

Southend & Leigh CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



Autumn Edition 2023

Fourth 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.



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Message from a Minister

Dear Circuit friends,

Hello! I am the new minister for The Fishermen's Chapel and Highlands Methodist Church. It is my first appointment as a probationer minister after training at Queens Theological College in Birmingham. For those who have been journeying with me, you will know that I had my Welcome Service at Highlands Methodist. It was absolutely fabulous – we filled the church with people from the Methodist circuit, district, our choirs, and family and friends; it was truly joyous. A huge thank you to you all who prepared for the service and attended.

For those who don't know me ~ I have a beautiful 17-year old daughter Georgia Baker who has just started 6th Form and I am married to Dave Cooke who is a professional musician. We live in Southend city centre with my sister's family and our rescue dog Bessie, who is the head of the household.

I have been a professional jazz singer and double bass player for 30 years, and I will continue to do that part-time as well as my ministry. In my role in the Methodist Church I will have pastoral responsibility for 2 churches, and I will begin developing the role of Chaplain to musicians in this area.

My passions are spending time with family and friends, live music/theatre/comedy/arts, cinema and walking in nature. I love good food and I am a vegetarian. I also love to laugh and I hope you think I have a good sense of humour.

My personal faith has been deeply rooted in Methodism and now I am excited about being able to serve God in this corporate role. I am particularly passionate about equality for all. I also hope to involve our church communities in working together with other denominations and inter-faith groups.

It is an honour and privilege to be part of the Southend and Leigh Circuit with such a great team of both ordained and lay disciples.

I look forward to serving my church family and the surrounding community.

God bless you all,

Rev Hev x

Reverend Heather Simmons
Probationer Presbyter





Circuit Calendar 2023/24

OCTOBER

- Wed 4th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church
Sat 7th – Circuit Prayer Meeting, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)
Sat 7th – District Circuit Stewards' Meeting, 10am, Zoom
Sun 8th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel
Wed 11th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

NOVEMBER

- Wed 1st – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church
Sat 4th – Circuit Prayer Meeting, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)
Tue 7th – CLT, 7.30pm, Zoom
Sun 12th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel
Sun 12th – Remembrance Sunday
Wed 15th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm
Thu 16th – Circuit Meeting, 7.30pm, Zoom
Mon 20th – Local Preachers Meeting, 7.30pm, Rayleigh Methodist Church

DECEMBER

- Sat 2nd – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)
Wed 6th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, Benfleet Methodist Church
Sun 10th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7:30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel
Wed 13th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm
Sun 24th – Christmas Eve
Mon 25th – Christmas Day

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

- Sat 3rd – Circuit Prayer Breakfast, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)
Wed 7th – Worship Academy, 7pm-9.15pm, 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

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)

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@tvmchurch.org)

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

(booking required with office@tvmchurch.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)



Circuit Prayer Diary October-December

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

OCTOBER

Prayer for Sunday 1st – Rev Agnes Sam and family
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 40 – South Essex Circuit
Prayer for Sunday 8th – Trinity Methodist Church
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 41 – Worship Academy
Prayer for Sunday 15th – Circuit Leadership Team
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 42 – Church Council Secretaries
Prayer for Sunday 22nd – Southend City Council, Councillors and Leaders
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 43 – Supernumeraries
Prayer for Sunday 29th – Trinity Family Centre



NOVEMBER

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 44 – Church Treasurers and Finance Co-ordinators
Prayer for Sunday 5th – UMC Great Wakering
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 45 – Pastoral Leaders, Carers and Class Leaders
Prayer for Sunday 12th – Rev Margaret Deans and family
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 46 – Wholeness and Wellbeing Services
Prayer for Sunday 19th – Havens Hospices
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 47 – Circuit Office
Prayer for Sunday 26th – UMC Shoeburyness
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 48 – Property Maintenance Co-ordinators and Committees



DECEMBER

Prayer for Sunday 3rd – Advent Courses
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 49 – Local Preachers' Secretary
Prayer for Sunday 10th – Anchored at Fishermen's Chapel
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 50 – Wesley Methodist Church
Prayer for Sunday 17th – Lettings Officers
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 51 – The Kindness Kitchen Short Street / SVP
Prayer for Sunday 24th – Rev Clifford Newman and family
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 52 – Southend Section
Prayer for Sunday 31st – Circuit Stewards



THANK YOU!

