



The **HIGHLANDER**


December 2023/January 2024

**The monthly newsletter of Highlands Methodist
Church, Leigh on Sea**

These are services at Highlands for December 2023.

11:00 am Sun 3 rd	Morning Worship Café Church (Advent 1)	Worship Leaders
5:00 pm Sun 3 rd	Circuit Service At Belfairs	
11:00 am Sun 10 th	Morning Worship Toy & Gift Service Parade (Advent 2)	Danni Mayo
4:00 pm Sun 10 th	Carol Service	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 17 th	Morning Worship Communion (Advent 3)	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 24 th	Morning Worship Section Service at Belfairs	Pastor Steve Mayo
4:30 pm Sun 24 th	Christingle Service	Rev Heather Simmons
11:45 pm Sun 24 th	Communion At Wesley	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Mon 25 th	Christmas Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 31 st	Section Service At Wesley	Pastor Steve Mayo



 Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church
www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk

The **Highlander** is published by Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland Blvd, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PT. Highlands Methodist Church is a member church of the *Southend and Leigh Circuit*, 34/10, which is part of the Beds, Essex and Herts District.



These are services at The Fishermen's Chapel (TFC) for December 2023/January 2024

09:30 am Sun 3 rd	Morning Worship Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 10 th	Morning Worship Toy & Gift Service At The Den	Rev Heather Simmons
7:00 pm* Sun 10 th *for 7:30	Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
5:00 pm Sun 17 th	Carol Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 24 th	Mindfulness	Rev Heather Simmons
10:00 am Mon 25 th	Christmas Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
<i>Jan 2024</i>		
9:30 am Sun 7 th	<i>Morning Worship Communion/Covenant</i>	<i>Rev Heather Simmons</i>
7:00 pm* Sun 14 th *for 7:30	<i>Gospel Service</i>	<i>Rev Heather Simmons</i>
7:30 pm Sun 21 st	<i>Anchored</i>	<i>Rev Heather Simmons</i>
7:30 pm Sun 28 th	<i>Mindfulness</i>	<i>Rev Heather Simmons</i>

These are services at Highlands for January 2024.

11:00 am Sun 7 th	Morning Worship	Colin Turner
11:00 am Sun 14 th	Morning Worship Communion Covenant	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 21 st	Morning Worship	Worship Leaders
11:00 am Sun 28 th	Morning Worship	Rev Heather Simmons



Dear Highlands family,

May you have a joyous Christmas full of love and friendship and a very blessed New Year! I look forward to our time together very much.

God bless you all,

Rev Hev xx





Highlands Methodist Church

Hospitality in the Midst of our Community

All telephone numbers are '01702' unless stated

Minister	Rev Heather Simmons heather.simmons@methodist.org.uk	07879 232231
Secretary to Church Council	Patrick Smith (minutes Secretary Margaret Wood)	557702 (557512)
Church Stewards	Andrew Hyde Donald Mayes Andreas Botzios (also Web Editor) Lesley Hyde	473111 473787 479476 473111
Worship Leaders	Jean Edmonds Jennifer Courtenay Frank Edmonds	525250 556140 525250
Church Treasurer	Steve Watson	07543 905641
Children's Worker	Ros Bryant	478631
Pastoral Co-ordinator	Jean Edmonds	525250
Church Flowers	Jean Edmonds	525250
Lettings/Use of Premises	Sara de Palma	07510 808519



From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

I was thinking at breakfast this morning how to write something that would be read during Advent, Christmas and on into January, when at the moment for me it is still November. It reminds me of times I have spent singing and recording Christmas tunes in the summer!

Some people are natural 'preparers', they buy their cards in January, they have their presents bought and wrapped before Dec 1st and the decorations are already out of the loft. Oh! To be like that... you might have guessed I am more lastminute.com. However, this new role of being your minister has meant that I have to do more preparing and planning. It made me think of Mary at this time of year. As my Polish friend would say, 'Can you even imagine?'



Mary, Mother of God, is a very young Mum, moving about, with no way of knowing what is ahead of her, no antenatal classes, hospital visits, pain control, new nursery, aftercare, maternity benefits and so on. And yet, she is to give birth to the Son of God. Imagine if Mary was your

child and you knew she was about to go through this. It makes me well up just to think of it.

