

Southend & Leigh CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



The Year Ahead - 2022

Second Quarter

Contents

- Message from a Minister
- Circuit Calendar
- News from Churches, the Circuit and District
- Upcoming Events

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.



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www.southendandleigh.org



Message from a Minister

Dear friends,

As I write this letter it would appear that the third of the storms has abated and finally the wind seems to have dropped, but what a mighty example of God's power we have witnessed over the last week. I don't know how you have all fared, but I had one fence panel down and that will be replaced shortly by the lovely grounds men we use in the Circuit.

Boaz (my dog) and I have now been in the Circuit for 6 months and I think we are settling in well. We have certainly been very welcomed by everyone we've met so far and Benfleet Methodist Church are keeping me well fed, possibly too well fed, but it makes a refreshing change to feel a valued member of a team and of my churches and I thank you for your hospitality. So far, in addition to the usual Sunday services, I've taken a number of funerals and baptisms, got involved in Saturday coffee mornings run for church funds and charities, run bible study, and given talks at various clubs (I've not yet exhausted my list of topics!), taken services at Westerley Care Home, got involved with funding applications for Thundersley Preschool plans for a child-friendly outdoor space, and dressed up as an elf on several occasions and I'm sure there will be many more firsts here in the Southend and Leigh Circuit for me in this context.

When I think about moving to a new place, particularly as a Minister, the juxtaposition of being both guest and host becomes more apparent than ever. We are seen to be leaders of individual churches and therefore get pushed into the role of host, yet *we* will often see ourselves as guests in these very same situations and particularly when we are new to an area. Jesus himself presents as a paradigm of one who was both guest and host and the Gospels show us that the topic of hospitality was a hot one for him. He embraced the risks that come with being a guest, and through doing so, he created opportunities to share the good news with people who had never of this before.

Today Jesus calls us as kingdom builders into new and challenging situations where we are likely to inhabit the role of guest. If we can embrace these situations as Jesus did, we may well find opportunities where we can bring the love of God in Jesus to those who would not otherwise have had the chance to encounter it, how amazing is that?

God bless you all,

Rev Zena and Boaz





Circuit Calendar 2022

MARCH

Tue 1st – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom

Tue 1st – Circuit Leadership Team (CLT), 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 2nd – Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)

Wed 2nd – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sat 5th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom

Thu 10th – Circuit Meeting, 8pm, Zoom

Sun 13th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Thu 17th – Presbyteral Synod, 10am-3pm, Saint Andrew's Methodist Church, Harlow

Tue 29th-Wed 30th (All day) – Superintendent's Meeting, Welwyn Garden City

Wed 23rd – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Canvey Island Methodist Church

Sun 27th – Mothering Sunday

APRIL

Sat 2nd – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom

Tue 5th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom

Tue 5th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 6th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sat 9th – District Circuit Stewards' Meeting, 10am-12noon, Hoddesdon Methodist Church

Sun 10th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Thu 14th – Maundy Thursday

Fri 15th – Good Friday

Sun 17th – Easter Sunday

Wed 27th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Benfleet Methodist Church



Circuit Calendar 2022 cont.

MAY

Tue 3rd – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom

Tue 3rd – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 4th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sat 7th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom

Sat 7th – District Representative Spring Synod, 10am-1pm, St. Albans

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

Wed 25th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Shoeburyness Methodist Church

JUNE

Sat 4th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom

Tue 7th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom

Tue 7th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 8th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Thu 9th – District Policy Committee, 7.30pm-9.30pm, Hoddesdon Methodist Church

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

Mon 13th – Circuit Meeting, 8pm, Trinity

Wed 22nd – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm

Thu 23rd-Thu 30th – Methodist Conference, Telford

JULY

Sat 2nd – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom

Tue 5th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom

Tue 5th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Wed 6th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sun 10th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Wed 27th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm

AUGUST

Tue 2nd – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom

Tue 2nd – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom

Sat 6th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom

Sun 14th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel



Church & Circuit News

THE EXPERIENCE PROJECT UPDATE

When the Experience Project (EP) launched in 2020, no one foresaw the Pandemic a few months later which would radically alter the mission and outreach not only of the Project, but of the Methodist Church as a whole. Now two years on the EP has experienced significant growth. Ocado collections have increased to three/four times per week, made possible through increased favour with Ocado and the support of a local business who is currently sponsoring the transportation costs and logistics involved. It has enabled us to provide over 1000 individuals per week with the highest quality household goods and fresh produce. This is distributed to our partners: they include One Love Project, Southend YMCA, Storehouse, Teen Challenge, Trinity Family Centre, UMC Mums and Tots, Saint Nicholas School, Summer Court Children's Centre (NHS), Friars Baptist Foodbank, Morning Light (refugee charity) Southend Borough Council Child Protection Team, Third Space (Southend High Street) and the Whittingham Care Home staff.