Belfairs Methodist Church would like to say a big **THANK YOU** to all those people and organisations that helped us transform our front foyer. It is now a more welcoming area, to meet and greet, and serve refreshments, especially after Sunday services.

Our thanks go to:

- Southend & Leigh Methodist Circuit for their generous grant
- Benefact Trust for their generous grant
- Bailey & Taylor for supplying and laying the new carpet
- Mr Clarke & Mr Spaul for installing the new kitchen area and fully decorating the foyer
- Brad Hunter for the plumbing works
- Paul & Paul for installing the drainage system
- 2 Anonymous donors who paid for the new tables and chairs.

These donations of finance and hard work have helped transform:

This:



To this:





CHARITY CRAFT FAIR AT BELFAIRS

A FAMILY team in Leigh raised an impressive amount for charity with a church craft fair in June.

Mother and daughter Anthea and Alix of Belfairs Methodist Church in North Leigh organised a fundraiser for a charity dear to their hearts, the British Heart Foundation.

Jan Andrews, also of Belfairs Methodist Church said: "Thanks to a little help from a lot of their friends, they raised £675, providing a tombola, cake and plant sales and homemade crafts."

Anthea and Alix and visitors to the church craft fair at Belfairs Methodist Church.

The new foyer was open in time for the Kings Coronation, on 6th May 2023 and, on 3rd June a special coffee morning was held to raise money for the British Heart Foundation which even made it into the local newspaper.

The total cost of the project was £8,664.17 but would have been more if we didn't have capable members who could fit the units, and decorate the area, free of charge.

Belfairs Methodist Church



Worship Academy 10th Anniversary Celebration



A JOYOUS CELEBRATION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTHEND AND LEIGH CIRCUIT WORSHIP ACADEMY

The party took place at Benfleet Methodist Church on 5th July 2023 to celebrate ten years of Worship Academy. Worship Academy was the brainchild of Rev. Phil Warrey, and despite the COVID pandemic we continued our regular monthly programme over the whole ten years. We normally meet October-December and February-July. It began when Phil chatted to Rev. Julia Monaghan and Rev. Elizabeth Kirova to plan this new venture.

From the beginning there were key features which made the Academy such a success. All were welcome and although most of the attendees were Methodist we certainly had individuals from the URC church who attended regularly.

** We meet at Benfleet Methodist Church and eat together in fellowship at 7pm before worshipping together and learning together. The essential ingredients are a magic mix of: **Food - Fellowship - Learning**. Doreen and Shelagh were and are such an important part of our Worship Academy family and thoroughly enjoy catering for us.

** We worship together in the Benfleet Sanctuary at 8pm and each church takes it in turn to lead Worship. The theme is usually linked to the session which follows. Methodism was born in song and to be part of that worship is amazing. I shall never forget my first session which was the fourth one in 2013.

** We have learned together, often in a very active way so that whether we were Ministers, Worship Leaders or Local Preachers we learned new ways of taking church services. We all have particular memories; I loved Ian Worsfold and Paul Wood's session. Our most regular speaker was Richard Armiger who came for eight years. I remember so clearly one of his sayings 'Get to know your congregation'.

** Friendships thrived and there has always been a real welcome to people joining our circuit.

** At the party we enjoyed food and fellowship. Sanya had worked hard with the 2022-2023 team to make our party a success.

