

# THIS MONTH: OCTOBER 2007

## RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

### **A word of thanks**

In the church, September is always a busy month of the year with things starting up again after the summer break. I am very grateful to all those who have returned to another year of service and to those who have made the events, such as harvest festival, special occasions. In our family, September was overshadowed by the sudden death of Janet's Father. We are very grateful for the help and practical support given by members of our congregations and for all the kind messages and cards that we have received.

### **News from the Plymouth and Devonport Circuit**

Our superintendent minister, Revd Robert Saunders, has been off work since the middle of June. Robert went into hospital to have a shoulder replacement operation and this was very successful. However, Robert's consultant recommended that Robert should have a second shoulder replacement operation as soon as possible and this is scheduled for the end of October or beginning of November. During this time, I have been appointed 'acting superintendent', which requires me to take a much more substantial role in overseeing the work of the seven other ministers and the 25 churches that make up our circuit. This does not mean that I am too busy for important pastoral matters but it does mean that I will not be able to be involved in some more routine things at Ridgeway and Millbrook.

### **What is worship?**

For most of my ministry, the changing style of worship in Sunday services has been one of the live issues in local congregations. While it is certainly not true that everything stayed the same for hundreds of years and then suddenly changed in the last 20 years, it is clear that society is changing more rapidly than ever before and the church is changing too. Change is very important, it is a characteristic of life, but change has to be managed and planned. Many people are confused about worship and simply make 'worship' synonymous with singing. Most of us have been in Sunday services that have been running for about 20 minutes when someone says, 'Now let's move into a time of worship', when what is meant is a time of singing contemporary songs. Many people will object that they have already been worshipping for the last 20 minutes, but is even that assumption correct?

We need to bear in mind that it is not simply calling something 'worship' that makes it 'worship' and that in the Bible some 'worship' was offered to God that was totally unacceptable to him. For some people, 'worship' is what happens when people sing

‘worship songs’, particularly when they have some kind of emotional experience singing them. For others, worship is what happens when they share in a particular form of service that they like, whether that service is the sonorous cadences of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), a nonconformist hymn-sandwich with generous fillings of Wesley and Watts, or a chandelier-swinging time of Pentecostal praise. Some people are narrow enough to suggest that if you do not worship in their way, you are not worshipping at all. Other people are generous enough to say that even if you do not worship in their way that you are still worshipping but we need to remember that true worship is not something that happens in isolation from the rest of life but is part of the whole essence of Christian living.

According to the New Testament, worship and service are something that we offer to God through the whole of life – and not just for an hour or two on a Sunday. It is our whole faith-response to God and not restricted to the Sunday services. Nevertheless, the New Testament is realistic and recognises that being a Christian is not always easy and so it is good for us to meet together to encourage one another and to build one another up. In short, what we call our ‘Sunday services’ are primarily to *encourage* and *edify* believers. This understanding gives us a whole new perspective on the Sunday service. When you take a friend along to church on a Sunday if you think in terms of worship, especially an understanding of worship that is found in a particular part of the service, in the form of a particular kind of worship, all you can really ask is ‘did you enjoy it?’ In fact, let’s admit that it’s a question that we are not unfamiliar with asking of ourselves. However, if we move the goalposts back to where they really ought to be then we are presented with two different questions – was it encouraging and was it edifying? Did I come out of the service encouraged (perhaps challenged or spurred on) and edified (built up) in my Christian faith? In order for that to happen, ‘the ministry of God’s Word must be at the heart of our meetings’. It is the preaching of the biblical gospel that calls the church into being and ‘sleepy churches come alive when God’s Word begins to be taught’ (For more thoughts about worship see PGP addresses, *Music in Worship*, <http://www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk/notes.html>).

God bless

*John Haley*

## **PASTORAL VISITORS**

Please note the new date for the next pastoral visitors meeting is Thursday 1st November (originally 2nd October).

## **GROUP REVIEWS**

Thank you to all those who responded so positively to the group reviews held during the summer. The stewards, along with John Haley, have begun to consider each report looking at ways in which groups, leadership and members can be involved. A response to each group will shortly be available. Thank you again.

## October Diary

Tuesday 2:	10.00-12.30 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Ladies' Group: Steve Holley "Plymbridge Woods"
Wednesday 3:	10.00-12.30	Coffee followed by lunches
Thursday 4:	2.45 pm	Women's Fellowship: Doreen Sinstadt
Saturday 6:	8.30 am 10.00-12.00	Prayer Meeting Oasis Coffee Bar: Macmillan nurses charity coffee morning (Ladies' Group)
<b>Sunday 7:</b>	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Revd John Haley:</b> <b>Communion and reception of new members</b> <b>Mrs Alfreda Rogers</b>
Monday 8:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible study (Christian Doctrine 3)
Tuesday 9:	10.00-12.30 7.30 pm 7.30 pm 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Men's Fellowship: Mike Steel "New Zealand slides" Youth Council Meeting Ladies' Group: Dr Henry Will "Past, present and future of Ford Park Cemetery"
Wednesday 10:	10.00-12.30 7.30 pm	Coffee followed by lunches Church stewards' Meeting
Thursday 11:	2.45 pm 7.30 pm	Women's Fellowship: Danie Neads Outreach Meeting
Saturday 13:	10.00-12.00	Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)
<b>Sunday 14:</b>	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Revd John Haley</b> <b>Revd John Haley</b>
Monday 15:	7.30 pm	Minister's Bible study (Christian Doctrine 4)
Tuesday 16:	10.00-12.30 2.15 pm 7.45 pm	Patchwork Group Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome) Ladies' Group: Revd Alen McCulloch "Life as a Naval Chaplain"

Wednesday 17:

10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches  
7.30 pm Church Council meeting

Thursday 18:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship

Saturday 20:

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

**Sunday 21:**

**10.30 am Revd George Palmer**  
**7.00 pm Miss Judith Walker**

Tuesday 23:

10.00-12.30 Patchwork Group

Thursday 25:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Win Smith

Saturday 27:

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine and Lydia)

**Sunday 28:**

**10.30 am Revd Jon Bush**  
**7.00 pm Revd John Haley (Communion)**

Monday 29:

7.30 pm Minister's Bible study (Christian Doctrine 5)

Tuesday 30:

10.00-12.30 Patchwork Group  
7.30 pm Ministry and Mission Meeting  
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Diane Law "Seaside Memories"

Wednesday 31:

10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches  
7.30 pm "Amazing Grace" (a film about the life of  
William Wilberforce)

**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](mailto:admin@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk)  
**Minister: The Revd John M Haley:** [min@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk](mailto:min@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk)  
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Information for November's *This Month* to the office by 23 October please.