

THIS MONTH: FEBRUARY 2006

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

Does Christian Doctrine matter?

Christian Doctrine sounds a rather arid subject but does it matter? It certainly matters for worship. Christians are committed to the complex doctrine of the Trinity (expressed simply this is the three-in-oneness of God's nature as Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Personally, I would find it impossible to worship with those who did not accept the Triune nature of God. The Bible records that when the disciples met the risen Lord Jesus they worshipped him. If Jesus is God to offer him worship is the most appropriate response anyone could offer; but if he is not God then it is idolatry. The early Christian Creed 'Jesus is Lord' means more than Jesus is in charge – it means that we accept him as fully divine.

The person and nature of Christ is yet another complex doctrine. The essence of Christian faith is trusting in the saving work of Jesus Christ, particularly his death upon the cross. Christians do not simply see this as an event in history, a rather long time ago, but an offering and sacrifice through which we can be made right with God. To do this Jesus had to be fully human and yet to receive our worship he must also be fully divine.

The great motto of John Wesley and the early Methodists, 'The best of all is: God is with us', is as important today as it has ever been. We do not believe that God is an impersonal being, far away, remote in heaven. We believe that he is present with us now. After his resurrection, but before his ascension into heaven, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal 'it' but the personal presence of God with us, illuminating the Bible to us, witnessing within us, blessing us with encouragement, binding us together in fellowship and energising us for service. Does Christian Doctrine matter? I should say so.

Pastoral news

We were all shocked to hear the news that our senior church steward, Mrs Pat Stead, had to go into hospital. However, we are thankful that Pat is making a good recovery and is now at home. As always, my general advice is to try to avoid telephoning the home of those you have heard are unwell, as in our church community a succession of telephone calls can be very trying. However, please feel free to keep in touch with me or with Sue Couch about pastoral news.

I had a telephone call from James Darby recently. I had very much hoped that things would work out well for James at Sherwood, Nottingham. However, James has been in touch to say that he is looking for a new job from the end of February as he finds the solitary nature of Christian work very demanding and hopes to move into a sphere of work where he can meet more people, particularly those in his own age group. I am sure you all join me in wishing James God's blessing and guidance for his future.

Circuit news: Plymouth and Devonport Methodist Circuit

Nationally, the Methodist Church is very short of ordained ministers and we have not been able to appoint a successor to Revd John Waldegrave, who retires in August. After a difficult couple of months, with a serious injury to his knee ligaments and an infection, John is making a good recovery and we wish him well for the future. However, the challenges before us mean that our 24-church circuit is likely to have to manage with eight ministers (in 1997 there were 13). We continue to explore various options

within the limitations of our budget. Please remember this in your prayers as, while the Revd Robert Saunders is on sabbatical, I am the acting superintendent minister.

Are you new to Ridgeway Methodist Church?

I am so pleased that so many new people are settling well within the life of the church but this also presents its own challenges. I would like to call on you at home, get to know you a little and assure you of our welcome. If you have joined us in the last year and I have yet to call on you please e-mail or telephone me so that I can arrange a convenient time to call. The Methodist Church has registered members. If you have belonged to another congregation before coming to us it might be possible to arrange a transfer of membership. If you have not really belonged to a local church before perhaps you would like to consider becoming a member of the church here. I have some booklets that explain this.

A good start to the New Year

I was delighted with the start we made to the New Year. Covenant Service was very well supported with 113 receiving communion and on the following Sunday we had 108 attending in the morning. Our evening congregations are still struggling to break the 40 mark regularly – but you could be a critical part in revolutionising our Sunday services, simply by giving us your loyal and faithful support. Our day away at Hampton Manor was very special and Revd Colin Salter, from Redruth, led us well. Thanks to Catherine for organising the day.

Redecoration

The chapel is being redecorated during February and the scaffolding is due to arrive on Friday 3 February. Please keep away from the decorating materials and consult with the property stewards about any usage of the chapel.

Midweek celebration: Wednesday 8 March, 7.30 pm

I am very pleased to say that Revd Andy Caldwell, the new minister at Mutley Baptist Church, and the worship band from Ivybridge Methodist Church will be joining us that evening. Please mark this date in your diary. Our regular monthly prayers will continue on the first Wednesday of the month. Do make a special effort to come to the February meeting – more information is given on this sheet.