** We had the circuit band to enhance our opening worship. This was followed by "Open Microphone" and all present had the opportunity to talk about sessions that were special to them with good memories. So, so many people took that opportunity and the stories were fascinating. They included, the "Worship Academy on the Move" when visits were made to Wesley's Chapel in the City.

** I had the privilege of organising Worship Academy for six of the ten years and was able to pay tribute to Andreas, without whom we could not have had one season on Zoom during COVID so that we "never closed".

** On a personal note, Worship Academy played a large part in my decision to return to preaching.

** Southend and Leigh Circuit established the first WORSHIP ACADEMY in the country and so many of us feel well supported in our calling to lead worship by this amazing group's activities.

** Highlights over the years have included very challenging interactive talks and musical contributions:

Rev, Dr. Jane Leach: *'Speaking of God in Public'*

Very Rev. Nicholas Henshall, Dean of Chelmsford Cathedral *'Lets Get Out of Here'*

Jane Fulford and friends: *'Prayer'*

Rev. Ian Worsfold & Rev. Paul Wood: *'Wot; no Sermon'*

Rev. Dr. Calvin Samuel: *'Distinctly Divine: Holiness as a Divine Attribute'*

Rev. Peter Perowne & Pastor Colin Turner: *'Love Feast'*

Rev. Hannah Bucke & Rev. Jenny Sponge: *'Worship in the World Still Matters'*

Our thanks go to Janet Warner for organising the group photograph and for contacting the Methodist Recorder with our story.

We look forward to our 2023/24 Worship Academy programme.

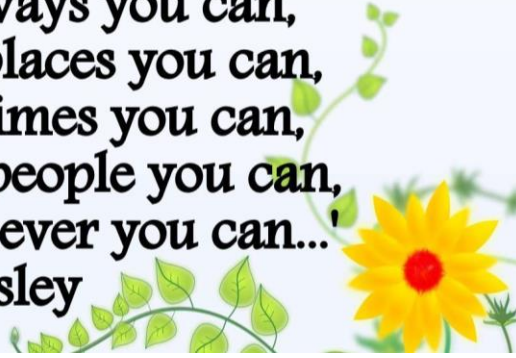
Eileen Simmons 18.8.23

Local Preacher & Worship Academy Programme Organiser 2015-2021

eileen.kester.simmons@gmail.com

Highlands Lunch Club Celebrates 1st Birthday

**'Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can...'
- John Wesley**



Back in March 2020 when news of the Coronavirus pandemic first hit, Tuesday Chatter were celebrating Darin's Birthday with refreshments in no. 1 room. It felt strange to have to advise everyone to go and wash their hands before we tucked-in to cake and sandwiches but this was just the beginning.

There were times when no one was permitted in the church building and at others, people were limited in number and had to be metres apart. All hard to imagine now but upsetting to remember how lonely and isolating this was for everyone.

Through this time Jackie hosted gatherings in her garden socially distanced and in accordance with prevailing guidelines. We both started to consider how we could bring people safely back to community.

Plans started to hatch; Pastor Steve asked Jackie if she would like to run a Lunch Club at Church. With relevant church permissions sort and sizeable donations received we were able to equip the kitchen with a lovely new oven and hood and all the associated precautions required for a venture of this nature.



The first lunch Club took place on Tuesday 12th July 2022.

We have a maximum of 30 places available every month which can be booked and paid ahead for the following month on the day of lunch club.

Subs per month are £7 which includes a main course, pudding and tea or coffee to follow.

We have been blessed with a super bunch of helpers over our first year and we would like to thank David, Heather, Chaz and Margaret for all their help and the supportive gentlemen from Leigh Roundtable who funded and helped serve Christmas Lunch in 2021 and 2022. We are also grateful to Pastor Steve for his consummate professional dishwashing skills and we warmly invite him to drop in to help if he has a spare moment from September.

