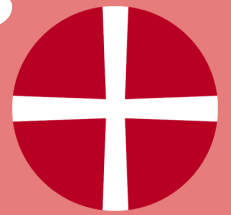


Southend & Leigh CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



Autumn Edition 2025

Fourth Quarter

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Welcome to our Circuit

We are a group of 15 Methodist Church fellowships, including a Zimbabwean fellowship, on 16 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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[Southend and Leigh Circuit Instagram](#)



Message from a Community Outreach Pastor

Dear Friends,

“Turn left. We want families to turn left and not just right”. This was the hope for my role at Rochford Methodist Church, to see families turn left into the church sanctuary and not just right into the community space. However, before we could see that happen, we needed to build up our wider community links and to reach out to the families themselves.

Along the way we have had a lot of fun and made some great friends. For me this is key, to go beyond seeing families as conversion targets but as friends. To enable the community to become involved in what we are doing, to support us and to allow projects to grow organically. We have done this as a team, the various events and clubs would not have been possible without others being willing to help.

At its heart, I am looking to serve the community, to bless them and to share Gods love in a practical way. With the area being one of high deprivation, removing any financial barriers is also important.

The work that I have been involved with can come under the following broad headings:

Assemblies

I lead Christian assemblies in two primary schools, aiming for them to be fun and engaging, with a Christian message weaved in. The kids enjoy them and I get invited back on a regular basis. I would say that my willingness to follow the school topics, being reliable and flexible to the schools’ needs have all helped.

VE Day Party / Summer Party / Light Party / Easter Party

I have organised a variety of parties and events. These have been a great time for the various parts of the church community to mingle and to deepen friendships with those in the church. They have loosely followed a messy church approach of craft, food and a short bible-based talk. For the summer party we had a bouncy castle, while for the VE Day celebration funding was secured from Rochford Parish Council and this paid for extra decorations, with sausages and chips for everyone.



Lego Club

Running after school on a Monday, our Lego Club has proved incredibly popular with families. We have built up a lovely community, a place where Lego is built, games are played and quality coffee is drunk. Healthy snacks are provided as the timing is when kids have the post-school hunger phase. A weekly Lego raffle is run, as a way of blessing the kids. A grant for this and the parties was secured from Sanctuary Housing. Lego club has also provided a place for families with links to our Happy Cup Toddler group to bring older siblings to.

Garden

The church did not have a garden, it had a gravel patch. That was until some of our Lego Club families, who have green fingers, offered to build an allotment for us. Now we have an amazing supply of tomatoes, strawberries and radishes growing. This garden really did grow organically, and it gives another focus for kids and adults at Lego Club.

Cooking Club

Last summer we ran our first cooking club, and we have now run many subsequent holiday cooking events. Our current summer cooking club was fully booked within 24 hours. The idea is simple. Kids love to cook, parents and carers are looking for creative activities to do over the holidays and so much the better if lunch is provided. We have taught how to cook simple meals like flatbread pizza, upside down cake and pancakes to name a few. As it encourages healthy eating in an area of high deprivation, I was able to secure funding from Sanctuary housing. We gave a slow cooker for each of the families that attended, which was a blessing.

Jamming on the Third

We have developed our all age worship service into a more creative and contemporary service aimed at those who are new to the church. This has been linked with craft events and has built on the monthly kids church. It has encouraged families to turn left into the sanctuary and not just right. We are seeing green shoots as families start to explore more about Christianity, which has been exciting to see.

We have seen friendships deepened and a good number of families coming into the wider church community. We are building a community, which is exciting and we are having the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with these families and starting to see people turn left. For me, the point when I realised we had a community was when our car was scrapped and a Lego club family lent me a mini. We still have the mini and it is a reminder that our families have just as much to give us as we do them.

Mike Webb

**Community Outreach Pastor
Rochford Methodist Church**





Circuit Calendar 2025

OCTOBER

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

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

Wed 8th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Sun 12th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Sat 18th – 10am-12pm Making "Carecrows" from recycled materials, Highlands Methodist Church

Sun 19th – Harvest Festival Service with food donations, 4pm, followed by hot supper, Highlands Methodist Church

Sun 19th – Harvest Festival Parade at The Fisherman's Chapel with 3rd Chalkwell Bay Scouts, 11am. Food collections for HARP and Southend Foodbank.

