

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



THIS MONTH: OCTOBER 2011

Dear Friends

'I am not ashamed of the gospel'

Much of the New Testament consists of the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote to the New Testament churches. He wrote his longest letter to the church at Rome and this is commonly reckoned to be not only the best summary of Christian doctrine but also the most difficult letter to understand. At the beginning the Apostle claims, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel' (Romans 1:17).

We are familiar with using ironic understatement for effect. For example we could say, 'to swim the English Channel is *no small* achievement'. More simply we could say, 'to swim the English Channel is a *great* achievement' but it is not quite so expressive. At the beginning of Romans, Paul writes that he is *not ashamed* of the gospel. Again, this is an expressive way of speaking. He could so easily have written that he was *proud* of the gospel or that he gloried in it. This set me thinking as to why Paul might be ashamed of the gospel?

First and foremost, the gospel is about a person, Jesus. The great claim of the Christian faith is that God has come to us in person, in Jesus. Why would Paul be ashamed of Jesus? At the time of the Roman Empire, Jesus' homeland, Judea, was just a distant province in the empire. People from Judea were not considered anything special. Although he was born in Bethlehem, Jesus was brought up in Nazareth, an unexceptional town from which nothing significant had ever come. Yet, even within his own community, there were those who looked down upon Jesus, perhaps because there had been some scandal as to the circumstances of his birth. If that was not enough, Jesus had been rejected and betrayed by his own people and crucified, a form of death reserved by Rome for criminals who were not Roman citizens and regarded as disgusting by the Jews.

It's easy to see why Paul might have been ashamed of Jesus and the gospel and yet he is not ashamed. He is not ashamed of it because he believes that in the gospel the righteousness of God has been revealed. While each of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) gives us information about the ministry of Jesus, his teachings, his parables and his miracles, there is little doubt that the main interest of the Gospel-writers is the death of Jesus. Christians believe that God deals with the sin of the world (unbelief, disobedience) by the death of Jesus, who bears our sins in his body on the cross. In Jesus, therefore, we can see the grace and mercy of God in action. In Jesus, God himself is winning us back by the depth of his love. Paul is not ashamed of this message. Furthermore, the story does not end there. The accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, when his disciples and friends saw him alive again, show his victory over sin, death and the grave and bring hope of life to everyone.

The gospel message is a challenge to us all. It calls us to believe in Jesus, the man who is God, and to apply his death and resurrection in our lives. But what does it mean to *apply* his

death and resurrection? It is possible to believe that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world but not to have acknowledged that he died for you. In the ancient world, when the worshipper offered a sacrifice, the worshipper would place his hand on the sacrifice to show that it was his. By faith, the believer does the same today, reaching out and acknowledging that Jesus is not simply dying *for the world* but *for me*. Do you feel that, by faith, you have knelt at the foot of the cross and prayed, 'thank you Jesus for dying for me'? It is possible to believe that Jesus has risen from the grave and is alive today but not to have acknowledged him as your personal Lord and Saviour. By faith, the believer acknowledges Jesus as Lord and Saviour and is not ashamed. The new way of thinking and the new way of living that results from this does not mean that we never make mistakes and need to ask for forgiveness but it does mean that we are committed to someone else being in ultimate control of our life and destiny. By faith, the believer can receive the Holy Spirit (the presence of God in our lives).

The Apostle Paul lived in a cosmopolitan world with many competing ideas. Yet even in that environment (with so many similarities to our present-day situation), he was not ashamed of the gospel. The message of the love, grace and mercy of God made known in Jesus is relevant to us all. Jesus' death on the cross as a sin-bearer makes being right with God possible, while his triumphant resurrection gives hope of life. If you have never done so before, I would like to invite you to *apply* the death and resurrection of Jesus in your own life. Set aside some time to seek God's presence and to pray. For those of us who have done this before, as a new church year of service begins, there is no harm in recommitting ourselves not just to the message but to the Lord of the message. Now we have to live by that message and prove in word and deed, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel' because I am not ashamed of Jesus.