At Your service

Julie Peek and Jackie Sheochoran

Team Highlands Lunch Club



THE EXPERIENCE PROJECT



Summer Sports Day

A warm sunny August day greeted the community on the Whittingham estate as The Experience Project hosted its Annual Sports Day.

With faces painted in the respective colours, Team Blue, Team Red & Team Yellow assembled on Bournes Green Park opposite The Experience Project. The children gave it their all taking part in several races: a three-legged race, egg & spoon, dressing up, a welly throwing contest and more! Not to be outdone, the adults skillfully took part in the Sack Race.

With refreshments on the horizon, it was time for the last event: the highly anticipated Tug of War. Having learnt from last year, a supreme amount of effort & tactics were deployed by both teams. Everyone's efforts were recognised with medals and the obligatory water fight.

Thank you to all the project staff & volunteers for a happy & enjoyable event. A special thank you to the staff at Whittingham House Care Home who volunteered their time to prepare the hot food.



3GENERATE

Methodist Children & Youth Assembly

3Generate, the children's and youth assembly of the Methodist Church, aims to create an inclusive and diverse space* for the prophetic voice of children and young people to emerge and be heard. It enables them to speak courageously, and listen to God and each other. Through the 3Generate process, children and young people are equipped to become participants in advocacy, change and growth and have an impact in their local Methodist communities. 3Generate calls the Church to listen to, and be in relationship and dialogue with and amongst, children and young people, so that change can happen together as a community.

3Generate in 2023: 6th – 8th October at the NEC, Birmingham

The church's
ministry of healing



A study day for all
who lead worship

**“Proclaim the Kingdom of God
and heal the sick” *Luke 9:2***
...How are we doing?

- Led by Alison Bryan, Coordinator of Healing Ministry, Methodist Central Hall Westminster
- With contributions from Rev Gill Newton, 2023-24 President of the Methodist Conference

Saturday 14th October 2023 10am - 4.15pm

Christchurch, Bedford Road, Hitchin SG5 1HF

Hot/cold drinks & biscuits provided, please bring a packed lunch.

RSVP to: info@christchurchhitchin.org.uk

Sponsored by the Beds, Essex & Herts District

Worship Academy 2023-2024

Season 11

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



Book via Eventbrite

Worship Academy 2023/2024 Season 11

First Wednesday of the month except August, September 2023 and January 2024

Date	Topic	Speaker/Facilitator	Church leading worship
TERM ONE: All age / Intergenerational			
4 October	Faith and Worship in Retirement Homes	TBC	
1 November	Intergenerational worship	Gail Adcock	
6 December	What can we learn from revival style worship?	Sanya Strachan	Sanya Strachan
TERM TWO: Creative			
7 February	Singing and choirs in worship	Heather Simmons	Heather Simmons
6 March	How to use the Psalms creatively	Pete Moorhouse	
3 April	Art in worship	Anne Briant	Anne and Bob Briant
Special?	Glass workshop - TBC	TBC	
TERM THREE: Use of scripture			
1 May	Gospel for Year B: Mark	Dave Chapman	
5 June	Controversial texts	Calvin Samuel	
3 July	TBC	TBC	
Saturday ?? July *SPECIAL*	Walk through the Bible	Tom Greene	

WHAT DOES MODERN SLAVERY LOOK LIKE?

Is it shackles and chains or
something a little more polished
and hiding in plain sight?



AN EVENING TO INFORM, INSPIRE AND ENGAGE *with* WORSHIP, PRAYER AND PEOPLE ON THE FRONT LINE

- ❖ **Dan Pratt** - Southend Against Modern Slavery
- ❖ **Bob Fortt** - Essex Police
- ❖ **Gwen Elliott** - Hope At Home
- ❖ **Debbie Huxton** - Dudley Council

Come and join us on **Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 7:30PM** at
**Thorpe Bay Methodist Church, The Broadway,
Thorpe Bay, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 3HQ**

Refreshments from 7pm. A retiring (cash) collection will be taken for SAMS.