Autumn Concert Series at The Fishermen's Chapel:

Sat Oct 11th – The Ondines and The Empty Bears (www.wegottickets.com/event/671059)

Fri Oct 17th – Quartz Saxophone Quartet (www.wegottickets.com/event/672869)

Fri Oct 24th – Bottleneck Blues with Martin McNeill, West Weston, Tim Huskisson and JJ Zarbo (www.wegottickets.com/event/674644)

NOVEMBER

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

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

Thu 6th – CLT, 7.30pm, Highlands Methodist Church

Sun 9th – Remembrance Sunday

Sun 9th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Tue 11th – Local Preachers Meeting, 7.30pm, The Fishermen's Chapel

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

Thu 20th – Circuit Meeting, 7.30pm, Belfairs Methodist Church

Sun 30th – Thanksgiving / Farewell Service, 10.45am, Thundersley Methodist Church

DECEMBER

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

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

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

Wed 24th – Christmas Eve

Thu 25th – Christmas Day

Circuit Services

Lectio Divina on Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

– Wednesdays 7.30pm-8.15pm with Rev Heather and Clive Johnson

All welcome. Each session is stand alone.

Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

BELFAIRS METHODIST CHURCH

Boys Brigade - Mondays, Anchor 5:30pm, Junior 6:30pm, Company 7:30pm
Badminton - Tuesdays, 8pm
Parent & Toddlers - Wednesdays, 10am
Girls Brigade - Wednesdays, Explorers & Juniors 5:30pm, Seniors & Brigaders 7pm
Thirsty For? (Café Worship) - second Thursday of the month, 7pm
A.C.T.I.O.N. (Fellowship) - fourth Thursday of the month, 2pm



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



CHALKWELL PARK METHODIST CHURCH

Ladies Monday Club - 2nd & 4th Mondays (except BH & August), 2-4pm
Caterpillars Baby & Toddler group - Wednesdays, sch. term only, 9.30am-11.30am
Coffee Morning - 1st Friday of the month, 10am-12noon
Crafty Friday (for adults) - 2nd & 4th Fridays, sch. term only, 10am-12noon



Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

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 in Church - Tuesdays, 9.15am-9.45am

Toddlers - Mondays, 9.30am-11.30am (term time only)

Bible Study / House Group - 3rd Tuesday of the month, 1pm-2pm

Evening House Group - 2nd Monday of the month, 7.30pm in the Snug

Classic Film afternoon with ice-cream - First Friday of every month, 2-4pm



ROCHFORD METHODIST CHURCH

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

Prayer time on Zoom - Mondays, 7pm

Bible Studies on Zoom - Tuesdays, 7.30pm

Housegroup - usually 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, 10am

The Tuesday Café - first & third Tuesday, 2-4pm

CrackerJacks - first Monday of the month, 2-3.30pm

Coffee Morning - every Wednesday, 10am-12noon



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 (Great Woking)

'Brew, Chew, Renew' (Bible Study with refreshments) - Fortnightly on Monday, 10.30am

Funtime Toddlers - Wednesdays & Thursdays (except 3rd Thurs of the month) 9.30-11.30am (term time)

Home Group - Tuesdays, 7.30pm (contact office@umcsouthend.org.uk)



Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

THE FISHERMEN'S CHAPEL

Coffee Morning - Wednesdays, 10.30-12.30pm.

Gospel Choir Rehearsals (contact Rev Heather 07879 232231)

Regular Music and Arts Events - please visit website: www.fishermenschapel.org.uk

On the 3rd Sunday of every month at 7.30pm the service content has changed from being a creative service to a reflective Taizé service.



RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH

Sunbeams Baby & Toddler Group - Mondays (term time), 1.15pm to 2.45pm (under 5 £2+50p parents/carers)

Townswomen Guild (Speaker, tea & cake) - Last Monday of the month, 10am to 12pm

Memory Worship (30mins service followed by Coffee & Craft) - First Tuesday of the month, 2pm

Free Drama Group Years 2 to 5 - Tuesdays (term time), 4pm to 5pm

Ladies Club (informal and fun All age tea, biscuit, speakers, outings, meals) - Wednesdays, 1.45pm to 3.15pm

Wesley Guild (Everyone welcome any age Women and Men varied program of Devotional, Christian Service, Cultural and Musical, Social events) - Thursdays, 2pm

Toys & Toast (Baby & Toddler) - Fridays (term time), 9.30am to 11am (£3 last 30 minutes is singing)

Trefoil Guild - Third Friday of the month (exc. Bank Hols), 1.30pm to 3.30pm (all 18+)

