

# *Southend & Leigh* CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



Winter Edition 2024

*First Quarter*

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## Welcome to our Circuit

We are a group of 15 Methodist Church fellowships, including a Zimbabwean fellowship, on 17 sites in the southeast corner of Essex. Our Circuit also incorporates 'Westerley', a Christian care home.

Our churches provide traditional services alongside an increasing number of contemporary and family-friendly expressions of worship.

We have a growing sense of service and mission to our communities, with a desire to love our Lord, and our neighbours.



## **FOLLOW / CONTACT US**



[Southend and Leigh Circuit Facebook Page](#)

[Southend and Leigh Circuit Website](#)



# Message from a Pastor

*Dear Circuit friends,*

## **First Hundred Days at Rochford Methodist Church**

I joined Rochford Methodist Church in Sep 2023 as a Community Outreach Pastor and I have enjoyed the start of my role at the Church. The members are friendly and welcoming and always keen to try out new ideas and initiatives. In talking through what I hoped to be able to get involved in, nothing seemed to be excluded. The congregation are very servant-hearted, always willing to get involved and to help others.

Although small, Church members run a lot of community activities and have developed strong links into the local community. The church is a praying church; they faithfully turn to prayer on a frequent basis. The weekly zoom prayer meetings work well, being accessible to all and a good length to enable things to be prayed about without becoming an overly-long meeting.

The group that the church has struggled to engage with are slightly older children and families and my role has been to try and reach out to them. This has developed into an outreach plan of overlapping circles.

The first has been to target with the wider community. This has primarily taken the shape of leading assemblies at our local Primary School on a regular basis, which has given an opportunity to share the Christian Faith with a large number of pupils while also being able to gain a level of awareness of what I am doing in the area and I hope some credibility as well. I have also been able to advertise events that we are running. My approach with the school was to offer them a service as schools normally ask busy teachers to run assemblies and if I can take away one part of the work then that will be welcomed. I have tried to keep assemblies light and fun, for example singing 'Baby Shark' while talking about Jonah and carrying out pass the parcel with parts of the nativity story in it during advent.

The next circle has been to put on more targeted events. These have taken the form of a light party and Christmas craft club. They have had a hook, in terms of free craft, free pumpkins to carve and also for the light party free dinner. As a family, you are looking for an event where you can enjoy time with your children, at a time that works for the family and is a blessing in terms of helping with practical details like eating. The light party ran from 4.00pm - 6.00pm and sought to tick these boxes. We had 19 Adults join us with 21 children.



The risk was in a low turnout, however with a range of publicity, hooks and prayer this was overcome. Families attending did indeed come from both local schools. Those attending were asked what future events they would like to attend, and the response was a mixture of after-school clubs and events at the weekend.

I am hoping to run a larger event every 6-8 weeks, looking to run approximately every half-term. These events have a lead in time of at least four weeks and are reliant on volunteers. They would also all need a hook of some sort. Although not called messy church, they follow the pattern of craft / games / talk / food that is used in messy church. The craft event was smaller in scale, but still attracted five families along. I am looking to start a lego club in the new year. Events need to be regular enough to build a group of attending families, but perhaps not weekly to avoid burn out of volunteers!

The final circle is that of events in the church, either kids church, Church itself or an outreach course. We have had a couple of families now join us at kids church from the other activities, which has been encouraging. Yet the end goal is not to increase church attendance, it is to share the good news. The previous events are all designed to bring people to a place where they have a greater opportunity to hear the gospel message. While encouraging, it does pose the question can other activities like messy church be made available as well? Could these be run on a monthly basis at the weekend? How would these link with the bigger events? Or can a specific games night / families event be run on a monthly basis? It is also key that we are to keep seeking the salvation of people central to our work, rather than just getting numbers along to our community events, but the starting point is to run creative, fun and good quality events that will draw people in to begin with!

Although the role of the church team at events is mainly to serve, if the church is to be inter-generational, then we also need to allow friendships to develop over the generations and I hope that these events will help to continue that process.

