

# *Southend & Leigh* CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



The Year Ahead 2023

*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**



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



# Message from a Supernumerary

*Dear Circuit friends,*

I hope you all had a blessed Christmas. It is easy to forget about the period of time we just went through as we look to the year ahead, but it is good to reflect on this season in the Church's Calendar and what it meant.

Advent is a season of waiting and preparation; in the Christian tradition we recall readings which tell us of God's people, the prophets, John the Baptist and Mary thence leading onto the birth of Christ. I wonder what Jesus the Christ would make of our preparation for Christmas. I think he might be a little surprised at the materialist interpretation that now consumes our time, effort, money and much else besides. All this frenetic energy requires much preparation too, but not as expressed in the Advent liturgy. After the enjoyment of Christmas there is the time when we are called to account for the financial cost and the pounds that occur around our waistline. Then onto the New Year resolutions which are often made with good intentions but all too often our resolve fails us.

However, whilst we may be good at planning and preparation, are we so adept at waiting? I know that I am not very patient and want to hurry things up. Whereas the emphasis of Advent is about personal reflection and evaluation of our relationships, in particular our spiritual wellbeing and relationship with God. It is a time for prayer and awaiting the work of the Holy Spirit to help us discern, seek wisdom, empower, or heal us depending on our need. After all, a doctor does not make a diagnosis based upon "gut reaction," a decision is made after several tests are made and evaluated. So, to improve our spiritual health, let us take some time out (no matter how small) to pray and meditate upon God's word to assist us.

In this New Year we can approach the challenging words of the Covenant refreshed and replete in that Love, Joy, and Peace of God that we emphasised at Christmas.

As Jesus enjoyed festivals and the joyful company of others, let us follow his example by not neglecting to maintain our relationship with God at the same time.

Every blessing to one and all for the year ahead,

*Rev Clifford Newman*





# Circuit Calendar 2023

## JANUARY

**Fri 6th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm**

Sat 7th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sun 8th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Mon 9th – District Safeguarding Oversight Group, 2pm-4pm, Video Conference

Mon 9th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 25th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Zoom

## FEBRUARY

Wed 1st – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

**Fri 3rd – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm**

Sat 4th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sun 5th – Circuit Service with Anna Turner, 6.30pm, Belfairs Methodist Church

Sun 12th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Wed 22nd – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Shoeburyness Methodist Church

Wed 22nd – Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)

## MARCH

Wed 1st – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

**Fri 3rd – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm**

Sat 4th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sun 12th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

**Tue 14th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom**

Wed 15th – Presbyteral Session of the Synod, 10am-3pm, Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

Thu 16th – Circuit Meeting, 7.30pm, Zoom

Sun 19th – Mothering Sunday

Wed 22nd – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Tue 28th-Wed 29th – Superintendents' Meeting, Welwyn Garden City

## APRIL

Sat 1st – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sun 2nd – Palm Sunday