Christmas Themed Party / Carol Service

Our Christmas party was the highlight of 2021! To see the children having fun in the church and enjoying themselves was a blessing. So many people commented, "it was lovely to see children finally able to be children again". We were unsure how many families would attend as we did not formally advertise but word certainly got round and over 100 children and parents attended. Mince pies and hot drinks were served to the parents and the children were kept entertained with a 'Christmas Craft Table', Face Painting, a 'Pin the Nose on Rudolf' competition and not forgetting a visit from Santa himself! Every child and parent went home with a gift (there was many hours of wrapping involved). We also gathered round the piano for carol singing and the children danced to Jingle Bells. All the staff and volunteers were dressed in Christmas themed fancy-dress and a good time was had by all. Lots of parents couldn't afford to take their children to see Santa and were so grateful to us for arranging this and were amazed that all this was provided free of charge.



Weekly Activities

POP-UPS (Mondays)

We collected over 200 turkeys on Christmas Eve and distributed them widely. Over half of them and all the Christmas dinner trimmings were given out in Cluny Square. We parked up outside the tower blocks and turned into Del Boy and co. The first lady we approached had just lost her father and her mother had called to say that she only had a chicken for Christmas. She left in tears and was overwhelmed – so much so that she came back with a gift of cream cakes and commented “maybe there is someone up there after all”. Since Christmas we have followed up with three pop-ups outside the blocks – breaking new ground and meeting new people has been life giving to all involved. If volume allowed, we would be doing them every day. A growing number of the Cluny Square residents have joined our coffee mornings, each week they bring someone new; they cannot get over the fact that all the refreshments are free!

Coffee / Games Mornings (Tuesdays)

Since July we have been hosting coffee /games mornings, this has been well attended amongst the local community and has given us the opportunity to build deeper relationships with parents and their children. Every week brings a new challenge – the level of disfunction on the estate is quite overwhelming. The pastoral duties are overflowing, this has become even more evident amongst the more senior members of the community. Care plans being removed has left a number housebound and without our support their personal needs would not be met. One guest said that “coming to the church is the highlight of my week”.

Foodbank (Thursdays)

The EP Foodbank (Thursdays) is giving out over 200 household bags per week, this number is increasing each month. Many new faces, some of whom have never been to a foodbank before, have been in attendance. Speaking with our partners this is a growing trend. Our staff and volunteers (16) have been given new uniforms which create an element of fun which is helping our guests feel more comfortable.

Piano Lessons / After School Clubs (Thursdays)

Since September a local music teacher has been giving free weekly piano lessons to 6-8 children. This has been very well received amongst the local families. As funding continues, we plan to increase this activity to other instruments. One 9-year-old girl had previously been teaching herself on her iPad, she is a very gifted girl; her mother’s feedback was that she cannot wait for Thursdays. It was her first opportunity to play on a baby grand piano – the teacher tells us that she is a natural – watch this space...



Outreach (Fridays)

Brent our Project Worker and his growing team go door-door every Friday delivering food bags to our most vulnerable residents. Many have commented that seeing them every week is a “Godsend”. The number of residents that require our visit is growing by the week, everyone is always so grateful. Praying for people in their homes has been very well received.

Partnerships and Plans



Cakes for Kids

A local charity approached us back in August – their vision is to provide personalised birthday cakes for children who come from impoverished homes. They have seven different bakers who have agreed to make cakes for children who use our Whittingham Mission. The parents and children have been bowled over by the act of kindness and the quality of the cakes. The parents are able to specify their child's hobbies/interests and the theme of the cake is made accordingly. We have seen many parents totally overwhelmed and reduced to tears when they collect their cakes and say without us arranging this, they would not be able to provide a cake for their child.

New Furniture

A local furniture business has donated 5 brand new solid oak tables and wing back chairs plus three new settees which provide a lovely lounge area for our guests.



