

THIS MONTH: JANUARY 2006

RIDGEWAY
METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

Happy New Year

I want to begin by thanking all those in the church community that sent Christmas cards and gifts to us – they are all very much appreciated. Early readers of *This Month* for January 2006 will just be about to celebrate Christmas. For most of us, the holiday season brings time for worship and thanksgiving, to spend time with loved ones and in recreation and perhaps to review the past year and plan for the year ahead.

The year 2005 has been busy for us as a family. Janet began her fourth and final year as a student at the College of St Mark and St John. She has a teaching practice and dissertation to complete and hopefully her course will come to a satisfactory conclusion. Katharine secured a place at the University of Portsmouth and managed to get onto the geography course which is what she really wanted to do. Fiona and Michael continue to be settled in their local schools. Fiona plays the flute with our worship band in every service and also learns the piano. Michael has started on the cornet and plays regularly with the Laira Youth Band. Significantly, for us as a family, I have been invited to stay a further four years in the circuit and am now settled until at least 2010.

The Plymouth and Devonport Methodist Circuit continues to face many challenges – not least attracting ministers to the Plymouth area. In the coming three months, our superintendent minister, the Revd Robert O Saunders, is taking a sabbatical and so, as deputy superintendent, these responsibilities fall to me. I would be grateful for your support and understanding in this period, particularly, as we continue to look for two ministers to succeed members of staff who are moving on.

Here at Ridgeway, I think we have had a good year. I know that I am responsible for leading a substantial part of it but, to me, there has been a freshness about our Sunday worship. Congregations in the morning have grown very slightly and evening congregations seem to have settled at a new slightly higher level having enjoyed quite a period of growth in the summer months. We have to expect the growth of the church to be a period of spurts and troughs but I feel that the underlying trend is up. This was reflected in our carol services. There was a great spirit among the congregation and I felt that there was a growing sense of the importance of being a community, a Christian family. If we can sustain a good spirit in the congregation, quality in music and worship and consistent Biblical preaching and teaching, I believe that we can continue to go in the right direction – but this is not solely my responsibility or the responsibility of those appointed to office: it is the responsibility of us all.

This year, because New Year's Day falls on a Sunday, we have decided to have our annual Covenant Service on 8 January at 10.30 am. The Covenant Service is a time of reflection and rededication to Christian faith and service for the coming year. Everyone is welcome and I hope that all members will give attending this service their highest priority.

Pastoral visiting

Patterns of ministry are changing and fewer and fewer members seem to want people to call without arranging a time in advance. I have also found that more and more members are either out or obviously

busy when I have called. I have decided, therefore, to adopt a new style of pastoral visiting with appointments. If I have yet to call and find you at home please would you suggest a time when you would find it convenient for me to come. If you know any member who would like me to visit more regularly (perhaps sharing communion) then please let me know. I am grateful to pastoral visitors who share with me in this work and remind them of two special meetings that we are having in January. I hope that these will be times of encouragement and fellowship for us all.

Maesteg Gleemen Male Voice Choir

Thanks to all those who have told me how much they appreciated the visit of the choir. The choir's accompanist, Suzanne Best, has been a friend of mine for a number of years and I have been trying to get the choir to come for a long time. The church was full both for the Saturday evening charity concert and for the Sunday evening Memorial Service. The choir did not ask for any expenses and the church covered the costs of printing, posting and advertising. Consequently, every penny of the combined proceeds of the tickets for the concert, the sales of programmes and the retiring collection at the Memorial Service (£1,513.34) went to Cancer Research UK.

Outreach programme

After another busy year in our outreach programme, several special events have been arranged for the early part of the coming year and are publicised in *Outreach News*. I am grateful to Catherine Stead for all the hard work that she devotes to these events. I hope that some of our own members will support *Christianity Explored* as well as the individual events.

Yours sincerely
John Haley

Superintendent—Sabbatical

Revd Robert Saunders and his wife Marion will have a time of renewal, reflection and recreation from 1 January to 31 March 2006.

We pray that God will bless them both during this special time and we ask His guidance on all those in Robert's Churches, and in the circuit, who will offer support during this time.