Coffee Morning - Third Sat of the month, 10am to 12pm

(each month in aid of community / church projects)

Messy Church - Last Sunday of the month except August and December, 4pm to 6pm



HOCKLEY & HAWKWELL METHODIST CHURCH

Sundays: Tea and Coffee from 10.30am followed by Morning Worship at 11.15am

Mondays: Brightstars Toddler Group, 9.00–11.30am

1st Hockley Rainbows, 4.15–5.30pm

Tuesdays: Messy Church (3rd Tuesday each Month), 4.00–5.30pm

Bible Studies on Zoom, 7.30pm

Wednesdays: Welcome Wednesday (Tea, Coffee & Cake), 10.00am-12noon

2nd Hockley Brownie Pack, 5.30-7.00 pm

Thursdays: 1st Hockley Beaver Colony, 5.15-6.15 pm

Thursday Social Club, 2.30pm



CHRISTMAS EVENTS / SERVICES

Fri 5th Dec – 7pm Music Man Christmas Concert, Highlands Methodist Church

Sat 6th Dec – Carols on Strand Wharf (with collection of toys) in association with 3rd Chalkwell Bay Scouts, 4-5pm

Sun 14th Dec – Christmas Gospel Service, 7.30-8.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Sun 14th Dec – Toy Service Parade with Uniformed Groups 10.30am, Highlands Methodist Church

Sun 21st Dec – Carol Service 4pm, Highlands Methodist Church

Sun 21st Dec – Midwinter Carols with The Famous Potatoes 5.30pm -6.30pm followed by mince pies and mulled "wine" (replacing Taize service), The Fisherman's Chapel

Wed 24th Dec – 4.30pm Make Christingles/Hot chocolate @5pm All age service, Highlands Methodist Church

Wed 24th Dec – 10.30am-12.30pm Crackers and Carols Coffee morning (all age), The Fisherman's Chapel

7.30-8.30pm Light a candle for a loved one for Christmas, The Fisherman's Chapel

Christmas Day – 10am-10.30am, Family worship, The Fisherman's Chapel

Christmas Day – 11am-11.30am Family worship, Highlands Methodist Church

Circuit Prayer Diary October-December

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

OCTOBER

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 40 – Rev Agnes Sam and family
Prayer for Sunday 5th – Church Administrators
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 41 – Trinity Methodist Church
Prayer for Sunday 12th – Local Preacher's Secretary
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 42 – Mindfulness at Fishermen's Chapel
Prayer for Sunday 19th – Church Musicians, Worship Bands and Organists
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 43 – Circuit Finance Officer
Prayer for Sunday 26th – Trinity Family Centre



NOVEMBER

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 44 – Lettings Officers
Prayer for Sunday 2nd – Circuit Office
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 45 – Inspire at Wesley
Prayer for Sunday 9th – Rev Heather Simmons and family
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 46 – Hirers and external groups that use our premises
Prayer for Sunday 16th – UMC Great Waking
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 47 – Property and Maintenance Co-ordinators and Committees
Prayer for Sunday 23rd – Circuit Officers
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 48 – Wesley Methodist Church
Prayer for Sunday 30th – South Essex Circuit



DECEMBER

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 49 – Advent Courses
Prayer for Sunday 7th – Southend Section
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 50 – Southend City Council, Councillors and Leaders
Prayer for Sunday 14th – Circuit Leadership Team
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 51 – Church Treasurers and Finance Co-ordinators
Prayer for Sunday 21st – HARP Homeless Charity
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 52 – Whittingham Mission Centre
Prayer for Sunday 28th – The Kindness Kitchens at Short Street / SVP



Ordination Highlights

On Sunday 29th June, Revd's Agnes Sam and Heather Simmons were received into full connexion at Methodist Conference in Telford in the morning and ordained at Saint Chad's Church, Shrewsbury in the afternoon. It was a wonderful occasion supported by family, friends, church members and other ministers. Congratulations!



UMC BBQ

On Sunday July 6th we held our annual BBQ at the home of Alan and Anita Sambridge. We were blest with good weather even though the forecast was a bit pessimistic. A few of our folk were missing this year for a variety of reasons but nevertheless those of us who attended enjoyed good food, fun and fellowship. This was a good opportunity to catch up socially with friends whom we may only see on Sundays in church and the general sound of chatter was proof that this was the case. Our thanks go to Alan and Anita for the work they did in preparing the garden, organizing, cooking and serving the food and generally opening up their house for the occasion. Voluntary donations raised £176 for church funds.



