

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH

OUTREACH NEWS: Christmas 2005



Dear friends

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)

In this way, the angel of the Lord brings the message of Christ coming to the shepherds. This is a message which, this month, is resonating in church celebrations all over this city and country: but it is a message for **all** not just for those inside the churches.

Christmas provides a natural opportunity for the church (all Christians, not just the institutions of Christian worship!) to reach out with the good news of Jesus. Although we have an outreach programme, reaching out with the good news of Jesus can never be restricted to an organised programme.

From putting posters in our windows, to choosing Christmas cards which speak of the coming of our Saviour rather than the coming of Father Christmas, (not forgetting all those opportunities to invite friends, family and neighbours to carol services and nativity plays!) there is much that we can all do to invite the community around us to share in the good news of the coming of Jesus.

OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS . . .

Christmas Shopping and Wells Cathedral

On 12 November, around 40 of us visited the *Clarks Village* at Street for Christmas Shopping, and also went to Wells Cathedral. If the number of shopping bags on the coach was

any guide, the opportunity for Christmas shopping was well and truly taken! The visit to Wells Cathedral was also a success: the Cathedral looked magnificent in the winter sunshine, and everyone enjoyed attending Choral Evensong with the boy choristers.

Book Fair

On 19 November we held a book fair at Oasis Coffee Morning. A large and varied selection of books, DVDs, music, Advent calendars and Christmas Cards was provided by the Christian Resources Project, and over £330-worth of goods were sold.

Maesteg Gleemen Male Voice Choir

Outreach from the church is not restricted to an “official” outreach programme: in the evening of 19 November over 150 people came to hear the Maesteg Gleemen and their guest soloist Claire Michelle Edwards sing a programme of traditional and specially-arranged music. There was also the opportunity to join in some traditional Welsh hymns. Although many of the audience regularly attend this or other churches, we were also delighted to welcome some friends who are not regularly inside any places of Christian worship. We were also pleased to welcome the Deputy Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Councillor David and Mrs Diane James.

All the CDs and tapes brought by the choir sold out over the weekend, and some people even came back to the Memorial Service on 20th November just to hear the choir again! We were also pleased to extend a welcome to many bereaved families at this service.

Christmas Events

Nearly 500 Christmas cards have been sent to church members and friends, and also to many of our neighbours on Ridgeway, bringing Christmas greetings from the church and an invitation to join us for our Christmas services - as well as a little of the gospel message.

As usual, we have had a very busy Christmas programme and welcomed many guests and visitors into the church. Two relatively new events in our church calendar are Christingle

and the open-air carol service at St Stephen's Place (arranged by Plympton Christian Leaders' Group); both took place on 17 December. Once again, the carols in St Stephens Place were well supported, and 400 mince pies were given away to shoppers. Music was provided by the Laira Youth Band. Through this event, we made contact with a lot of people that we might not have met in the churches. We welcomed around 50 people, including nearly 20 children, to Christingle, and were delighted that so many enjoyed the service.

AND IN THE WEEKS TO COME . . .

An evening with Gary Streeter

On Friday 13 January, there will be the opportunity to share in a meal at the New Country Inn at Smithaleigh, when our speaker will be Gary Streeter, MP.

Hampton Manor

On Saturday 21 January, we will be holding a day away at Hampton Manor near Callington. We visited Hampton Manor in the summer when, as well as being spiritually refreshed, we were able to appreciate the beautiful gardens under the hot summer sun. This time, we will be able to appreciate the log fires and cosy lounge as we seek spiritual renewal!

The day will be led by Colin Salter who was minister of the International Church at Khartoum in the Sudan until he recently had to return to Cornwall to regain his health. He has previously been director of Ambassadors for Christ. Colin's theme for the day is 'Empowering our Witness'.

Christianity Explored

Christianity Explored will be running on Friday evenings from 20th January. The course, which is based on Mark's gospel, is for anyone wanting to explore the Christian faith, and all are welcome.

Walk Thru the Old Testament

On Saturday 4 February the Walk Thru the Bible team will be leading a Walk Thru the Old Testament seminar and bringing

the Bible to life through active learning. In June, they will be returning to lead us on a Walk Thru the New Testament.

Bryn Haworth

On Saturday 18 March, we are pleased to have the singer and songwriter Bryn Haworth joining us as part of his "Keep the Faith" tour.

Treloyhan Manor

Our church weekend at Treloyhan Manor is drawing closer: the weekend of 7-9 April 2006 seems a long time in the future, but of course it will soon be 2006. If you have not yet booked your place on this weekend, we would be delighted if you joined us.

AND FINALLY ...

I am thankful for the prayer and encouragement you have given me so far, and ask for your continued prayer and support for the church's outreach work.

God bless you

Catherine Stead

Outreach Worker

The church has a busy programme of regular and seasonal events. These are advertised on our weekly and monthly sheets and on our website.

Church office hours: Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am—12.30 pm
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