## ***Pastor Mike Webb***

Rochford Methodist Church





# Circuit Calendar 2024

## JANUARY

Sat 6th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Weds 10th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Sun 14th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Wed 17th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 17th – District Safeguarding Oversight Group, 2pm-4pm, Video Conference

Wed 24th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Zoom

## FEBRUARY

Sat 3rd – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Wed 7th – Worship Academy, 7pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sun 11th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Wed 14th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Wed 14th – Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)

Wed 21st – Circuit Meeting, 7.30pm, Zoom

## MARCH

Sat 2nd – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Wed 6th – Worship Academy, 7pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Thu 7th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Sun 10th – Mothering Sunday

Sun 10th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Tue 12th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Tue 12th – Local Preachers Meeting, 7.30pm, Thorpe Bay Methodist Church

Wed 13th – Presbyteral Synod, All Day, Chelmsford

Thu 28th – Maundy Thursday

Fri 29th – Good Friday

Sun 31st – Easter Sunday

## APRIL

Wed 3rd – Worship Academy, 7pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sat 6th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sun 14th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Wed 17th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Sat 20th – Synod, All Day, Hitchin

Wed 24th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service with Communion, 7.45pm, Benfleet



# Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

## BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH

Bible Study - Thursdays, 3.30pm

Wesley Art Group - Mondays, 7.30pm in Wesley Hall

Light Worship - third Tuesday of the month, 12noon

Sunday Lunch - second Sunday of the month, 12.30pm (book in advance with John Stokes at [johnstokes660@yahoo.com](mailto:johnstokes660@yahoo.com))

Coffee Mornings - Monday-Saturday, 10am to 12 noon (with a Beading Craft session on Wednesdays)

Ladies' Thursday Club - first Thursday of the month, 7.45pm

Women's Fellowship - first and third Wednesdays of the month, 2.30pm

Wives' Club - Tuesdays, 1.45pm

Benfleet Hope Group - Mondays, 10am-2pm

Messy Church - third Saturday of the month, 3.30pm-5.30pm

Little Bunnies (Mother & Toddler group) - Mondays, 9.30am-11.30am

Fusion Children Groups - Fridays, ages 5-11 yrs 5.30pm-7pm & 11+ yrs 7pm-8.30pm



## CANVEY ISLAND METHODIST CHURCH

Bible Study - Tuesdays, 8pm

Wives Club - Thursdays, 2pm

Coffee Morning - Wednesdays, 10.30am-12noon

Coffee Morning - Saturdays, 10.30am-12noon

Wednesday Fellowship - first two Wednesdays of the month, 2.30pm

Midweek Communion - third Wednesday of the month, 10am



## HIGHLANDS METHODIST CHURCH

Coffee Morning - Saturdays, 10.00am-12noon

Lunch Club - second Tuesday of the month, 12noon (registration essential)

Chatter (Fellowship Group) - Tuesdays, 10am-12noon

Hobbies - first and third Thursdays of the month, 10am-12noon

Prayer Meeting on Zoom - Tuesdays, 9am-10am

Toddlers - Mondays, 9.30am-11.30am



# Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

## ROCHFORD METHODIST CHURCH

Cake and Kindness (Tea and homemade cakes) - Mondays, 2pm-3.30pm

Bible Studies - Tuesdays, 7pm

Prayer time on Zoom - Wednesdays, 7pm

Housegroup - third Wednesday of the month, 8pm

'Happy Cup' Breakfast Club for children under 5 and carers – Fridays (term-time), 9.30am



## THORPE BAY METHODIST CHURCH

Mid-week communion - third Wednesday of the month, 12pm

(lunch afterward – booking required with [office@tbmchurch.org](mailto:office@tbmchurch.org))

Bible Study & Soup - 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month

(booking required with [office@tbmchurch.org](mailto:office@tbmchurch.org))

Community Cafe - Wednesday, 10am-12pm

Memory Worship Service & Activities - first Monday of the month, 2pm-3.30pm



## THUNDERSLEY METHODIST CHURCH

Coffee Morning - Wednesdays (term-time), 9am-12noon

Coffee Morning - second Saturday of the month, 10am-12noon

Afternoon Club - Tuesday fortnightly, 2.30pm



## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

'Brew, Chew, Renew' (Bible Study with refreshments) - Fortnightly on Monday, 10.30am  
(at UMC Great Waking site)

Home Group – Tuesdays, 7.30pm (contact [office@umcsouthend.org.uk](mailto:office@umcsouthend.org.uk))



# Circuit Prayer Diary January-March

*On the following Sundays and during the week  
we ask you to pray for:*

## JANUARY

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 1 – President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference  
Prayer for Sunday 7th – The Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 2 – Worship Leaders  
Prayer for Sunday 14th – Belfairs Methodist Church  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 3 – Adventure Island Chaplaincy  
Prayer for Sunday 21st – Coffee Mornings in our churches  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 4 – Wellbeing and Wholeness Services  
Prayer for Sunday 28th – Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, Councillors and Leaders



