

Southend & Leigh CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



The Year Ahead - 2022

First Quarter

Contents

- Message from the Superintendent
- Circuit Calendar
- News from Churches, the Circuit and District
- Upcoming Events
- COVID Guidance

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



www.facebook.com/Southend-and-Leigh-Methodist-Circuit-104457831482943

www.southendandleigh.org



Message from the Superintendent

*“But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Saviour.
My God will hear me.” Micah 7:7 (NIV)*

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year. Welcome to the Circuit's New Year's Resolution. Hopefully each quarter one of the Circuit Leadership Team will be writing to you. In these letters we hope to offer some inspiration and news from around the churches, Circuit and Connexion.

I'm personally deciding on the best way I can serve the Circuit this year as I take on my pastoral responsibilities as well as offer support to our churches. As Superintendent I have been encouraged to focus on the 4 E's:

Explore - What new work do I need to do?

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

Equip – What work do I need to equip or stop equipping?

Engage – What work is being done ecumenically or across the circuit boundaries that I should encourage churches to be involved in?

I wonder if these questions would help you as well to focus on new areas of your own personal discipleship? One thing is for sure that as we head into a new year it's always a good time to focus on what good we can do for God. Most of us will this month renew our covenant. John Wesley saw this as of the utmost importance to remind ourselves of our own personal responsibility in building the kingdom. What is the new year to hold for us? As Micah once wrote 'let's watch in hope'. Both words seem passive, but the opposite is true, that in watching we should take notice of what's going on. In hope we really should act. Using our hope in Christ as a foundation because really nothing bad can happen when we have Christ as our support.

Happy New Year to you all.

Yours in Christ,

Revd. Pete Moorhouse





Circuit Calendar 2022

JANUARY

- Tue 4th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom
- Sat 8th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom
- Sun 9th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel
- Tue 11th – Circuit Leadership Team (CLT), 7.30pm, Zoom
- Wed 26th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Zoom

FEBRUARY

- Tue 1st – Minister's Staff Meeting, 12noon, Zoom
- Tue 1st – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom
- Wed 2nd – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church
- Sat 5th – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom
- Thu 10th – Local Preacher's Meeting, 8pm, tbc
- Sun 13th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel
- Wed 23rd – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Zoom

MARCH

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



Circuit Calendar 2022 cont.

Thu 14th – Maundy Thursday

Fri 15th – Good Friday

Sun 17th – Easter Sunday

Wed 27th – Wellbeing and Wholeness Service, 7.45pm, Zoom

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, Zoom

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, Zoom

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, Zoom

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

Reaching Out - In Town Centre Ministry

Deacon Sarah McDowall

(Article taken from *The Methodist Recorder*)

As I come to the end of my first year as a deacon in the Southend and Leigh Circuit I look back in amazement at all that has happened over the last twelve months. My husband, Archie, and I moved from one end of the country to the other as we left Cumbria just as restrictions were beginning to ease (before being imposed again!) and it has been very strange settling into a new appointment in an area which neither of us had ever been to apart from our stationing visit in December 2019. It has been frustrating in some ways as it is not easy to get to know a new area when most businesses are closed and to get to know new church friends over Zoom. I often reflect on how in my first year here I did not once spend time with my new circuit colleagues in the same room - except for in a Zoom breakout room!



In other ways though it has been exciting and far from being restricted in what I have been able to do I have been encouraged by the many opportunities and challenges which have been opened up to me since arriving.

The appointment is very imaginative and varied as I spend time in various mission initiatives across the town.

As part of my role I spend time at the Family Centre which is attached to Trinity Methodist Church in the Westcliff area. This is a project which has been in existence for over twenty years, run largely by volunteers, and with the stated aims of improving the quality of life for people of all ages, cultures and needs in an area of high deprivation. Each week the centre provides breakfast, lunches and after school activities to a wide range of local residents, families and other organisations such as the local MenCap group, all of whom can make use of the computer and sports facilities contained within the centre. It is obvious that the centre has been much missed during lockdown and it has been good to see people returning as the restrictions have eased. I have enjoyed getting to know those people who visit each week as we seek to strengthen the already valued links between the church and the centre.

Another part of my role is to be chaplain to Southend town centre. The chaplaincy is a joint initiative between the Methodist Circuit and "Love Southend" the ecumenical body to which most of the town's churches belong. I work alongside one of the leaders of an independent church in the town and we both led the Chaplaincy Everywhere course on Zoom in order to encourage more people to gain the required skills to expand the team. We hope to repeat this course in the New Year, but in person next time!