Wed 5th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

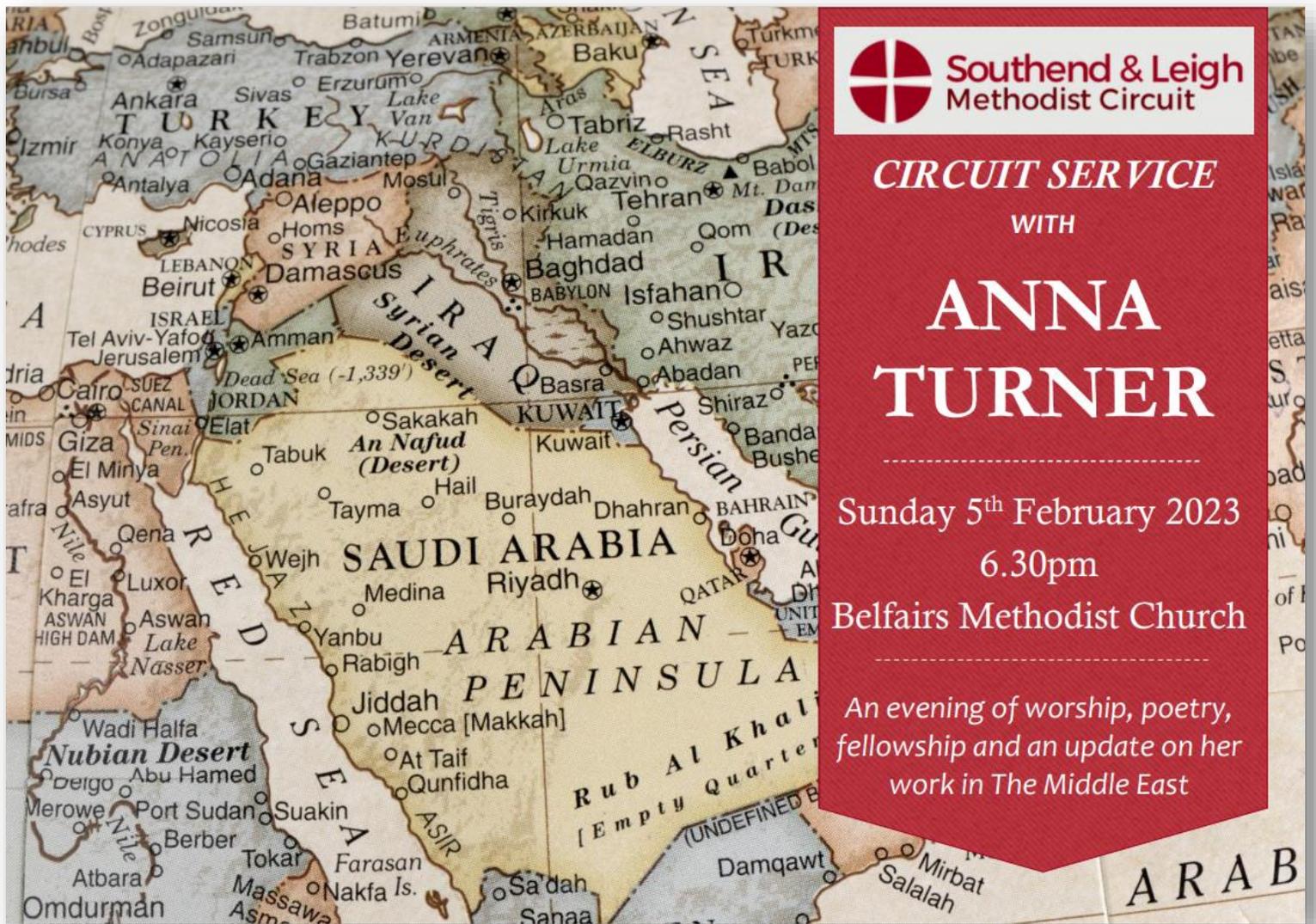
Thu 6th – Maundy Thursday

**Fri 7th – Good Friday**

Sun 9th – Easter Sunday

Sat 22nd – Representative Spring Synod, 10am-1pm, The Square Methodist Church, Dunstable

Wed 26th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm



Southend & Leigh  
Methodist Circuit

*CIRCUIT SERVICE*

WITH

**ANNA  
TURNER**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023

6.30pm

Belfairs Methodist Church

*An evening of worship, poetry,  
fellowship and an update on her  
work in The Middle East*

THE  
**JULIA AND HANS RAUSING**

TRUST



Julia and Hans Rausing said: “We are pleased to support The Experience Project in Southend-on-Sea. The funding applications we received highlighted the emergency crisis foodbanks are facing across the country.”

“The Foodbank Fund was created to alleviate some of the pressures foodbanks are facing with increased demand and the associated costs. We hope that those who are able will also consider giving generously to support their local foodbanks, which are a valued lifeline to many.”