We have just had a beautiful Remembrance Day and parade where we honoured those who gave their lives for our freedom. I wonder how we can honour Mary this Advent, Christmas, and January? How can we show our thanks for all that she did for us, as a Christian

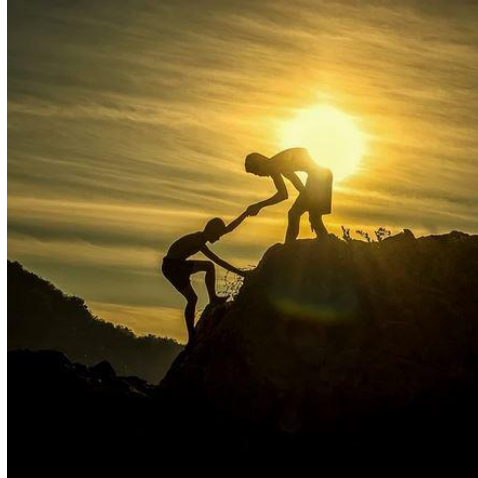
family. I am going to approach this coming season with Mary at the forefront of my prayers and prepare with care in her name.

We can all do things to honour Mary, we can support expectant mothers and parents with new babies. We can donate new baby items to GroBaby at Rayleigh Vineyard Church. We can keep our eyes open to see where a Mum needs an encouraging smile or lift with some shopping, if wanted. Which reminds me of Emily Dickinson's poem ...

Friends

They might not need me; but they might.

*I'll let my head be just in sight;
A smile as small as mine might be
Precisely their necessity.*



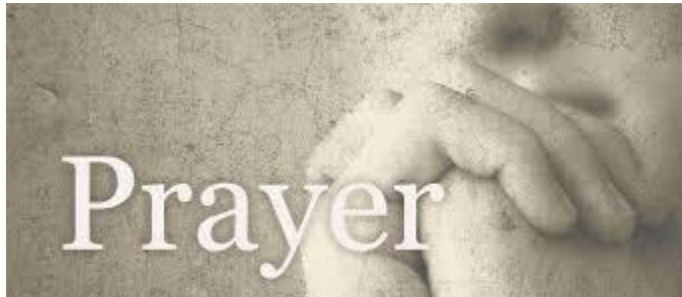
We can also all pray for the mothers and their babies in war-torn countries or where food and water is in short supply.

Our Methodist Connexion have prepared a fabulous worship resource for churches to use this season with the theme 'Out of the Ordinary'. It shows us how...

'the wonder of God's love is revealed in the ordinary. A seemingly ordinary birth becomes God's out of the ordinary world-saving event through Jesus. How every day, ordinary acts of kindness can breakthrough to the extraordinary'.

My prayer for all the members of Highlands, all who are friends of the church, and our local community is that you have a blessed time of joy, comfort, health and peace, a beacon that shines out into the world as the brilliant light of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that ALL might receive the same. God bless you all,

Rev'd Heather (Rev Hev!) x



We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound, or bereaved and for those in residential care: particularly Sheena Hunter in *Westerley Methodist Care Home*. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

We **pray especially for** a number of church members afflicted by long-term illnesses and short-term accidents; may God grant in each case a speedy recovery. Especially we remember anyone waiting to go into hospital, or already receiving treatment away from friends and family,

We **pray for the peoples of Gaza, Israel and Ukraine**, wherever they find themselves, and for a just and lasting peace in their homelands.



Snippets

From Our Lettings Officer

I have recently joined the team at Highlands. Jean is guiding me through the process for co-ordinating the letting of rooms at Highlands. If you wish to enquire about regular hire of space at Highlands or are looking for a venue for a meeting or special event, please contact me via e-mail, text message or voice mail. I should be very happy to hear from you.

These are the current Hire Rates:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| • Church | £25 per hour |
| • Hall | £25 per hour |
| • Rooms Number 1 & 2 | £20 per hour |
| • Lounge | £15 per hour |

All rates include 30 minutes to set up and 30 minutes to close up at no extra cost. I look forward to supporting the lovely team at Highlands and meeting you all.

Best wishes,

Sara De Palma

Highlands Lettings

E-mail: highlandslettings@gmail.com

Mobile number: 07510 808519

Job Available

Southend CAP Debt Advice Centre is looking for a part-time Debt Centre Manager to run the debt counselling service in Southend in association with Christians Against Poverty, for 20 hours per week. Salary depending on experience. Further details our FB site. Applications by 3 December so don't delay...