Sandown Park, Surrey **15-16 Oct 2025**

Ripples from the Empty Tomb

Written in 2020, this article was originally circulated electronically to the community at Maldon in 2020 during the lockdown.

The 26th March 2020 was three days after the lockdown was announced. It was a sunny day so I went into the garden to play with my camera. We have a picket fence that has seen better days and one of the wooden posts that holds it up has a knot in the wood. It would be a nice challenge, I thought, to capture the knot with a macro lens. This is the kind of lens that gives big pictures of tiny things and as I normally like to capture images of landscapes, I don't often use my "macro" lens.

Image 01

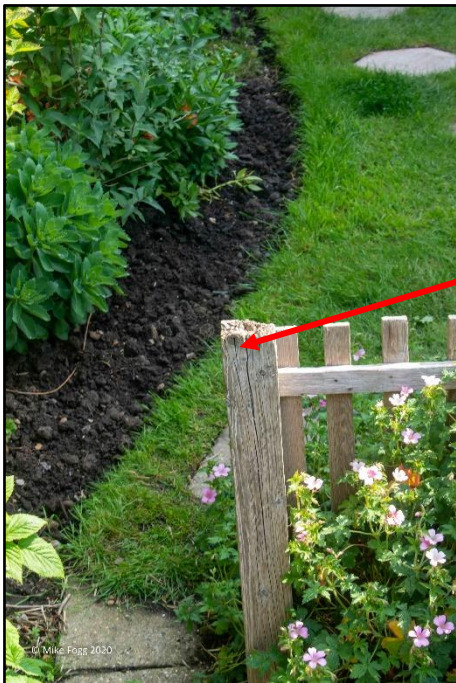


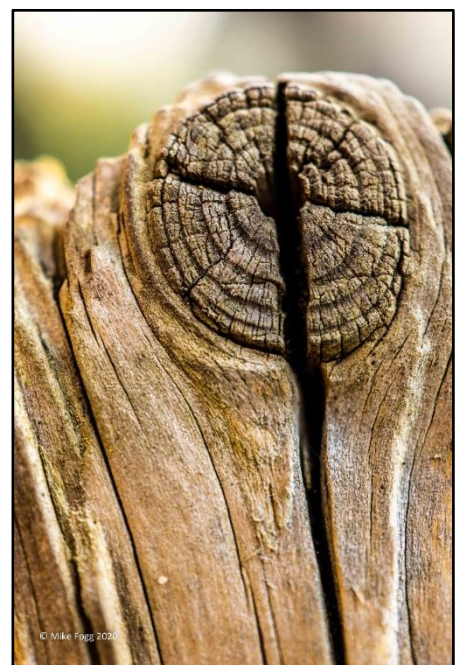
Image 01 on the left is the post in all its glory and if you look closely and follow the red arrow you can make out the knot, it's about $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter in real life. It at the top on the left-hand side.

Now move on to image 02 below, which is the knot captured with the camera mounted on a tripod using the "macro" lens, which is probably about $\frac{1}{2}$ " away from the knot. The knot is still only $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter, however we see a more detailed view of it. Simply put the macro lens allows us to see something that's there all the time, but we don't notice it.

Image 02

How often is God "there all the time" in our lives, maybe in the actions of others or simply in nature all around us and yet we don't see him. Echoes here I think of the story of the road to Emmaus.

Now look at the cross more closely. Well, in fact there is nothing there, the wood has split because I have not maintained it over its 30 years in the garden. What we see is a dark space in the shape of a cross. It reminds us that, like the people who sought Jesus body after his crucifixion, he was not there, he is risen, the tomb was empty, just like the "cross" here is empty.



Now look again at the image and the circles around the knot radiating or rippling outwards from the centre of the cross that isn't there. I see the circles as the Church (the body of Christ) down the centuries, radiating God's message in Jesus to people far and wide and radiating it from an empty tomb. One of the first ripples was to include people who were not Jews, people like you and me. God used Cornelius as a channel to achieve that part of his plan.

Our place in Christian life is in one of those circles. We may be old and battered, crinkly at the edges, however our clear purpose is to continue to spread the message outwards, near, far and wide. Look at the image again. There are diagonal cracks in the knot leading out from the centre and perhaps we can see these are channels through which we can deliver the message and to use different means to take the message further.