The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust is an independent grant-making charitable fund supporting organisations and charities within the UK. The Trust exists to realise the philanthropy of Hans Rausing and Julia Rausing. Since its formation, it has provided over 1,000 grants totalling more than £330 million. Funding is given to organisations working within three main areas: Health and Wellbeing; Welfare and Education; and Arts and Culture. By supporting charitable initiatives within these areas, the Trust aims to foster a healthy society that gives care to those in need, provides opportunity for all, and offers inspiring cultural engagement. The Trust is a named fund held within The Master Charitable Trust (MCT). The MCT is a donor advised fund managed by C. Hoare & Co. Bank and is a registered charity (number 1139904). Donations made from The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust are directed by Julia and Hans Rausing and verified by Messrs. Hoare Trustees. <https://www.juliahansrausingtrust.org>

# Circuit Prayer Diary January-March

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

## JANUARY

Prayer for Sunday 1st – Music Mentors

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 1 – The Experience Project, its staff and volunteers

Prayer for Sunday 8th – Superintendent Pete Moorhouse and family

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 2 – Local Preachers

Prayer for Sunday 15th – Belfairs Methodist Church

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 3 – Leigh Section

Prayer for Sunday 22nd – Local Charities

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 4 – Circuit, Synod and District Representatives

Prayer for Sunday 29th – Mission Planning Groups



## FEBRUARY

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 5 – Deacon Sarah McDowall and family

Prayer for Sunday 5th – Alpha Groups

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 6 – MIST (Methodist Independent Schools Trust)

Prayer for Sunday 12th – All those affected by famine and drought

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 7 – Rochford District Council, Councillors and Leaders

Prayer for Sunday 19th – Church Administrators

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 8 – Lent Groups and Courses

Prayer for Sunday 26th – World Mission

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 9 – Benfleet Methodist Church



## MARCH

Prayer for Sunday 5th – Circuit Prayer Meetings

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 10 – Canvey Methodist Church

Prayer for Sunday 12th – Circuit Meeting

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 11 – Methodist Homes (MHA)

Prayer for Sunday 19th – LWP Homes

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 12 – Wholeness and Wellbeing Services

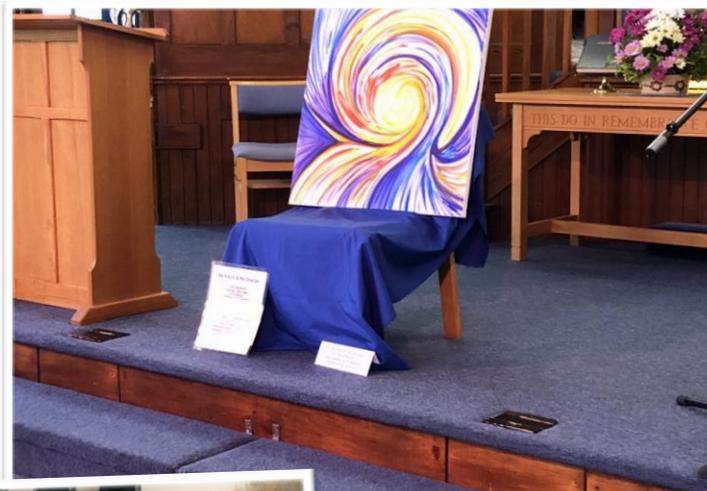
Prayer for Sunday 26th – Manses and the Property Manse Co-ordinator

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 13 – Gospel Vespers



# Recharge | Refresh

## Circuit Prayer Day



On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October, 31 people from around the Circuit met at Rayleigh Methodist Church for our first prayer day since the pandemic. The morning started with a brief introduction and a short act of worship. Then everyone went on to explore the four areas of prayer:

*Praying in Nature*

*Creative Prayer*

*Art and Prayer*

*Music, Stillness and Prayer*

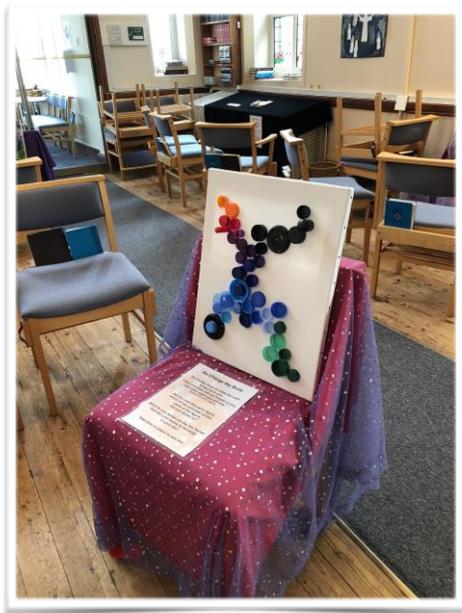
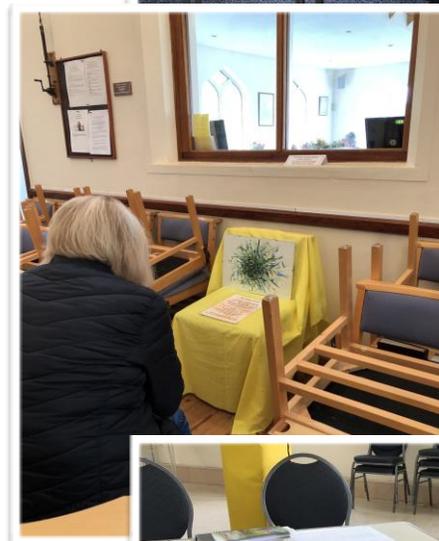
As this was our first prayer day in a long time, half way through our time we came together to check in and to have a short prayer.

We finished out time with a short act of worship and grace, before heading to the hall for some scrumptious hot soup and warm rolls.

A big thank you to Rayleigh Methodist Church for hosting us and for the team for their hospitality on the day. A super thank you for those of you who came and engaged with the prayer stations and for your positive feedback.

Thank You!

Deacon Sarah



### Finding Silence

How do I find stillness God,  
In this busy, hectic world?

When to take some time for myself fills me with unease  
When I feel the anxiety tingle around inside of me.  
Where do I find you God when my life needs a spiritual  
recharge

And my soul aches to be refreshed?

I can turn to you, I know that  
But boy is it hard....

To open my heart to you,  
To allow you access all areas.

And so I try God, to give myself fully to you  
And maybe this happens slowly,  
One piece at a time.

I can turn to you, I know that.  
Amen.

@ Rev Zena Smith

# Honouring and Celebrating Wesley's Nineties

In 2022 four of our congregation were celebrating their 90th birthdays and I discussed with our minister, Pastor Steve Mayo, the possibility of having a special church service. My own church is Wesley Methodist, in Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. We involved their families in the planning and included those who were already over 90 in our church. The decision was taken back in January 2022 and the service took place on 27 November, the first Sunday in Advent.

I did lots of personal touches, which included a handwritten card to the ten people involved and talked to their sons and daughters well in advance, following up with invitation letters to their families and friends.



Our minister, Pastor Steve and I made joint home visits to the four involved and although we know them well an extended visit helped us both to know even more of their life stories. Each of them was invited to choose their favourite hymn and Bible passage for the service. Fortunately, three chose Psalm 23 and the fourth, 1 Corinthians 13 so both Bible passages could be included in the order of service. Each hymn was also sung to their chosen tune. For one hymn we stayed seated and our music group sang it to us. Quite superb!

In planning the welcome I chose Pope Francis' words of February 2022:

*“Being old is just as important and beautiful as being young. Let’s remember that...”*



The service was joyous and our congregation was bigger than our most optimistic forecast. It was just wonderful to see their grandchildren with their own babies in slings. The children of the 90-year-olds were so thrilled and grateful to see their parents honoured and cherished. Pastor Steve spoke about what was happening in 1932 and also preached on Psalm 23.

We are an inclusive church and recently we have had at least five sets of new people join us. One man comes with his very young son and learning about the special service brought his 94-year-old grandmother for her first visit. When the prayer crosses made of olive wood from the Holy Land were distributed to the over-90s, she also received one, which gave me another opportunity to actively involve her great-grandson, Hugo. He usually helps take the collection and that day he also gave her a handheld cross.

During the service, I talked about the lives of the four who had their 90th birthdays and of their Christian commitment and service to our local community – not every congregation has a boxing coach. Sometimes we have to wait until funerals to learn about people's life stories.

One of the grandchildren runs her own café and that family provided amazing cakes for the refreshments that followed the service. The buzz of conversation afterwards and the joy of a very crowded church made for a very happy time.