From Jackie Williams.

Very many thanks to you all for the gift I was given on my retirement as Church gardener. I have lost count of the number of years but I can assure you that I love pottering in the garden, so this was no hardship. I regret that it has been a bit neglected recently but the poor old joints have made it difficult, telling me it is time to give up. Thank you again.



Jackie Williams.

Highlands Toddlers

Thank you to those Highlands members and friends who supported our Coffee Morning on 28 October. We were pleased to donate £150 to BBC Children in Need on behalf of Highlands Toddlers.

Our last session of this term will be 11th December.
Ros (478631) and Margaret (557512)

Christmas Coffee Morning

Our Highlands Coffee morning is on:

Saturday 2 December
10:00 am until 12:00 Noon

Will include an exclusive book signing by a local author.



Mike Spaul

Don't worry - nothing bad happened. Mike has changed his number to 07709 176057.

Message from Circuit

Jess writes: Many thanks to everyone who has already completed the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training & Unconscious Bias training. We do appreciate the time you have given to the training. A number of people indicated that they would be completing the course online. If you have completed the training but not informed the Circuit Office, then please let us know.

If you need to start or finish the training online then this is your gentle reminder, thank you.

Toy & Gift Sunday - Sunday 10 December

Don't forget to bring new toys (colouring books and pens are always acceptable) or hamper items as per the list in the Jubilee Room (which you should have also has a flier).

Events Around the Circuit

Hadleigh Methodists invite you to their Christmas tea:





If you're still peckish 7 days after that lot:

Still in the mood for carols after our own carol service on 10 Dec?



Present An Evening Of Christmas Music



Or alternatively the wonderful warblings of Allegro - catch them at 7:30 pm on Sat 16 December at St Albans Church Westcliff or 3:00 pm the next day Sun 17 December. Tickets £10 (children free!) by calling 01268 751303

If you or anyone you know need lunch on 25 December - don't Yule out Benfleet! All are welcome to welcome to lunch at 12:30 pm on 25 December, served by Benfleet Methodist Church. There is no charge but donations are welcome from anyone who can afford it. Contact Shelagh or John Stokes on 01268 750532 by 18 December at the latest.



Christmas concert: A few tickets are still available for the annual Music Man Christmas Concert on Friday 15th December at Highlands Methodist Church. This event heralds the start of Christmas for many people. The wonderful evening of entertainment commences at 7.30 pm. Admission is free but capacity is limited due to its popularity. Contact Jean or Frank Edmonds for further information.

But the event you must not miss is of course here at Highlands





Not Another Panto Surely!

Oh yes, it is!

Starring all your favourite performers from Wesley. And the usual ones.

Friday and Saturday 1-2 December.

DON'T MISS IT.



Serving the Homeless

And so, the time is near, we are about to close down our operation.

Some of you will remember the time, 33 years ago, when Rev Alan Ogier invited all the churches in Leigh to a meeting at what was then New Road Methodist Church. We were to discuss the problem of homelessness in the area, with particular reference to young people. The result was Serving the Homeless, an ecumenical group of five churches.

So much good work has been done in the intervening years, not

least the contribution towards the purchase of the freehold of the premises in Valkyrie Road, allowing HARP to move to more efficient premises. Other assistance has included:

- the purchase of flats,
- helping with holiday arrangements,
- scholarship funding,
- contribution towards the cost of furnishing premises,
- fresh food and
- a defibrillator.



Most of the funding has gone towards HARP and lately YMCA and SVP. The Covid pandemic changed the homelessness scene in many ways and several initiatives have now grown up to support those affected. Like many charity organisations, support has fallen off during recent years, and it has proved difficult to recruit help with the arranging of fund-raising events

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the years with your donations, '200 Club' membership, attendance at events and prayers and encouragement.

Our final event will be our Carol Service at Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Friday 15 December at 7:00 pm. We would love to see as many of you as possible come to join us to celebrate the work of STH. We also welcome you to join us afterwards for mulled wine and mince pies in the Parish Centre.

At Highlands we will continue to support the various groups and agencies which offer many types of assistance to the vulnerable on the streets.

Frank.