So then, when you are "carrying on" this week, you might feel like the fence post which could fall over, which is battered and gnarled and if you do, think again. Look at the cross and radiate out from it to be with and serve others in the name of Jesus. Pick up the phone and talk to someone, write a letter, talk to people on your daily walk. All of these are opportunities to continue to spread the message as it has been spread down the centuries.

It's now 2025 and both the post and the fence have fallen and been placed in the re-cycling bin!

Mike Fogg
Local Preacher

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and took part at District Synod in September. It was wonderful to come together.



The Experience Project

Activities and Events



High Street Bless Mob Summer 2025



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We had a special guest join us - Sammy the Shrimp, Southend United Football Club mascot, made a guest appearance at the Bingo Morning in August!



Community Pop-Up / outreach work on the Kursaal Estate and to the St Luke's Community Hub, where we were delighted to share lovely food bags, Prep Kitchen ready-made meals, bread, and other treats to brighten their day.



The Southend and Leigh Circuit would like to express their gratitude to the Benefact Trust who have grant-funded our Experience Project at the Whittingham Mission Centre.

Benefact Trust is one of the UK's largest grant-making charities and awarded more than £23 million to churches, charities and communities in 2020. Its funds come from its ownership of the Benefact Group.



**BENEFACT
TRUST**

Greenbelt 2025 Hope in the Making

For me Greenbelt is HOPE

Thursday

Easy journey with Bob and Anne Briant. Greenbelt campers getting organised carting their tents etc from their cars to the campsite – a way bit off in the distance – we were just getting our wrist bands and programmes. All very easy. Then a bite to eat at the Campsite Hub and of course a cup of tea. Refreshed and already pondering which events to go to for three whole days – onward to the Hotel. Meeting friends in the lobby, totally unplanned, lovely room and then a swim, evening meal and rest.

Friday

Hotel breakfast – fried bread – thank you and off to Greenbelt. Talks, worship and workshops already begun. People wanting to listen, learn, be involved, babies in carts and slings, toddlers running free on the grass, many mobility scooters O so much freedom for all ages. A community, respectful, calm, safe, smiling in the sunshine all intentionally seeking 'something'

What are you seeking?

My first talk, in the shelter tent, was with Miranda Threlfall-Holmes exploring the text in Ezekiel 37 and the Valley of the Dry Bones. She began explaining that there were just over 150 comments on HOPE in the Bible but not many on making hope. For this talk then she had chosen the phrase 'our bones are dry, and we are hope less'. For the first 35 chapters of Ezekiel the people are in exile, and their country lies wrecked, everything lacks hope. Ezekiel through vivid visions is challenged by God to speak out about all that they did wrong – to prophecy – a calling out especially to their leaders and to turn to God. One vision is of the Valley of the Dry Bones with the valley referring to Psalm 23. The bones do listen; they stand together like a community having lived through a trauma and are now becoming hopeful. By coming together, telling our stories – sometimes wrestling with them we can become more hopeful.

Miranda then gave us an activity to do. There probably were about a 100 people in the TENT called SHELTER. We were to create a Haiku (a Japanese poem of 3 lines and 17 syllables). In small groups we were to create / choose a first line of 5 syllables and put on one postit, a second line of 7 syllables and put on a second postit of a different colour and finally the third line of 5 syllables on the third coloured postit. Once done we placed them on the 3 edges of the small, raised stage at the front of the TENT. One of the group then chose another 1 line from the edge of the stage to take back to the group. I offer you 2 examples:

Valley of Dry Bones
Put breath in you, you shall live
We have a future

Mortal, can bones live?
Thus says the Lord to the bones
Join with HOPE we live

Wonderful I was back at Greenbelt learning and being involved in Worship.

Next onto Remembrance for Peace with Wild Goose (part of the Iona Community) and CND. A short talk and then over to the gathered group to come up with ideas for Remembrance services: Poppies – red, white, black and purple; friendship bracelets, world map and candles on areas of conflict and the importance of personal stories. As I am taking the Remembrance Sunday at Wesley this year you may get one or all of these.

Still with Wild Goose a panel of 4 people in their twenties and thirties discussing 'The Church I never knew I was looking for?'. Their attendance and love of their church was encouraging.

Brain needing a rest. 'Grace Notes' was next. A jazz ensemble offering gentle movement and music to reflect the scriptures, wonderful. Continuing the relaxed mediation theme a walk through a labyrinth on the grass.

Getting on for 5pm so to the Tiny Tea Tent. Fill up my flask and survey the eateries – a roast pork burger will do. Sat listening to the Xcerts – a little loud and not really my music. A slow walk to the car and the hotel.