Music Therapy Project

We have secured funding to run a 10-week Music Therapy programme for 11-18 year-olds, called Social Sound Sculpture. The programme will be offered to 6-8 vulnerable young people and will be run by a highly experienced and qualified music therapist who works within NHS Mental Health Services. Building on the existing partnership, the delivery of project will be with children from St Nicholas School where form teachers will identify those that will most benefit from the therapy.

Plans into 2022

- EP to become a CIO
- Film nights (last Friday of the month)
- Street Party to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee (June)
- Drama classes - digital pantomime (after school club)
- A second EP Promotional film
- New signage
- Purchase a refrigerated van
- Gain ongoing funding and local business support
- Sunday morning story time followed by a community meal (starting end of February)



Support the Experience Project

If you or your church would like to support the work of the Experience Project at the Whittingham Mission Centre, you can either make cheques payable to The Methodist Church Southend & Leigh Circuit and post them to:

The Experience Project c/o Circuit Treasurers, Circuit Office, Highlands Methodist Church,
Sutherland Boulevard, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3PT

Or by bank transfer to:

Bank Name: HSBC

Acc. Name: The Methodist Church Southend & Leigh Circuit

Sort Code: 40 02 06

Acc. No: 70030600



Circuit Events & Courses

Worship Academy 2022 Season 9

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



You can participate both online and in-person. If you are interested in joining the mailing list for an invite please contact: southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com

Any questions please feel free to contact Worship Academy Coordinator, Sanya Strachan.

Date	Topic	Speaker/Facilitator
6 April	<i>Expressing our Commitment to Inclusion in our Worship and Liturgy</i>	Inderjit Bhogal
4 May	<i>Climate Change and the Challenge to the Church</i>	Lynne Norman / Mollie Green Agents of Change (Young Adults)
8 June (second Wed of the month)	<i>Creative Approaches to Prayer for Personal and Corporate Worship</i>	Rev Prof David Wilkinson
6 July	<i>Spontaneity and Openness to the Spirit</i>	David Clayton

The 4 E's of the Southend and Leigh Circuit

Future of God's Work in Southend and Leigh Circuit

In preparation for Reimagining the Southend and Leigh Circuit Mission Planning Day on Saturday 19th March, Rev Pete Moorhouse considered it best to re-look at the circuit direction of travel. How do we help the Kingdom of God in this circuit? To help focus the conversation the following questions were considered, known as the 4 Es:

Explore – What new work do we need to do?

Encounter – What work nationally and interdenominationally do we need to tap into and encourage circuit churches to take part in?

Equip – What work do we need to equip or stop equipping? We have huge potential with the new admin team that we are underutilising. Which bits of work are we propping up and need to stop?

Engage – We are not alone what work is being done ecumenical or across the circuit boundaries that or mission and outreach mode.

What do you want 'the' Circuit and 'your' church to be like in the future? Maybe you have already started working through the eight-step process for Mission Planning? Maybe you think the Circuit should 'do more'? Making decisions about what mission activities to support and develop across the circuit would be much easier for everyone if there was a circuit mission plan and we could all see how we fit in...

Helpful Links:

Please follow any of the attached links to see more of the Mission Planning process.

'An eight step process for Mission Planning'- with toolkit:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/lead-churches-into-growth/write-a-great-mission-plan/mission-planning-toolkit/>

The Workbook (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18460/mission-planning-workbook.pdf>)

Strategic Guidance for the Use of Property in Mission (January 2021) states

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. Property plays a significant role in enabling a presence within communities. ... Utilising a property, either by redeveloping it for social purpose or incorporating a range of social uses into an existing building, is as much a part of a mission plan as preaching, worship, or community evangelism.

[Click here to read the new Strategic Guidance for the Use of Property in Mission.](#)

THOUGHTS ON THE 4 E's

explore

Note where the 2 red dots are:

Exploring takes time, goes in many directions, Sometimes wanders, sometimes pauses.

As we emerge from a 2nd period of restrictions, we need to explore our own Church settings/ Spirituality afresh. How are our people feeling: frightened, sad, anxious lonely How are we feeling / how is their faith/ and ours. Noting & recording our findings in order to move on.

Encounter Asking the questions:

How have we encountered God through these times , Honestly! Be real ourselves- where/how it really is –“ I am / am not fine!”