From the Editor

*You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometime, you'll find
You get what you need...*
M Jagger/K Richards ('The Rolling Stones') 1969



As I write this, a ceasefire is contemplated in Gaza. By the time you read it, the said ceasefire may have collapsed. I hope not.

At any event, the protagonists should have learned the truth. The Stones were right. If *Harakat al-Muqāwamah al-Islāmiyyah*¹('HAMAS') and the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) want their enemies wiped off the face of the earth, then they cannot possibly 'get what they want'.



What the Palestinians and Israelis **need** is peace, stability and prosperity. Returning to pop music, these are the words of Feargal Sharkey OBE, born 1958 in Derry/Londonderry, once lead singer of punk band *The Undertones*, speaking on the BBC programme *Have I Got News for You*:

¹ 'Islamic Resistance Movement', labelled a terrorist organisation by UK, USA and EU governments among others

For 25 years, the people of Northern Ireland have been able to prosper and grow and blossom and have discovered that this thing peace is a very delicate, beautiful little flower that needs nurturing and caressing and supporting. I do wish the people of Gaza, and Palestine and Israel get to discover what 25 years of peace, prosperity and diplomacy and democracy looks like. And that those people can blossom.




Those words should be our present to Israel and Palestine, marking the birth (in the West Bank town of Bethlehem) of the greatest peacemaker of all time.

Andrew

ho ho ho
**★★ MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

Puzzle of the Month²

A new post-Brexit regulation requires all songs to have accurate and detailed description. Here are nine descriptions of popular Christmas songs. Can you guess what the old, unsatisfactory titles were? I've put initials in (in **bold like this**) in order to help you:

A Duodecad of Twenty-Four-Hour Periods Devoted to the Mass of Christ TDOC	Light, Mellow Resonant Sounds Emanating from Hollow Metallic Objects, Shaped Like Inverted Cups JB	Do Not Impede or Forbid in Any Case the Occurrence of Frozen Atmospheric Water Vapour Descending Lightly upon the Earth's Surface LIS
Azure Nativity BC	Festoon the Elongated, Walled Enclosures Used Typically for Passage DTH	Xmas of the Initial, Ordinal, Arithmetical Value TFN
Appreciative Feelings of Great Pleasure or Euphoria Bestowed in the Direction of a Cerulean-Hued Globe Rotating at the Approximate Distance of an Astronomical Unit around the Sun JTTW	A Nocturnal Unit of Time Sans Acoustical Accompaniment SN	Yule-Related Musical Composition TCS 

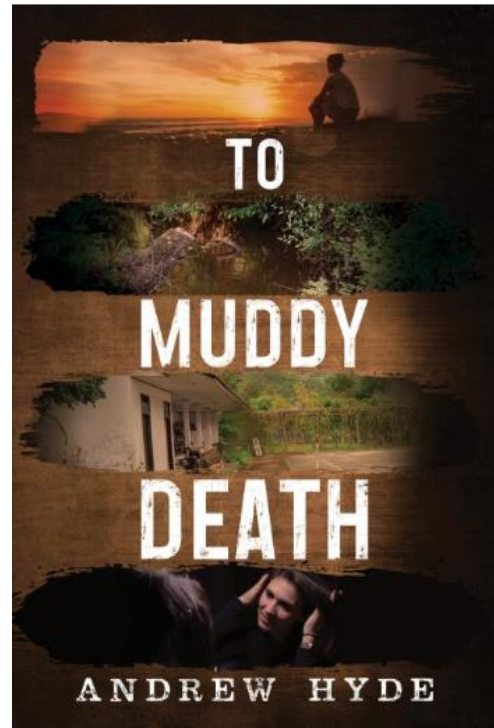
² Solution page 20

Your Christmas gift problems - solved!

As you may know, I don't normally permit advertising in these pages. However, I have decided to make a small exception for (err...) myself.

My first novel is published by Vanguard Press on 30 November. I wish I could send you all a complimentary copy, but that's not possible. You can however order a copy, or preferably several copies, from the publisher's website (pegasuspublishers.com).

You can also order from the websites and branches of Waterstones, Foyles, Hatchards and of course Amazon. Just search under 'Andrew Hyde' or 'To Muddy Death'. I hate to admit it but Amazon is slightly cheaper. Yes, I'm discounted already.