Saturday

Back with Miranda Threlfall-Holmes exploring Exodus chapter 5 – bricks made without straw. This needs quite a lot of explanation, so I am going to offer this for the November Clarion. The second half she led us through corporately composing a Psalm – really inclusive – maybe I will try this in a service.

In the pagoda tent I sat listening to the actor Adjoa Andoh, best known as *Bridgerton's* Lady Danbury, is a Christian and who has had a very interesting journey into acting. She is a member of the Church of England and just a couple of quotes I hope I have got correct: - 'God meets us where we are' and 'God is better than a fag!' We need to remember that every day is a miracle, and we are all capable of being a light for those around us. So, hopeful.

Next to a service by the Magdalene Community Church – a church that is always outside regardless of the weather, with all ages especially young children and families. Glad it was sunny but most of us were in the shade. It was a joy to watch the toddlers and the relaxed manner of the parents. Leaders' voices had to be loud as no microphone so were not always clear but no matter the message God's love was clear.

A trip to the Tiny Tea Tent followed by a talk by Charlotte Gale about setting up a 'new' church in a former bookshop in Coventry Cathedral, being self-sufficient, inclusive, small and varied. Again, this was encouraging that people were coming to faith in our modern busy world.

Another trip to the Tiny Tea tent and dinner listening to the wonderful 'The Longest Johns' for me folk sea shanties – a joyous fun time – giggling about, clapping and having a feel-good time for about an hour before beginning to think about the hotel and some well-earned sleep.

Sunday

Communion for all, sitting at the main stage with about 15,000 people believing and worshipping together in sunshine. The communion is all about inclusivity and this year was no different. We were led by Ezra Solanky – a 10-year-old Greenbelter, and an 82-year-old, Rev Sue Parfitt. She was one of the first women to be ordained as a priest in the Church of England and is possibly about to be charged with terrorism for supporting the banned Palestinian group. Other supportive organizations were Two:23, Symphony Collective and St Columba's Church, Oxford.

We began with a traditional hymn of 'Great is Thy Faithfulness' and then to a not so well-known John Bell song 'Christ's is the world in which we move' with a lovely refrain: -

*'To the lost, Christ shows His face
To the unloved, He gives His embrace
To those who cry in pain or disgrace,
Christ, makes, with His friends, a touching place'*

After prayers and readings, we were in groups of 10-12 to offer each other communion of bread and wine – Ribena – intergenerational, friends and strangers – silence, peace, joy and fun.

There is always a collection and this year it was 50% to Greenbelt to organise next year and 50% is to go to the relief and restoration projects in Gaza though the charity Christian Aid. Although I did not get to a tent/stage called the No Fly Zone, this was where discussions on the Holy Land took place. An art installation, the Gaza Lighthouse stood shining a light for the Holy Land and the Palestinians throughout the festival.

After the communion I went to a talk by Ruth Harvey at Wild Goose entitled Hope in every Breath. This was very informative and scriptural but in discussion and feedback the most memorial comment was there is more good than badness inside us and that brings HOPE. This was then encouraging us to make as many acts of kindness as we could as this offers others HOPE.

The weekend coming to an end and I had not even been to the Hope and Anchor – a tent organised by the Methodists. Dropped in, chatted to old friends and then to the bookshop tent. Yes, it is a good resource and of course had to buy some books.

Loaded up began reluctantly to wander very slowly to the car.

Definitely going back next year. *Anyone want to join me?*

God Bless,

Jane Fulford



Loving through a Broken Heart

A talk by Rev David Hardman

at Trinity Methodist Church in Basildon

Liaison Officer for the Methodist Church in Jersualem

I attended this talk about the history, geography and theology of this region in a calm and thoughtful gathering on the 3rd August 2025.

Rev David Hardman began by explaining why he had embarked on a series of talks. He lives when in Jersualem overlooking the Church of England Cathedral St Georges. This area is not part of Gaza. Recently he was concerned for the caretaker that cared for the building as he had not seen him for some time. The caretaker was fine – the simple answer was he was not allowed through a checkpoint barrier for a whole week. He had done nothing wrong he was just trying to get to his place of work to enable him to earn a wage and feed his family. There was no reason given to explain why the checkpoint had been closed.