The chaplaincy provides a much needed service at a time which is far from easy for those involved in the retail sector. Most of the shops were closed for much of the last year and this has obviously been very unsettling for those employees who face an uncertain future. As a chaplain I am able to provide a sympathetic and listening ear and I have been impressed by the way in which I have been welcomed by the shop and centre management as I spend time in the shopping centre - trying to limit myself to window shopping so that I don't spend too much!



Church & Circuit News

Of course, in common with many seaside towns it is not just shops which are in the centre of Southend. There are also attractions for the visitors who come for the weekend or even for the day and as part of my town centre chaplaincy role I am very privileged to serve the staff at Adventure Island, the seaside theme park which attracts thousands of visitors each week. Again, this has not been an easy time for those who are employed there, many of whom have come from other parts of the county, and have faced a lonely existence during lockdown and the period of restrictions. Most of the employees are young, some as young as 16, and it has been obvious how much they have valued the independent and confidential support which I have been able to offer. I enjoy my visits to Adventure Island very much but as I look in awe at some of the scary rides which surround me in the theme park I often think that God must have a sense of humour placing me there - I get dizzy from just walking past them!



Again though, it has been encouraging to see the way that I have been welcomed by the theme park management and to see how much they value the chaplaincy service. Such is the demand for the service that I have recently been joined in the chaplaincy by the local Anglican vicar and it has been good to have that support. We are also supported by our two counsellors who are there when staff need more specialised help.

Add to this the times when I lead worship within the circuit and the other activities which have come along from time to time and as I look back at what has been an unusual first year in a new appointment I can also see the ways in which God has opened doors and provided opportunities.

I am very grateful for the way in which the circuit has continued to support the vision which it had when the appointment was first considered - much has changed since then and it is good that the effects of lockdown are now slowly clearing and this will enable so many more opportunities and ideas to be followed up on.



As I spend so much of my ministry outside of the church and meeting people who have no or very little church connection it has been fascinating to see the ways in which they have opened up to me about possibly sensitive or personal situations and the way in which they trust me simply because they know that I am a Methodist minister. This has emphasised the importance of providing a link between the church and the communities in which we find ourselves. I have been both amazed and encouraged by the ways in which I have seen God move and heal some of the most difficult situations and this underlines for me the importance of taking the gospel of love out of the church building and into the streets and workplaces of our towns.

God Bless,
Deacon Sarah



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
2 February	<i>God's Table: An Invitation for All</i>	Presidential Address (A Recording) Revd Sonia Hicks
2 March	<i>An Inclusive Church – Evangelism & Growth</i>	Holly Adams
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 / Green Agents of Change (Young Adults)
8 June (second Wed of the month)	<i>Creative Approaches to Prayer for Personal and Corporate Worship</i>	TBC
6 July	<i>Spontaneity and Openness to the Spirit</i>	David Clayton

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Trinity Methodist Church served over 150 meals on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. Many thanks to all the volunteers and for donations. It was quieter than normal due to Covid, however this gave the opportunity for the volunteers to give quality time to people, who needed company as well as a hot meal.

www.trinityfamilycentre.org

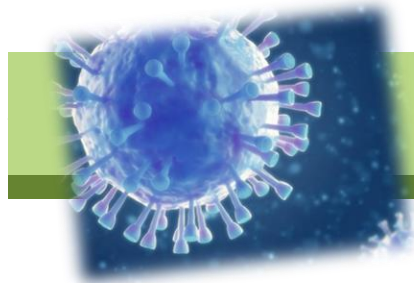


St Vincent de Paul Society of England and Wales

This December, the membership at Highlands Methodist Church in Leigh supported SVP by donating food, toys and games for them to distribute in the community. St Vincent's Centre (SVP), Southend-on-Sea is a busy community hub supporting vulnerable people with foodbank services, hot meals, in and outreach support, and household items and clothing. The Southend unit is managed by a team of four headed by Daniel Cauchi who not only receive food, provisions, clothing and some furniture, all donated free of charge, but also dispense it via their industrial unit. It's a community support project for vulnerable people. The Southend hub is dedicated to changing lives through practical support, advice and friendship.

www.svp.org.uk/st-vincents-southend/what-we-do





Coronavirus Guidance

Methodist Coronavirus Guidance for Property Update December 2021

www.methodist.org.uk

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

What are the main considerations for using our buildings following Government Plan B guidance?