How have our Church folk – LISTEN to them, share our story note what they are saying , 1-1 , small group

Imagine God saying ...

I don't just listen to your words. I listen to your use of words, your tone, your body movements, your eyes, your subtle facial expressions. I interpret your silences - I can hear everything you don't say in words.

If God see us like this, reflect on how others see us!

Equip We are in no place to equip others ,

if we aren't equipped ourselves! Are we being propped up or propping up others

Equipped with what: Able to...

Listen, comfort, encourage, inspire, educate, guide, teach through... prayer support, study groups, non jargon

A Lent course is an ideal time to re-engage in all 4 "E's"

Engage this occurs in many different forms:

for some it will be through food whilst for others, walks, activity, common interests, talking, being alongside, smiling, tidying up/ serving tea, on zoom .

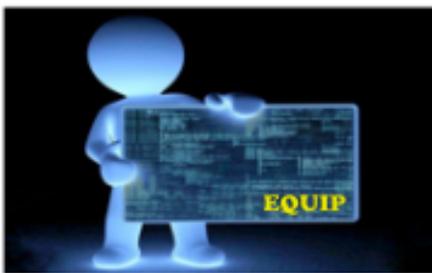
However it is done, engagement can be build up when someone trusts us enough to begin to be open/ real.

Everyone is different, some are readers, talkers, doers ,watchers, creators, makers, thinkers, repairers.

We all need to **re-engage** in our Church communities and assess where we are. Look carefully, listen properly, to the concerns and needs of our **Older /longer lived folk -** whose (war time spirit) may have seen them manage better than us with Covid restrictions and rationed items, but who desperately missed their family visiting! **Our Young Adults –** who have been Home schooling/working from home , furloughed/lost jobs, caring for Parents...

Our youngsters – who have heard their parents/school anxieties , not understanding masking up, learning from home, not allowed out, trying to imagine what this 'Covid thing is' that can't be seen.

Anne Briant Jan 2022



Engage

- keep
- hold
- grip
- retain
- keep in
- connect
- be attached to
- attach

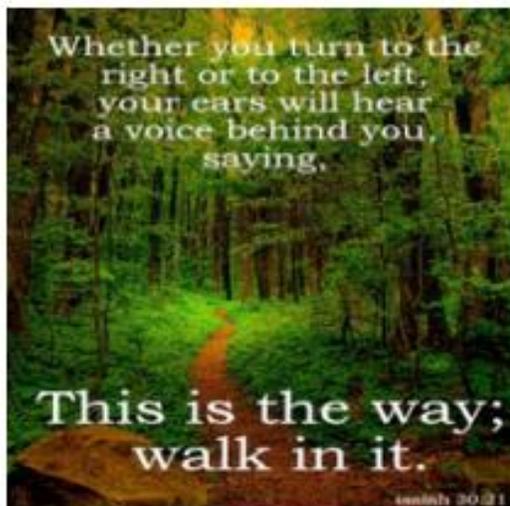


Engaging people is about meeting their needs, not yours

Tony Robbins

Once we have considered these in our own settings... then we can consider how our findings may relate Circuit wide.

Questions we all may need to answer for each of the 4 'E's' within our Settings, not just by Church Councils & Stewards.



EXPLORE

Exploring takes time.

In our own Churches:- need to reconsider...

- Asking each individual – would they like more study time, prayer time, teaching time. Anything else they'd like to see.

Across our Circuit:

- What could work as a section? – realistically with the people to run it.
- How those in the churches can see the role of the Circuit? (Some folk see only their church as relevant to them)



Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

- Proverbs 4:25-27

ENCOUNTER

Encounter

- More teaching on: Encountering God in our Churches – begun in the 6 week Methodist way series
- Including ways of experiencing Spirituality- Silence, Quiet days, Art, music, books, video, senses...



EQUIP

Equip - Spiritually, then Practically

- What do each of us need to be equipped with?
- How will that happen?
- What do our Churches need to be equipped with?
- How can this be facilitated?



ENGAGE

Engage

How does Engagement occur?

- Through feeling sure that Confidentiality is agreed and adhered to - this will allow people to be real and honest.
- Give people time and space to think ideas through and share views and ideas of their own. (people come from different angles)
- Comfortable & safe – folk need to feel secure and valued