God bless

John Haley
Minister

HARVEST FOR THE HUNGRY

Our Harvest thanksgiving is on Sunday 9 October, this our 14th year supporting "Harvest for the Hungry". Sadly the poverty in eastern Europe (as elsewhere) continues and with the recession - giving to charities decreases. Last year Ridgeway Methodist Church gave slightly less than before, having increased it year by year until then. During our past hard winter I often thought of the people living in dire conditions, yet comforted to know someone cared enough to send them help. Please give as the Lord directs you, every penny will go to provide food and heating. Thank you.

Carol Sharman

KINGDOM KIDS PARTY

Please come and join us to celebrate being God's kids, cost £3.00 per family of four, tickets include games, bouncy castle, face painting, food and drinks, please book your place through the office - all welcome.

MESSY CHURCH

If you would like to know more about “messy church” coming to us soon, please come along on Wednesday 5 October at 7.30 pm.

Rachel Nelson - Local Mission Enabler

October Diary

Saturday 1:

	PRAYER CAFÉ Saturday 1 October 8.30 - 9.30 am Prayer and breakfast	
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10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Anne and Beth)

Sunday 2:

Sunday Services

10.30 am Preacher: **Revd Terry Higgins - Holy Communion**
7.00 pm Preacher: **Mrs Alfreda Rogers**

Monday 3:

7.30 pm Minister Bible Study (3)

Tuesday 4:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Mr Mark Pellow (Our Bible in English)

Wednesday 5:

10.00 - 12.30 Coffee followed by Lunches
7.30 pm Messy Church meeting

Thursday 6:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Mr Graham Skedgell

Saturday 8:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Harvest for the Hungry (Carol and friends)

Sunday 9:

Sunday Services

10.30 am Preacher: **Mr Chris Sturley - Harvest Festival**
12.45 pm Harvest Lunch (please see separate leaflet)
7.00 pm Preacher: **Mrs Brenda Youngs**

Monday 10:

7.30 pm Minister Bible Study (4)

Tuesday 11:

10.00 - 12.00 Patchwork Group
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Mrs Helen Pearce (Shekinah)

Wednesday 12:

10.00 - 12.30 Coffee followed by Lunches
7.30 pm **Fellowship Café**

	FELLOWSHIP CAFÉ Wednesday 12 October 7.30 - 9.00 pm Fellowship preceded by puddings
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Thursday 13:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Mrs Delarre Irving

Saturday 15:

10.00 - 12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: M.A.F (Pat and Jane)

Sunday 16:

Sunday Services

10.30 am

Preacher: Mrs Val Facey

7.00 pm

Preacher: Revd David Youngs - Holy Communion

Monday 17:

7.30 pm

Minister Bible Study (5)

2.00 pm

Network Meeting

Tuesday 18:

10.00 - 12.00

Patchwork Group

2.15 pm

Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)

7.45 pm

Ladies' Group: Mrs Tracy Watkiss (Decorated Dishes)

Wednesday 19:

10.00 - 12.30

Coffee followed by Lunches

Thursday 20:

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship: Mrs Pat Stakes

7.00 pm

Flower Arrangement practice (in the crèche)

Saturday 22:

10.00 - 12.00

Oasis Coffee Bar: Shekinah Mission (Sue and Len)

Sunday 23:

Sunday Services:

10.30 am

Preacher: Mrs Val Marriott

7.00 pm

Preacher: Mr Brian Hart

Thursday 27:

2.45 pm

Women's Fellowship: Mr Nigel Graham

Saturday 29:

10.00 - 12.00

Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril and Val)

Sunday 30:


Sunday Services:

10.30 am

Preacher: Miss Catherine Stead

7.00 pm

Preacher: Mr Nigel Graham - Teaching Café

	<p>TEACHING CAFÉ Sunday 30 October 7.00 - 8.30 pm Teaching and a light supper</p>
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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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Pease submit Information for November *This Month* to the office by 25 October.