1. Is it a legal requirement to wear face coverings in a Place of Worship?

YES - All those using a place of worship or ancillary buildings have to wear a face covering by law from **Friday 10 December 2021**. The Government guidance also outlines situations where individuals may be exempt. This is outlined here - [Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-exemptions-and-how-to-make-your-own). There are reasonable exemptions from this, while someone is leading worship or giving a reading for example. For specific guidance on singing see below.

2 Can we still use our church buildings?

YES - there are currently no restrictions on continuing to use our church buildings. Although the Government is now advising office workers to work from home if they can from **Monday 13 December**. Churches should therefore consider how this advice affects those who work or use the church building and if temporary adjustments can be made during this period. For further information refer to - [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread).

3 Do we need to ask building users for a NHS Covid Pass?

NO – places of worship and ancillary buildings will not be required to ask for evidence from building users, see [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread) under the heading **Required use of the NHS COVID Pass**. This includes activities such as communal worship, and ceremonies to mark life events such as weddings and funerals. Note: activities which take place after these events in the building such as wedding receptions, will only need to request a NHS Covid Pass if there are 500 or more attending indoors.

4 Can we still sing in church?

YES – the current Government changes have not advised against singing, and current guidance suggests that a reasonable excuse exemption within the current regulations will allow the removal of a face covering whilst singing if an individual wishes to do so. It is suggested that this should be balanced against the specific setting and risks, such as smaller spaces and limited natural ventilation. Therefore churches councils may wish to take a specific local decision on this matter.

5 Should we continue to ventilate indoors or meet outdoors if possible:

YES - If this is not possible or practical, Government SAGE data suggests that opening windows regularly for 10 minutes, or a small amount continuously, can help reduce the risk of transmission compared to no ventilation. The use of CO2 monitors can also help highlight areas of poor natural ventilation in a building. There is also an 'easy read' version of the Government's more detailed ventilation guidance, which can be found here - [Ventilation of indoor spaces to stop the spread of COVID-19 \(easy read\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101421/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-covid-19-easy-read.pdf).

6 Do we need to socially distance?

NO – there is currently no Government requirement for the reintroduction of social distancing within church settings. A level of distancing to protect those who are vulnerable can be considered though as part of a specific risk assessment for the room or activity. This is a local decision for the managing trustees, based on the local situation.

7 Should we continue to get tested and self-isolate if needed:

YES - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and take a free PCR test as soon as possible. Anyone who tests positive must self-isolate. Equally, anyone notified they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive should also take a free PCR test as soon as possible and self-isolate if required. Stay at home if you are feeling unwell.

8 Should we continue to encourage good hygiene practice:

YES - Provide hand sanitiser in convenient areas throughout the building for everyone to use; keep established practices of cleaning surfaces touched regularly and rooms with high use by different groups such as toilets and kitchens.

Continue to use live-stream and other forms of online communication:

Continue with the positive changes that have been made during the pandemic. Perhaps this has been live-streaming services or similar online and outward-looking mission. Look to improve on these as a means of giving people within and outside the church continued access to worship, teaching and support during this period.

Is there additional information for working in settings with children and young people?

YES – please refer to guidance produced by the Children, Youth and Families Ministry Team - <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/resources-and-help-for-lockdown-and-beyond/>

Further considerations for face to face services:

Care should be taken to reduce the risk of spreading the virus, including reviewing the length of service and the number of hymns sung (when permitted), avoiding various people handling the same piece of equipment etc. For the time being, we suggest ministers should refrain from using the common cup for Holy Communion. We recommend keeping the elements to be distributed covered during the thanksgiving prayer if it is deemed inappropriate for the presiding minister to wear a mask. Similarly, for the time being, consider retaining the reasonable safe practices for cafes when providing or distributing food and drink, such as after a service or other events.

Are there any changes for those undertaking pastoral work?

YES – from 11 November 2021, those undertaking pastoral work within Care Quality Commission-regulated care homes providing accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care have to be fully vaccinated.

Are there any printed resources available for buildings?

YES – the Government has digital resources [available to download from the CRC](#) (Campaign Resource Centre) and there is also a [DHSC press release](#) with details on the booster vaccine programme.

Is there any additional Methodist Church information to which churches can refer?

YES - The key documents to review are:

[Guide to Managing Your Church Building](#)

[Covid-19 Risk Assessment \(Word\)](#) or [\(pdf\)](#)

[Cleaning Churches during Covid-19](#)

[Re-Opening a Building Checklist \(Word\)](#) or [\(pdf\)](#)