

# THIS MONTH: JUNE 2007

## RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

**“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).**

The account of the Christian message being proclaimed on the day of Pentecost is sensational. When the Holy Spirit came, the apostles left the room in which they had been gathered and began preaching the good news of Jesus to the crowds. The essence of their message was that Jesus was the promised Saviour and that his death was part of God’s plan. The apostles said that God had raised Jesus from the dead, as he had promised, and that they were witnesses to the resurrection. The apostles had seen Jesus, heard his voice and touched him. They had shared meals with him but then he had ascended into glory. The apostles challenged all their hearers to turn from unbelief and disobedience and to believe the good news and thousands did so.

Acts continues with details of what the new Christians did: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”. In the course of my work, I meet a lot of people who tell me that their faith is a private matter and not something that they need to express in the Christian community. However, when we turn to the New Testament we find that the very opposite is the case. In Britain today, we rarely have great crowds of people wanting to demonstrate Christian commitment in baptism and church membership. In the last century, the way that many churches tried to accommodate that was to make Christian commitment as undemanding as possible but in the New Testament we find that Christian commitment is as demanding as things can get.

A healthy human being normally eats well. Only when we are sick do we sometimes lose our interest in food. What applies physically will very often apply spiritually. The new Christians in Acts were hungry for spiritual nourishment – devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching. Openness to the Word of God and the teaching ministry is an important evidence of having spiritual life. It is a mistake to think that the primary purpose for Christians gathering together is ‘worship’ (especially if worship is limited to singing hymns and praise songs). The main purposes for our gathering together are to be fed from God’s Word and to encourage one another. The Apostle Peter, reminded the New Testament Christians that they should be like newborn babies, craving pure spiritual milk, so that by it they may grow up in their salvation (1 Peter 2:2). Our Sunday services and Bible studies are vital opportunities for Christians to grow.

If there is one word that Christians consistently misuse it is 'fellowship'. Just like anyone else, Christians can become discouraged at the state of the world and the apparent weakness of the church. It is easy to become disappointed with other Christians and to struggle in the Christian life. In an age where individualism is stressed, even the idea of expressing commitment in and to a community is alien to our culture. 'Fellowship' is about being Christians together. There are so many things that we do (e.g. going out for a meal, going to a sporting event or other entertainment, even going for a walk) where, although it is possible to do them on our own, it is so much better to have others to share them with. Fellowship reminds us that we were never supposed to be solitary Christians.

The breaking of bread (or as most Christians these days say 'Holy Communion' or the 'Lord's Supper') was given to us by the Lord Jesus as a meal at which he is remembered. It would be possible to have a big meal but to do only a little remembering whereas the format familiar to most of us is to have a small (one might say symbolic meal) in order to concentrate almost exclusively on the remembering. Once again, though it is possible to remember Jesus anywhere and anytime for many people this can soon become nowhere and never. We do not have complicated rules about who might share around the Lord's Table with us – we simply want people to remember him, particularly his death on the cross, with us.

Many people tell me that though they believe that prayer is important that they do find it quite difficult. If you find prayer difficult, then it might reassure you to know that you are not alone. For many people, the pattern of prayer they learned as children was to 'say prayers' at the beginning and end of the day. If you manage to do that, then I think that you are to be commended for it. However, busy people often find that they are rushing first thing in the morning and tired last thing at night. If that resonates with your experience then I suggest that you try a different pattern of prayer – maybe finding some time of day when it is quiet and you can take a while to read your Bible and to pray. It is also good to pray with other Christians. If you can spare an hour on a Saturday morning (once a month) you are very welcome to join our prayer group. We use various aids to prayer, including our prayer handbook, whole church community prayer initiative and prayer request book – so you need not be worried about coming but not being sure what you might have to say.

Once again, the coming month promises to be busy a time for us. We begin with our monthly prayer meeting on Saturday 2 June at 8.30 am. Please make a very special effort to join us. In addition to our usual programme, on Saturday 16 June at 7.00 for 7.30 pm we have the Outreach Dinner at the New Country Inn with Revd Edgar Daniel (see separate leaflet). This is a good opportunity to bring family and friends to a Christian event outside of the church. On Wednesday 20 June at 7.30 pm we have our midweek celebration with Revd Dave Martin who is the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District Evangelism Enabler. I hope you will support these special occasions as well as the things which happen more regularly.

Finally, at our General Church Meeting, we appreciated the work of Barry Mead and Marilyn Crabb who retired as church stewards and we appointed Avril Baker and Simon Rogers to

be church stewards to serve alongside Pat Stead, Sue Tozer, Dave Hockings and Karen Hussey. We have an excellent team of stewards who deserve our prayerful and practical support.

God bless

*John Haley*

## June Diary

Saturday 2:

- 8.30 am Monthly Prayer Meeting
- 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril, Steve and Kim)

**Sunday 3:**

- 9.30 am Service of believer's baptism**
- 10.30am Revd John Haley including Holy Communion and Reception into Membership**
- 7.00 pm Mr Brian Hart**

Monday 4:

- 7.30 pm Minister's Bible Study (New Testament 5)

Tuesday 5:

- 1.00 pm Ladies' Group Crediton Trip: Crediton Parish Church Flower Show

Wednesday 6:

- 10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 7:

- 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Paignton trip

Saturday 9:

- 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)

**Sunday 10:**

- 10.30 am Revd Vijay Panandiker**
- 7.00 pm Mrs Alfreda Rogers**

Monday 11:

- 7.30 pm Minister's Bible Study (New Testament 6)

Tuesday 12:

- 10.00-12.00 Patchwork Group
- 7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Mary Coslett "Midwifery with Altitude TIBET"

Wednesday 13:

- 10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches
- 7.30 pm Men's Fellowship Barbeque

Thursday 14:

- 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Members Afternoon

Saturday 16:

- 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine Gregory)
- 7.00 for 7.30 pm Dinner at New Country Inn with Edgar Daniel

**Sunday 17:**

**10.30 am     Revd John Haley**

**7.00 pm       Revd John Haley**

**Monday 18:**

7.30 pm       Minister's Bible Study (New Testament 7)

**Tuesday 19:**

10.00-12.30 Patchwork Group

2.15 pm       Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)

7.30 pm       Men's Fellowship: "June Walk"

**Tuesday 19:**

7.45 pm       Ladies' Group: Peter Shore "Lost in Nepal"

**Wednesday 20:**

10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm       Midweek Celebration with Revd Dave Martin

**Thursday 21:**

2.45 pm       Women's Fellowship: Revd John Haley

**Saturday 23:**

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril Baker)

**Sunday 24:**

**10.30 am     Mr Chris Sturley (All Age Worship)**

**7.00 pm       Revd John Haley (Communion)**

**Monday 25:**

7.30 pm       Minister's Bible Study (New Testament 8)

**Tuesday 26:**

10.00-12.00 Patchwork Group

7.30 pm       Men's' Fellowship at Elburton

7.45 pm       Ladies Group: Barbara Bowles "Lace Making"

**Wednesday 27:**

10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

7.30 pm       Church Council

**Thursday 28:**

2.45 pm       Women's Fellowship: Garden Party

**Saturday 30:**

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)

**Church office hours:**

**Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm**

**Church telephones:**

**348178 (office only)**

**331186 (pre-school and hall)**

**Church Office:** [office@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk](mailto:office@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk)

**Minister: The Revd John M Haley:** [minister@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk](mailto:minister@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk)

[www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk](http://www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk)

Information for July's *This Month* to the office by 19 June please.