Yours sincerely

John Haley

February prayer launch

There are many people at Ridgeway who pray for the various groups and individuals who make up the church – the Body of Christ, and it's a great privilege to share in God's work this way. So that we can pray more effectively and knowledgably, and so that all areas of the church's work and life are covered and supported, a list has been compiled, and we'd like everyone in our church community to commit to pray for up to three of these groups on a regular basis.

Cards are being prepared, with a short list of the prayer needs of each group, and will be available at the monthly prayer meeting on **Wednesday 1 February at 7.30 pm**. Please join us if you can, to find out more, to become involved, to be inspired (hopefully), and to get excited about God.

Let's rise to the challenge and turn this place into a powerhouse of prayer, where newcomers feel at ease, where needs are met, but most especially where God's presence is felt by all.

Pastoral visitors – please take lists to housebound people.

Carol Sharman

24/7 Prayer 19—26 May 2006

We will be holding a week of 24/7 prayer again from 19—26 May. More details later, but for encouragement please visit www.praywithoutceasing.org.uk

Miriam Sitch

Bible Society Plympton Action Group

If you would like to support this group on behalf of Ridgeway Methodist Church please speak to Barbara Wagner (213092) who will gladly give you more information.

February Diary

Wednesday 1:

10.00 am—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm Monthly Prayer Meeting. All welcome

Thursday 2:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Miss Catherine Stead

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

Friday 3:

7.30 pm Christianity Explored. Lounge

Saturday 4:

10.00—12 noon Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Outreach. Christine Gregory

9.30 am—5.00 pm "Walk thru the Bible". (Old Testament)

Please see Catherine Stead for more information.

Sunday 5:

10.30 am Revd John Haley. Holy Communion

7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Monday 6:

7.30 pm Management (Finance and Property Committee)

Tuesday 7:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

7.30 pm Crosstalk Circuit Meeting at Stoke

7.30 pm Church stewards' meeting

7.45 pm Ladies Group—Mrs Howell History of Lukesland (Slides)

Wednesday 8:

10.00—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowships

7.30 pm ICES 6 (Writings of John)

Thursday 9:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Members afternoon

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

Friday 10:

7.30 pm Christianity Explored

Saturday 11:

10.00—12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Church funds. Ruth Holman

7.00 pm 'Recharge'

Sunday 12:

10.30 am Mr Terry Waters

7.00 pm Revd John Haley. Holy Communion

Monday 13:

7.30 pm Minister's Bible Study (Hebrews 10)

Tuesday 14:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

2.15 pm Service at Pocklington Rise. All welcome

7.30 pm Youth Council Meeting

7.45 pm Ladies Group—Vicki Norman. Scattered Homes and Broken Hearts

Wednesday 15:

10.00—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowships

7.30 pm Local Preachers Meeting at Ridgeway

Thursday 16:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Revd Denis Applebee

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

Friday 17:

7.30 pm 'Christianity Explored'

Saturday 18:

10.00—12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Church funds. Miriam and Pat

All day: Girls' Brigade Officers course

Sunday 19:

10.30 am Mrs Janet Dobinson

7.00 pm Miss Judith Walker

Tuesday 21:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

Ladies Group. HALF TERM BREAK

Wednesday 22:

Coffee and lunches HALF TERM BREAK

7.30 pm House Fellowships

Thursday 23:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Muriel Duerden—slides

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

Friday 24:

7.30 pm Christianity Explored

Saturday 25:

10.00—12 noon Oasis Coffee Bar in support of church funds.

Sunday 26:

10.30 am Miss Catherine Stead

7.00 pm Mr Brian Hart

Tuesday 28:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

7.45 pm Ladies Group. Harold Rogers. Life History of Fanny Crosby (including soloists)

Church office hours:

Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Church telephones: 348178 (office only) 331186 (pre-school and hall)

Minister: The Revd John M Haley: minister@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

Outreach Worker: Miss Catherine Stead: outreach@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

Administrative assistant: Mrs Pat Gorton: office@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

Website address: www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk

Information for March's *This Month* to the office by 21 February please.