David then took us through the theology of the ‘promised land’ and the more up to date areas of occupation through an understanding of ‘settler Colonialism’ ‘Zionism’ ‘Occupation’ ‘Oppression’ and ‘Apartheid.’ Highlighting the Balfour Declarations of 1926 and of 1948 and the 6 Day War of 1967 and condemning the taking of hostages by Hamas on Oct 4th, 2024.

For me this was illuminating but also very sad as what came across was the ordinary Israeli and Palestinian simply want to get on with living their lives.

In the Question-and-Answer session the final question was ‘What is the way forward?’

Firstly, there is no easy answer. Secondly, it is important that both Israelis and Palestinians have homelands and equal humanitarian rights to govern themselves. This would indicate a two-state solution. Thirdly, one state where all people can have equal humanitarian rights – a dream as there has been so much conflict and bloodshed?

So as a beginning maybe a two-state solution but let the ordinary people decide – again maybe an impossibility but just sometimes the impossible can become reality.

Below is a suggested link for further reading from the Methodist Church in Britain Website

[Israel-Palestine - The Methodist Church](#)

Closer to Home

I did put leaflets advertising this event into our sanctuary at Wesley. On the morning of the 3rd August I needed to check the time of this talk, so I was amazed to find they had almost all gone, none were on view! At one level it would have been wonderful if interested people had taken them, but I fear not. I find it very sad and annoying that we cannot advertise a talk by a Methodist minister in a Methodist church with a wealth of knowledge about a controversial topic. If anyone knows who took them and why please do let me know. Please remember that one aspect of the Methodist Quadrilateral is 'reason.' One theme of the Methodist Way of Life is Lifelong learning. As Methodists we should be debating issues to help us make informed choices and to keep us from only hearing the voices of fake or extreme views.

I will continue to pray for peace in all areas of conflict as I hope you will.

A Prayer for peace

Creator God

Today in a fractured world we pray for peace and justice,

Your peace, not built on our broken promises and failing courage,

But your deep peace, through your creative power and embodied in the service and sacrifice of Jesus.

May we follow Christ, seeking your justice, acting in solidarity and hope,

Even when the way seems unclear and the powers of our world don't reflect your Kingdom,

Your Peace, Your Justice, Your Kingdom, Your world,

In Jesus name

Amen.

(From the Methodist Church in Britain Website)

God Bless,

Jane

Praise and Play

Fridays (once a quarter) exact dates are below
09.15am-09.45am
Leigh Wesley Methodist Church

Playful worship with toys, singing good old school assembly songs, fun biblical storytelling and prayer activities. Join us for 30 minutes with your little ones as we worship God and learn more about Jesus.

Refreshments available afterwards in The Sanctuary Cafe.

PRAISE AND PLAY

Playful worship for under 5s

Fridays (once a quarter)

7 November 2025, 6 February 2026,
8 May 2026 , 7 August 2026

09.15am-09.45am

Followed by refreshments in the cafe



At Wesley Methodist Church, Elm Road,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1SJ
www.wesleymethodist.org.uk

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



Wholeness &
Wellbeing
Services
2026

28th January
Zoom

1st April
Benfleet Methodist
Church

24th June
Benfleet Methodist
Church

All dates are on Wednesdays and services begin at 7:45pm

For more details contact southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com



THUNDERSLEY
METHODIST CHURCH

A Service of Farewell and Thanksgiving



SUNDAY 30TH NOVEMBER
10:45AM

CELEBRATING A NEW CHAPTER, AS
THUNDERSLEY METHODIST CHURCH
BECOMES
THE BURRELL WELLBEING CENTRE
KENNINGTON AVENUE, BENFLEET
SS7 4BS



***You Are Invited To a
Traditional***

Afternoon Tea

***at United Methodist Church
High Street, Great Wakering***

on

Friday 17th October

2.00pm - 4.00pm

£7.50 per person.

To ensure a place, please contact the church office on

07752 859296 email: office@umcsouthend.org.uk

or ring Anita on 07375 402677



REFLECTIVE WORSHIP

WEDNESDAYS
ONCE A QUARTER
6.30PM

WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH
ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA
SS9 1SJ

REFLECTIVE WORSHIP

WEDNESDAYS - ONCE A QUARTER
6.30PM - 7.30PM



Reflective Worship focuses on quiet, more contemplative and meditative styles of worship, in an informal and relaxed setting.

29th October
18th February

27th May
22nd July

ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP 2025-2026

INSPIRE 4TH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 5.30PM - 6.30PM

Inspire is our monthly service dedicated to contemporary worship; modern worship songs, prayer, activities and reflections.