## FEBRUARY

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 5 – Rev Dr David Chapman (Chair of District)  
Prayer for Sunday 4th – Castle Point Section  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 6 – Worship Academy  
Prayer for Sunday 11th – Toddler Groups, Preschools and Nurseries in our churches  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 7 – Safeguarding Representatives  
Prayer for Sunday 18th – Benfleet Methodist Church  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 8 – All We Can  
Prayer for Sunday 25th – Church Volunteers  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 9 – Circuit Prayer Meeting



## MARCH

Prayer for Sunday 3rd – Superintendent Pete Moorhouse and family  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 10 – Canvey Island Methodist Church  
Prayer for Sunday 10th – Gospel Vespers  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 11 – Church Sunday Schools and Youth Groups  
Prayer for Sunday 17th – Circuit Stewards  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 12 – Fellowship Groups and Home Groups  
Prayer for Sunday 24th – Guiding, Scouting, Boys & Girls Brigade and Uniformed Organisations  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 13 – HARP Homeless Charity  
Prayer for Sunday 31st – Chalkwell Park Methodist Church



# Salvation Army Stuff on the Bus Project Castle Point Area

The Salvation Army have launched Stuff on a Bus on Canvey Island in October for the Castle Point Area, a new mobile community supermarket where customers can get discounted food from a refurbished double-decker bus.

The Salvation Army is working in partnership with Essex County Council and Feeding Britain by jointly funding this initiative which aims to bring some relief to local people who are struggling. This is in response to the cost-of-living crises.

The supermarket will be on the bottom deck of the bus while the top deck will have facilities including a mobile banking unit, an Employment Plus area, access to job-advice and a wellbeing coach. Customers have the opportunity to buy items at a reduced price after paying a £5 annual sign-on-fee.

The new Stuff on a Bus service will initially run for two days a week. On Tuesdays, it will make two stops at Link Road from 10am to 12pm and The Paddocks from 2pm to 4pm, while on Fridays it will stop outside St Nicholas Church from 10am to 11am, the Small Gains Hall from 11.30am to 12.30pm and Canvey Island FC from 2pm to 3pm. A personal shopper service will be offered for disabled customers.

If you would like to volunteer on the bus please contact The Salvation Army email: [hfeadmin@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:hfeadmin@salvationarmy.org.uk) or call 01702 426260.

*With thanks to Colin Turner for providing the photographs*

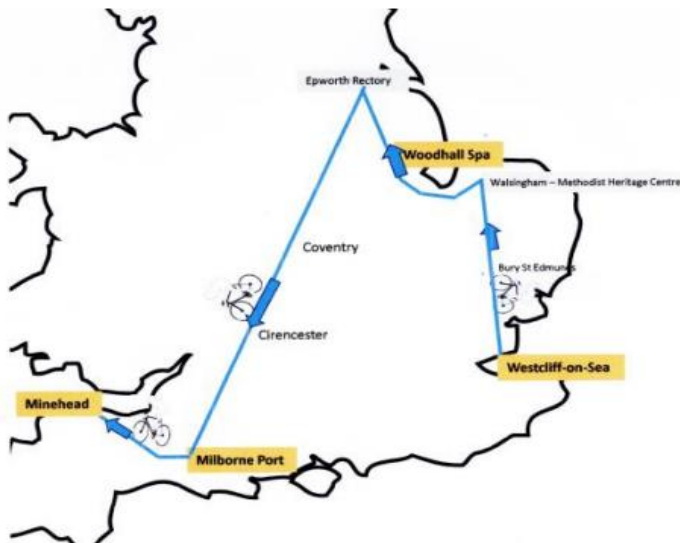




# WESTERLEY CYCLE RIDE

Westerley are celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Robert Davie is cycling around the 4 LWPHomes in the country to celebrate. The send-off for Robert will take place on **April 16<sup>th</sup> 2024 from Westerley, Westcliff**, and we would be so grateful if members of the Circuit could be there to cheer him on.

## Why cycle 550 miles?



## In Celebration of 75 Years of Christian Care!

LWPHomes (formerly LPMA Homes) has been supporting Leaders of Worship and Preachers in need for 75 years – the first Home was opened at Westcliff-on-Sea in 1949. Our celebrations for this special anniversary include a 550+ mile cycle ride to visit each of the LWPHomes, starting at Westcliff on Tuesday April 16, 2024.

Our cyclist, Robert Davie, is asking for your support to make people aware of the care given to our residents in LWPHomes.

To read more, and to donate if you wish, please go to [JustGiving](#) and search Robert Davie, LWPH or scan the QR code below.