Acorn Christian Listeners Course. 9—23 January

In response to Crossline's urgent need to recruit additional new listeners to cover their 24 hour telephone listening line, we are hosting a 'Mini Course' If you would like any further information on this please see the notice board, or if you would like to attend but unable to meet the cost of the course please speak to Sue Couch.

Monthly Prayer Meeting

On the first Wednesday of each month a number of people meet to pray for our youth, church, locality & nation. The meeting is open to everyone at Ridgeway, it's not just for house group members, and a special initiative to ensure all aspects of our church's work is bathed in prayer, will be launched in February - more details nearer the time, but set aside Wednesday 1 February if you can.

The turn of the year is a significant time in many ways, and we have invited members of the other churches in Plympton to join us for the first "normal" prayer meeting of 2006 (i.e. it will be our usual, informal, open prayer time, not a big organised affair with live music). Please come if you can - not everyone prays out loud, so there's no pressure - God hears the "amen" of your heart.

We don't fully understand why God wants us to pray His will into being, but we do know that our prayers somehow enable Him to work in power in situations and in people's lives, and it's a great privilege to work in harness with Him through prayer.

Carol Sharman

Pray without ceasing

We are now well into the Methodist year of continuous prayer. At Ridgeway please continue to support the monthly prayer meetings (first Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm) and the prayer times before the morning service. If you have not yet been to either of these then you will be warmly welcomed. The prayer meeting on 4 January will be focusing on Plympton, our country and the world. The prayer meeting on 1 February will be focusing on the life of our church and will include a special challenge/invitation to the whole Church family. 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

January Diary

Sunday 1:

10.30 am Revd John Haley

7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Monday 2:

9.30 am New Year walk. Please see notice board for further details

Tuesday 3:

7.30 pm Crosstalk. Circuit Prayer Meeting at Stoke

Wednesday 4:

10.00 am—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm Prayer in the church. All welcome

Thursday 5:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Revd John Haley. Holy Communion

Friday 6:

Trip to see 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' Time to be confirmed.

It's not too late to book. Please sign list on the notice board.

Saturday 7:

10.00—12 noon Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Church funds

Sunday 8:

10.30 am Revd John Haley. Covenant Service

7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Tuesday 10:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

2.15 pm Service at Pocklington Rise—all welcome

7.30 pm Men's Fellowship at Ridgeway. Carpet bowls

7.45 pm Ladies Group—Bag Beetle

Wednesday 11:

10.00—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowships

7.30 pm ICES *The Writings of John (4)*

Thursday 12:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Malc Halliday

7.30 pm First of two meetings for Pastoral Visitors (lounge)

Friday 13:

7.30 pm An evening with Gary Streeter at the New Country Inn, Smithaleigh.

Saturday 14:

10.00—1.00 pm Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Church funds. Pat Stead

Sunday 15:

10.30 am Revd John Haley

7.00 pm Revd John Haley. Holy Communion

Monday 16:

7.30 pm Minister's Bible Study (Hebrews 8)

Tuesday 17:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

7.45 pm Ladies Group—John Goodridge. History of Morwellham

Wednesday 18:

10.00—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowships

Thursday 19:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Mrs Winnie Smith

7.30 pm Second of two meetings for Pastoral Visitors (lounge)

Friday 20:

7.30 pm 'Christianity Explored' Week 1

Saturday 21:

10.00—1.00 pm Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Ladies Group. Christine Gregory

10.00 am 5.00 pm "Away Day" at Hampton Manor with Colin Salter

Sunday 22:

10.30 am Mr Mark Pellow

7.00 pm Miss Catherine Stead

Tuesday 24:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

7.45 pm Ladies Group. Joseph Watson 'Forever Living Products'

Wednesday 25:

10.00 am—1.00 pm Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm House Fellowships

7.30 pm ICES *The Writings of John (5)*

Thursday 26:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship. Peter Gregory

Saturday 28:

10.00—12 noon Oasis Coffee Bar in support of Youth Mission. Miriam Sitch

Sunday 29:

**10.30 am Revd John Haley. GB/BB enrolment service,
including the baptism of the son of Karen and Richard Sutton**

7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Monday 30:

7.30 pm Minister's Bible study (Hebrews 9)

Tuesday 31:

10.00—12.00 Patchwork Group

6.30 for 7.00 pm Ladies Group. Dinner at the college of St Mark and St John

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

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