

Wednesday 16:
 10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches
 7.30 pm Stewards' meeting

Thursday 17:
 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship
 8.00 pm Singing practice

Friday 18:
 7.30 pm SW Bible Festival (Mutley Baptist)

Saturday 19:
 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril Baker)
 7.30 pm SW Bible Festival (Mutley Baptist)

Sunday 20:
10.30 am Revd John Haley
7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Monday 21:
 6.15 pm Membership preparation (4)
 7.30 pm Moore Bible Study: New Testament (4)

Tuesday 22:
 10.00-12.30 Patchwork
 7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Kay Rouse "Anastasia"

Wednesday 23:
 10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches
 7.30 pm Plympton Churches' Festival of Prayer (Mudge Way Community Church)

Thursday 24:
 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship
7.30 pm Circuit Service, Preacher: Revd Paul Smith

Saturday 26:
 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Music Group (Charlotte Bloxham)

Sunday 27: (Pentecost)
10.30 am Revd Nathan Fisher
7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Monday 28:
 7.30 pm Moore Bible Study: New Testament (6)

Thursday 31:
 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship

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

Information for June's *This Month* to the office by 22 May please.

THIS MONTH: MAY 2007



RIDGWAY METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Friends

The meaning of the ascension

In the Christian calendar, Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday 40 days after Easter Day (or six weeks after Maundy Thursday if that makes it easier) and, along with other Christians, Methodists have often celebrated this on the following Sunday. For 40 days from Easter Day, the risen Lord Jesus Christ appeared to his disciples, not just the Eleven, but up to 500 hundred at one time. At the end of these appearances he vanished from sight but after the 40 days these appearances came to an end when Jesus, enveloped in a cloud of God's presence, was taken into heaven.

In the next to last verse of Luke's Gospel, for the first time, Luke records that Jesus was worshipped for who he really is – God's eternal Son. Realising who Jesus is and what he has done for us is the very ground of worship. Luke shows that Jesus is uniquely the Son of God (at his annunciation, at his baptism, at his temptation, at the transfiguration, at his trial). Luke also shows that Jesus is uniquely the Saviour of the World (the Gospel shows that Jesus ministered not only to Jews but also to Gentiles, while its sequel, Acts, records the spreading flame of the good news of Jesus).

It is because of who he is and what he has done that the disciples worshipped him. The resurrection seals that the death of Jesus was not simply martyrdom - it was the sacrificial death to which the ancient ritual of the Lamb of God pointed. The ascension seals the entry of Jesus into the heavenly Holy of Holies, there to be our advocate and great high-priest (in other words Jesus has gone into heaven to plead for the salvation of his people).

It must inevitably be true to say that the disciples looked for Jesus' return and yet, however devout that waiting would be, it did not involve gawping into the sky. Waiting with expectation and living faith involves worshipping the risen Christ and witnessing to others. This year we celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of the great Methodist preacher and hymn-writer, Charles Wesley. I conclude my reflection on the ascension with one of his greatest hymns, which reminds us that the ascension is not just a matter of abstract theology but of personal faith:

Entered the holy place above,
 Covered with meritorious scars,
 The tokens of His dying love
 Our great High-priest in glory bears;
 He pleads His passion on the tree,
 He shows himself to God for me.

Before the throne my Saviour stands,
My friend and advocate appears;
My name is graven on his hands
And him the Father always hears;
While low at Jesu's Cross I bow,
He hears the blood of sprinkling now.

This instant now I may receive
The answer of his powerful prayer;
This instant now by Him I live,
His prevalence with God declare;
And soon my spirit, in His hands,
Shall stand where my Forerunner stands.

Plymouth and Devonport Circuit events

Our circuit is a group of 23 churches. This year we are holding a Day of Prayer on Tuesday 1 May. The Day of Prayer will conclude with a special service at 7.30 pm at Stoke Methodist Church. Please see the weekly notice sheet for further information. Later in the month, we at Ridgeway are hosting the circuit service on Thursday 24 May at 7.30 pm. I hope as the host church that we will give this service our wholehearted support. Methodists all over the world remember that 24 May was a decisive day in the life of John Wesley, founder of the modern Methodist movement. In order to practice some of the hymns for the service and to familiarise ourselves with tunes (both traditional and contemporary) which we use regularly but have different parts for men and women we are arranging a singing practice on Thursday 17 May at 8.00 pm – all welcome.

Plympton Churches Prayer Festival

This year Mudge Way Community Church is the venue for the third annual Prayer Festival on Wednesday 23 May at 7.30 pm.

News from our General Church Meeting

We were pleased to welcome Revd Dave Martin our district evangelism enabler who shared some news with us from around the country of different styles of mission. Andrew Stead gave an excellent presentation about the Margaret Bell School in Zambia www.margaretbellschool.org. The meeting was excited to hear of this work and we agreed to facilitate members giving donations toward the cost of £1,200 to make substantial improvements to the school buildings.

The General Church Meeting expressed its thanks to Marilyn Crabb and Barry Mead who are standing down as church stewards. It reappointed Pat Stead, Sue Tozer, Dave Hockings and Karen Hussey and elected Avril Baker and Simon Rogers as church stewards for the coming administrative year.

The minister, senior steward and treasurer presented reports. The minister's report is printed separately. The treasurer pointed out that if our work is to go ahead that we will need people to show an even greater commitment in their giving. People in the church community who pay income tax were again asked to sign a gift aid declaration (a simple form available from Barbara

Parr of Liz Garland) so that they could give in a way that enables the church to recover literally thousands of pounds worth of tax. Those who have served the church in all kinds of ways in the past year were thanked. We are looking forward to another year of Christian ministry and mission.

John Haley

May Diary

Tuesday 1:
10.00-12.00 Patchwork
7.30 pm Circuit Day of Prayer Service (Stoke)
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Piers Le Cheminant "Devon Air Ambulance"

Wednesday 2:
10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 3:
2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Pam Tibbs
7.30 pm Pastoral Committee Meeting in the Church lounge

Saturday 5: (Noise weekend—see separate publicity)
8.30 am Monthly Prayer Meeting
9.00 am Dartmoor Walk
10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Mission Outreach (Christine Gregory)

Sunday 6:
10.30am Revd John Haley (Communion)
7.00 pm Mrs Janet Bell

Monday 7:
May Day Bank Holiday Monday (no Minister's Bible study)

Tuesday 8:
10.00-12.00 Patchwork Group
7.30 pm Men's Fellowship: Peter Gregory "Plymouth Nostalgia"
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Mr Palmer "Civic Ceremonial"

Wednesday 9:
10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 10:
2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Joan Lean

Saturday 12:
Flower Festival—please see separate information
10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)

Sunday 13:
10.30 am Mr Earle Rendle
7.00 pm Mrs Danie Needs

Monday 14:
6.15 pm Membership Preparation (3)
7.30 pm Moore Bible Study: New Testament (3)

Tuesday 15:
10.00-12.00 Patchwork Group
2.15 pm Service at Pocklington Rise (all welcome)
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Jeffrey Lloyd "From policeman to priest"