28th September
26th October
23rd November
No service in December
25th January
22nd February

22nd March
26th April
24th May
28th June
26th July
No service in August



www.wesleymethodist.org.uk

Wesley Methodist Church

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

Inspire

EVERY 4TH SUNDAY
5.30PM
WESLEY METHODIST
CHURCH
ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA
SS9 1SJ

MEMORY WORSHIP

Worship for those
with & without
Dementia



Dementia
Friendly
Communities

2PM - 4PM
3RD MONDAY
OF THE MONTH

MEMORY WORSHIP

3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH
2PM - 4PM



Worship for those with and without dementia. Our 'dementia friend' team are on hand with tea, cake and fellowship.

15th September
20th October
17th November
15th December
19th January
16th February

16th March
20th April
18th May
15th June
20th July
17th August

ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP 2025-2026

MIDWEEK COMMUNION & TIME FOR PRAYER



2ND WEDNESDAY
OF THE MONTH
9AM & 9.30AM

WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH
ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA
SS9 1SJ

MIDWEEK COMMUNION & TIME FOR PRAYER

2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
9AM & 9.30AM

Midweek Communion service at 9am, with Time for Prayer at 9.30am for private & group prayer.

10th September
8th October
12th November
10th December
14th January
11th February

11th March
8th April
13th May
10th June
8th July
No meeting in August



www.wesleymethodist.org.uk

Wesley Methodist Church

THE SANCoUARY CAFÉ

Café for the Community

Fridays 10am-12pm

Saturdays 10am-1pm

**Wesley Methodist Church,
Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea**
(entry via the double doors
at the front of the church)



www.wesleymethodist.org.uk



FUSION Youth & Kids

For school years 1 - 6

**2ND
THURSDAY
OF THE
MONTH
6pm-7.30pm**

Wesley
Methodist
Church,
Elm Road,
Leigh

**£1.50
ENTRY**

Tuck Shop | Sports | X Box/Wii | Games
Craft | Pool | Table Football | Competitions
& much more!

Contact: fusionyouth@btinternet.com



www.wesleymethodist.org.uk



FUSION Youth & Kids

2025/2026

Wesley
Methodist
Church,
Elm Road,
Leigh

Thursdays 6pm-7.30pm

11th September
9th October
13th November
11th December
8th January
12th February
12th March
14th May
11th June
9th July

Contact: fusionyouth@btinternet.com

07504 492470 / 07766 588877

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HIGH STREET, GREAT WAKERING

F.E.E.T

Family Fun
Exploring
Everything
Together
At United
Methodist
Church

Drinks
and
Biscuits

Fun
activities

Singing

SATURDAY, 11TH OCTOBER
AT 10.00 AM

SUNDAY 12TH OCTOBER AT 10.30 AM
YOU ARE WELCOME AT OUR
HARVEST FESTIVAL SERVICE

FREE ENTRY

NON-ALCOHOLIC BAR



**FISHERMEN'S
CHAPEL
GOSPEL CHOIR
ACCOMPANIED
BY MIKE
KENTON**

GOSPEL *Choir*

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 25TH
DOORS OPEN
7.00 P.M.
SHOW 7.30 - 9.30**

Come and join us at Rochford Methodist Church for an uplifting evening of gospel music led by the Fishermen's Chapel Gospel Choir, with introductions and testimony by their Musical Director, Revd. Heather Simmons.

Tickets are available by scanning the the QR code, or please call 01702 544096 -



Rochford Methodist Church



Worship
**WORSHIP
ACADEMY**
Academy

**SOUTHEND
AND
LEIGH
METHODIST
CIRCUIT**

Autumn

1st October – Language in Worship
HEATHER SIMMONS

5th November – Activities in Worship
SUE HOCKETT, STEVE HOCKETT & ANNE BRIANT

3rd December – Planning a Lectionary Service
RICHARD ARMIGER

Spring

4th February – Prayer & Healing
BOB BRIANT

4th March – Poetry & Drama in Worship
ANNA TURNER

1st April – Planning a Lectionary Service
PETER MOORHOUSE

Summer

6th May – All Age Worship | Senses in Worship
COLIN AND CATHY TURNER

3rd June – Small Group Devotions
MAUREEN SPINKS

1st July – Food, Fellowship, Feedback, A new approach
STAFF TEAM

**FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH EXCEPT AUGUST,
SEPTEMBER & JANUARY
BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH SS7 5LH**

7 PM FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

8 PM WORSHIP & LEARNING

www.southendandleigh.org