**Eileen Simmons**  
(Anna Chaplain and Methodist Local Preacher)

Tel: 01702 472521

Email: [eileen.kester.simmons@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.kester.simmons@gmail.com)

10<sup>th</sup> December 2022

# Worship Academy 2022-2023

## Season 10

First Wednesday of the month except January,  
August and September,  
19:00-21:00 at Benfleet Methodist Church.

Worship Academy is a training programme particularly for leaders of worship in the Methodist Church but it is open to everyone.

Outline of the Evening:

19:00 meal

20:00 worship led by the circuit

20:15 worship academy

c.21:15 depart

If you are interested in joining the mailing list for an invite please contact: [southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com](mailto:southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com)



*Book via Eventbrite*

## Worship Academy 2022/2023 Season 10

First Wednesday of the month except August, September 2022 and January 2023

| Date                           | Topic   | Speaker/Facilitator    | Church leading worship                 |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| <b>TERM TWO: Spirituality</b>  |   |                        |  |
| 1 February                     | Prayer in worship   | Jane Fulford           | Thundersley                            |
| 1 March                        | Modern worship and modern worship songs   | Lewis Cox              | Hadleigh                               |
| *15 March*                     | SPECIAL: Bible stories in worship   | Revd Michaela Youngson | Thorpe Bay/UMC/Hockley<br>Shoeburyness |
| 5 April                        | How worship helps us with evangelism  | Revd Emma Nash         | Rayleigh                               |
| <b>TERM THREE: Inclusivity</b> |   |                        |  |
| 3 May                          | Inclusivity piano presentation  | Revd Ermal Kirby       | Belfairs                               |
| 7 June                         | On the margins, local community, how to craft worship for people unaffiliated with 'church' | TBC                    | Rochford                               |
| 5 July                         | Worship Academy 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary<br>Summer Party                                | n/a                    | Thorpe Bay/UMC/Hockley<br>Shoeburyness |

**What to teach – How to teach – What to do**

# Church and Circuit News

## Trinity Methodist Church Multicultural Service with the Mayor and Mayoress of Southend-on-Sea

Trinity Methodist Church had a special visit from the Mayor Kevin Robinson and the Mayoress Debbie Robinson on Sunday 20th November to our multicultural service. It was a mixture of music, dance, and worship.

Three of our young people from Laser Club interviewed the Mayor on what his role is, how did he become the Mayor and what do you most enjoy about being mayor? Kevin, the mayor was really good at answering the girls questions.

After worship there was a good opportunity to speak with The Mayor, Mayoress and the Deputy Mace bearer informally over food. Of course everyone wanted their photograph taken with the mayor!



We also shared cake as we celebrated Jewel's 3rd birthday.

A great morning of joyful worship, delicious food, interesting conversations and being together, as God's family.



# Church and Circuit News



## Trinity Family Centre: POP In The visit from the Mayor and Mayoress

The Mayor, Kevin Robinson and the Mayoress Debbie Robinson visited Trinity Family Centre on Monday 21st November.

POP In is our group for older people and people on their own.

POP (People on Pensions) and those who are isolated can enjoy a hot meal and company. POP In provides a range of entertainment, including a weekly quiz, monthly seated fitness to music, and a welcoming community atmosphere.

The Mayor gave a talk on the history of the Mayor, the role of the Mayor, how he became Mayor, and the joys of being Mayor. This was followed by a Q&A. Kevin went around everyone listening to them, and the concerns that they have.

We enjoyed a yummy cream tea before hearing who won this weeks' quiz.

Thank you for taking the time to visit us at the Trinity Family Centre.



## CAN YOU SPARE 3 HOURS A WEEK?

We need volunteers to help with running our charity shop and supporting other vulnerable volunteers. Open Tuesday - Friday 10-4 & Saturday 11-2

**Trinity Family Centre Shop**  
**11 West Road, Westcliff On Sea SS0 9AU**  
Contact [Sarah@trinityfamilycentre.org](mailto:Sarah@trinityfamilycentre.org) 01702 436228