the church but I have always felt that it accurately describes our mission. But what is our shadow mission?

I keep losing count but I think I have been minister of 19 different churches, in five circuits and three countries over a period of 27 years. Each church has had strengths (some more than others) and each church has had weaknesses (some a lot more than others). Each church has had opportunities (often these have been nothing other than immense challenges) and the fact that four have since closed indicates that threats were all around us – we had our mission (even if it was not always articulated in mission statements) but there is no doubt in my mind that we often had our shadow mission. I have a feeling that in many Methodist Churches today (and I can only speak from my own experience of my own denomination), that the shadow mission is 'to keep the people that we have reasonably happy'. That's not the worst idea that I have heard but what about if and when it comes into conflict with Christ's mission, 'to seek and to save those who are lost?' I invite you to share the challenge to think about our mission, as a church and as individual Christians.

Minister's Bible study (new term begins Monday 26 April, 7.30 pm)

We are not abandoning the Bible but in our next series of studies we are not actually doing 'Bible study'. Instead, in order to accommodate our students who are doing the Moore College Course, we shall be looking at Reformation Church History. The format of the meetings will be much the same and God willing we will all learn a lot about how the Reformation influenced so many of the ways in which we think and live as Christians today. Everyone is welcome and no prior knowledge is expected or assumed. There is no study on the two Bank Holiday Mondays. In those weeks our studies will be on Wednesday 5 May and Wednesday 2 June.

Café initiatives and special guests

In the coming month our Prayer Café will be on Saturday 1 May at 8.30 am, our Fellowship Café will be on Wednesday 12 May at 7.30 pm and our Teaching Café will be on 23 May. From 22 to 24 May, Willy and Katharina Niklaus will be with us from Switzerland, where Willy is a minister in the Swiss Reformed Church. We are arranging an opportunity for people to meet them for High Tea on Saturday 22 May at 4.30 pm at the Friary Manor Hotel which is next to Maker Church between Kingsand and Cremyll. Please enquire through the office at the beginning of that week. We look forward to welcoming them.

God bless

John Haley

PRAYER CAFÉ

The next prayer café is on Saturday 1 May - food will be served from 8.15am in the main hall followed by a time of prayer and worship in the chapel. The prayer focus will be on our local community at the start of the NOISE weekend.

THE NOISE

Please can you support our young people by praying for them and by coming along to help with as many of the events as possible from 1 - 3 May (please see separate leaflet for times). Thank you to everyone for their donations of chocolate bars, cakes and gifts for the Free Gift Stall.

Miriam Sitch

FLOWER FESTIVAL

If you can help with stewarding or serving the refreshments, please sign up on the board in the entrance area. On Saturday 8 May - in order to contribute to the art exhibition or if you would like to do your own flower arrangement based on one of Jesus' parables, please speak to Miriam as soon as possible. Please pray for this event - that many will come and all will feel welcome.

The Local Mission team

PRAYER LABYRINTH



Churches throughout the city are uniting to support 10 days of prayer from Ascension Day to Pentecost. Different churches will be hosting various events and we are going to provide a prayer labyrinth and associated prayer areas on Tuesday 18 May noon - midnight. This will be set up in the chapel and you will be able to visit at any time. If you are able to help with stewarding during this event, please speak to Simon or Miriam.

WEDDING SERVICE

Val and Alan Peter would like to welcome anyone to the service of their daughter Melissa on Friday 21 May at 2.00 pm.

May Diary

Saturday 1:

	PRAYER CAFÉ 8.30 - 9.30 am Prayer and Breakfast	
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10.00 - 12.00
5.30 pm

Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)
Barbecue

Sunday 2:

10.30 am
7.00 pm

Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)
Revd David Youngs

Monday 3:

No minister's study today (see Wednesday)

Tuesday 4:

10.00 - 12.00
3.00 pm
7.45 pm

Patchwork Group
Cake café
Ladies' Group: Mr Brian Gerry (Musical Evening)

Wednesday 5:

10.00 - 12.30
7.30 pm

Coffee followed by Lunches
Minister's Study (Reformation Church History, 2)

Thursday 6:

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship: Mr Ivor Merrin

Saturday 8:

10.00 - 4.00
10.00 - 12.00

Flower Festival ("Stories of Jesus")
Oasis Coffee Bar: Local Mission (Pat, Jane and Miriam)

Sunday 9:

10.30 am
7.00 pm

Revd John Haley
Revd John Haley (Holy Communion)

Monday 10:

7.30 pm

Minister's Study (Reformation Church History, 3)

Tuesday 11:

10.00 - 12.00
3.00 pm
2.00 pm
7.30 pm
7.30 pm

Patchwork Group
Cake café
Ladies' Group: Buckfast Abbey - Tour and Cream Tea
Church stewards' meeting
Men's Fellowship: Ridgeway Methodist Church

Wednesday 12:

10.00 - 12.30
7.30 pm

Coffee followed by Lunches
Fellowship Café

Thursday 13

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship (Ascension Day Communion) (All welcome)

Saturday 15:

10.00 - 12.00

Oasis Coffee Bar: Christian Aid (Pat Jane and others)

Sunday 16:

10.30 am **Revd David Hull**
7.00 pm **Revd John Haley**

Monday 17:

7.30 pm Minister's Study (Reformation Church History, 4)

Tuesday 18:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group
noon - midnight Half Day of Prayer
2.15 pm Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)
3.00 pm **Cake café**
7.30 pm Church Council if required (refer to weekly notice sheet)
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Mrs Mary McNaughton (Project Sierra - a family & a future)

Wednesday 19:

10.00 - 12.30 Coffee followed by Lunches
7.30 pm Pastoral Committee

Thursday 20:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: "Songs of Praise"

Friday 21:

2.00 pm Marriage of Simon Blacker and Melissa Peter

Saturday 22:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Worlds Mission (Beth and others)
4.30 for 5.00 pm High Tea at Friary Manor (Maker) with Willy & Katharina Niklaus
(details through the office)

Sunday 23:

10.30 am **Revd John Haley**
7.00 pm **Revd John Haley (Teaching Café)**



TEACHING CAFÉ
7.00 - 8.30 pm
Teaching and a light supper

Monday 24:

7.30 pm Minister's study (Reformation Church History, 5)

Tuesday 25:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group
3.00 pm **Cake café**
7.30 pm Men's Fellowship: Mr Norman Proctor (Jaipur Limb)
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Mr Jim Williamson (MAF -Flying for life)

Wednesday 26:

10.00 - 12.30 Coffee followed by Lunches

Thursday 27:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Revd Mike Gatley

Saturday 29:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam, Kim and Steve)

Sunday 30:

10.30 am **Revd Stephen Caddick**
7.00 pm **Mrs Kate Konrad**

Monday 31:

No minister's study today (rearranged for Wednesday 2 June)

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

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Information for June *This Month* to the office by 25 May please.