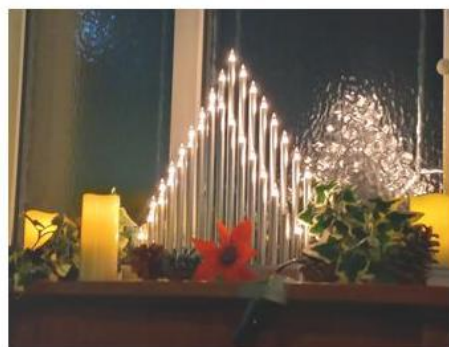




In November - another walk in the woods for some of the members of the Boys' and Girls' brigades at Belfairs. Just one of the many activities enjoyed by the more than 60 members of the brigades at Belfairs. Next year they will be returning to Littlehampton for their summer camp.



Led by the Worship Band and others from the circuit, friends from across the circuit enjoyed an advent celebration (and mince pies!) at Belfairs on 3rd December.





# GREENBELT 2023

At the Communion Service on the morning of Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August, I asked Lazarus, a refugee who has officially received asylum in this country, what he has enjoyed most during the weekend. His reply gave me joy and sadness. He simply said, **'the kindness of the people'** not an event, not a speaker, not a performer but **'the kindness of the people.'** This meant the kindness of about fifteen thousand people in one community for three to four days. That really does sum up **GREENBELT**. Here people try to accommodate others by listening, encouraging, and laughing, they debate issues not people and try to come up with solutions. The sadness came as I realized possibly it was the only place, he felt welcome and safe.

So, in short, what did I do at **GREENBELT** this year – well Friday turned out to be a political day. It began with John Bell from the Iona Community explaining that the image of Jesus as 'gentle, meek and mild' does Him a disservice. For three years of his Life Jesus challenged the authorities, the communities, and his own disciples. In this age then we should challenge those around us to care for others. Pondering this I felt the need to go to one of my favourite places, The Tiny Tea Tent for tea and a flapjack, where I saw **'the kindness of the people.'**

Gordon Brown, former prime minister, was next – packed out tent to listen to him, on challenging the government on poverty in this country. Amazing speaker – no notes humourous illustrations but hard-hitting facts too. The one that seems to have stayed in my brain was there over **FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND FAMILIES** without the means to cook. He was arguing that poverty is a moral issue, and he lives in **HOPE** of all peoples, charities and political parties creating a coalition to end poverty in the UK. His first act would be to begin a comprehensive review of Universal Credit. Next was Tim Farron MP Liberal Democrat passionately speaking about why he is still in politics especially at constituency level. I was so encouraged that I then went to the Christian Aid Tent and completed a letter to Anna Firth about the lack of funds for the poor in this country.

Saturday was really all about worship Christian Aid morning prayer – peaceful and challenging, then a wander to the prayer space for quiet prayer. Followed by a noisy, happy, joyous hour with **FISCHY MUSIC**. Here I can be a child again, joining in the songs, getting the actions wrong but thoroughly enjoying myself towards the back of the tent trying not to be too obvious. Unfortunately, I forgotten I had my where's Wally red and white striped T shirt on! So, if you watch Songs of Praise with Kate Botley on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September you may or may not spot me but here, I witnessed the **'the kindness of the people.'** Then to a talk by John Bell near the **TINY TEA TENT** – all good but left quickly for a Catholic mass at the other end of the festival ground. A roast pork burger for my evening meal and listening to the Gospel group – The Spirituals in the worship tent. Slept well at the hotel.

Sunday up early to secure a spot to be able to see the main stage and gather all our friends about eighteen of us this year, along with the other fifteen thousand to listen to a service prepared by **FISCHY MUSIC** and David and Carrie Grant with the theme of Thanks, Sharing and Giving with a **HI-5 of Peace**:

*God makes peace within us. **Let's claim it.** God makes peace between us. **Let's share it.***

Afterwards an Iona talk, about doing worship well and being part of worship. Lastly but not least our own Fisherman's Chapel choir leading gospel songs in the worship tent. A joyous event/worship showing **'the kindness of the people.'** **Won't you join us next year?**

**Jane Fulford**



# Girls' Brigade Nativity @ Belfairs





# THE EXPERIENCE PROJECT



Whittingham Mission Centre was all lit up for All Saints Day on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Big thanks to Captain Stone Fish Productions.

The Light / Projection show delighted the crowd in attendance, and made the Church shine out across the whole estate – displaying the Light of Christ for the whole community.



**Southend & Leigh Circuit invites you  
to our**



**Wholeness &  
Wellbeing  
Service**

**Wednesday 24th January  
7:45pm on Zoom**

**Wednesday 24th April  
with Communion  
7:45pm at Benfleet Methodist  
Church**

*For more details contact [southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com](mailto:southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com)*



**Craft Fair & Christmas Bazaar**

Sat, 25<sup>th</sup> November  
10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Canvey Methodist Church  
Waarden Road

Tea, Coffee, Soups,  
Christmas foods



No admission charge

**Crafty Christmas**  
ARTS & CRAFTS  
AFTERNOON

*A family craft event for all ages with creative activities, cards, competitions & take! Everyone is welcome. All children must be accompanied by an adult.*

Sat 25 Nov  
From 2.30pm – 4.30pm

United Methodist Church  
St Andrew's Road,  
Stonbury, SS1 4HT

**FREE ENTRY**

A selection of events from  
a busy  
November & December  
across the  
Circuit



You are invited to a  
Circuit Service  
where we shall be sharing  
**'Modern Christmas Songs of Worship'**.  
Music will be led by the Circuit Band  
with contributions from others  
in leading worship.

Sunday 3rd December 2023 at 5.00pm.  
hosted by Belfairs Methodist Church.  
Light Refreshments to follow.

We look forward to this time of  
worship together.

United Methodist Church  
High Street, Great Wakering  
Annual Christmas Festival

Saturday 9th December  
10.30am - 3.00pm

Food and drink all day

Raffle

Christmas cards and more

Gifts to give

Christmas exhibits

Sing Immanuel  
ADVENT CONCERT

Saturday 25th  
November 2023  
9.30pm

Thorpe Bay Methodist Church  
The Broadway  
Thorpe Bay SS1 3HQ

Please come along and enjoy  
an afternoon of music and song.  
Donations accepted.  
We look forward to seeing you.

**Christmas Fayre**

Hadleigh Methodist Church  
Saturday 25th November  
10:30 – 3:30

Stalls

Dancing Display  
2pm

Refreshments

Art Display

Sideshow

**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November from 2 p.m.  
Chalkwell Park Methodist Church  
Corner of Kingsway & Oakwood Lane (off Southbourne) SS20 9JF

Variety of stalls: Gifts Crafts  
Plants Books Edible Gifts  
Chocolate Tombola  
Cakes & Preserves Raffle  
Gift Tombola

PLUS: Refreshments  
Games for Children to play (in Foyer Room)

3.30 p.m. Father Christmas Storytime  
4 p.m. Raffle drawn

www.chalkwellpark.co.uk

**UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH**

JOIN US FOR OUR  
CAROL SERVICE  
ON SUNDAY  
17TH DECEMBER  
AT 4.00 PM  
AT GREAT WAKERING  
MUSIC READINGS  
CAROLS  
FOLLOWED BY  
TEA/COFFEE AND  
MINCE PIES

**CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING**

SATURDAY  
DEC 2<sup>nd</sup>  
10AM - 12

**CHRISTMAS**  
SHOCKLEY & HAWKELL  
METHODIST CHURCH  
MAIN ROAD, HOCKLEY, ESSEX SS3 4QY Tel: 01702 205870

SUN 2nd DEC 11.30am  
**TOY & GIFT SERVICE**  
AND CAROL SERVICE

SUN 10th DEC 4.00pm  
**CAROL SERVICE**  
No Morning Service

SUN 17th DEC 11.30am  
**CAFÉ CHURCH**  
Cakes & Carols

TUES 19th DEC 6.00pm  
**WCS**  
Worship & Carols

SUN 24th DEC 6.00pm  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
**CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**  
No Morning Service

CHRISTMAS DAY 10.00am  
AT HOCKLEY  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

**Christmas  
Craft Morning**

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
December 10am-  
12pm.

Thorpe Bay  
Methodist Church

For children aged 3-  
9yrs, please call the  
office to book on  
(01702) 589263.

# Worship Academy 2023-2024

## *Season 11*

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH EXCEPT AUGUST,  
SEPTEMBER & JANUARY

BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH SS7 5LH

7 PM FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

8 PM WORSHIP & LEARNING

## All Age & Intergenerational Worship

4th October - Faith & Worship in Retirement homes  
SAM MONAGHAN

1st November - Intergenerational Worship  
GAIL ADCOCK

6th December - What can we learn from Revival Style Worship  
SANYA STRACHAN

## Creative

7th February - Singing & Choirs in Worship  
HEATHER SIMMONS

6th March - How to use the Psalms Creatively  
PETE MOORHOUSE

3rd April- Art in Worship  
ANNE BRIANT

## Use of Scripture

1st May - Gospel for Year B: Mark  
DAVID CHAPMAN

5th June- Controversial Texts  
CALVIN SAMUEL

Saturday 20th July- Walk Through the Bible  
TOM GREENE AT WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH

[www.southendandleighcircuit.org](http://www.southendandleighcircuit.org)