What sort of book is it, though? It's a crime thriller with a dose of mystery. All of these sellers will give you more information about the book³. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Andrew

Humour Corner

Doctor's receptionist: *There's a man outside who's worried he's turning invisible...*

Doctor: *Please tell him I can't see him now.*

³ ...and a totally unsolicited review is on page 22

Dining In (at Christmas)

This month's recipe is for a quick gift for a chocolate lover. Those fancy hot chocolate stirrers you see at craft shows can be made easily and much more cheaply at home. You need :

- Sunflower oil for greasing
- 300 g chocolate - dark, milk or white (this makes 6)
- Decorations you choose - mini marshmallows, buttons, smarties etc



You also need:

- 6 empty little pots (fromage frais are perfect)
- 6 wooden lolly sticks
- Cellophane bags if gifting

1. With a pastry brush, paint a very thin layer of oil in each little pot.
2. Break the chocolate into pieces, put in a glass bowl and heat in the microwave in 30 sec blasts. You want it smooth and runny. Do melt different types of chocolate separately.
3. Pour the melted chocolate into the pots, put a lolly stick in the middle and sprinkle your decorations around it. (Let the chocolate get a little cooler before you do these last 2 steps).
4. Put in the fridge and allow to set - best left overnight.
5. Next day, carefully pull the chocolate out of the pots, pop in a cellophane wrapper. Either on the stick or on a separate gift tag, write *'Simply stir into hot milk for a delicious hot chocolate drink'*

Puzzle of the Month Solution

Twelve Days of Christmas	Jingle Bells	Let It Snow
Blue Christmas	Deck the Halls	The First Noël
Joy to the World	Silent Night	The Christmas Song

Easy peasy. But congratulations anyway if you got them all.

Poem of the Month

In the Bleak Midwinter

by Christine Rossetti (1830-1894)

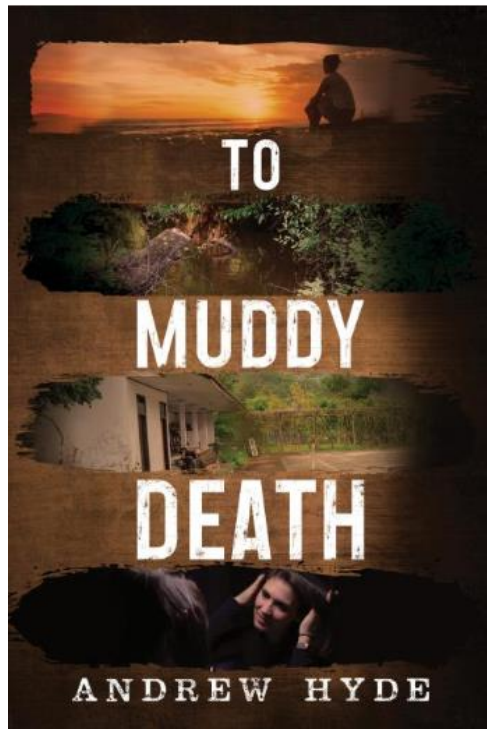


Rossetti was born in London of Italian parentage, one of a number of people of immigrant stock who would enrich the cultural landscape of the Victorians - we may think of her artist brother Dante, the writer Joseph Conrad or composers Gustav Holst and Frederick Delius.

In the Bleak Midwinter was an 1872 poem before it was set to music in the 1900s, first by Holst and later Harold Darke whose anthem version was described as 'less well known but infinitely more stylish'. You can take your choice. Over the years a choice widely taken has been to omit or amend the problematic (for Victorians) third verse. Here it is as written.

1. In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold
Him
Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee
away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.
3. Enough for Him, whom
cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom Angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.
4. Angels and Archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.
5. What can I give Him,
Poor as I am? —
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.





To Muddy Death (TMD)

I'm delighted to say that since issuing some pre-release copies of TMD I have been flooded with a review which I quote in full:

What a delight to enjoy the penmanship of a local man who worships with us at Highlands Methodist Church.

Andrew Hyde blames the Covid pandemic for the fact that he picked up a pen, more likely sat in front of his laptop, to bring us "To Muddy Death".

The plot is intriguing and kept me wanting more as I delved further into the book. One can hear Andrew's voice in some of the phrases and his vocabulary is inclusive. Local colour keeps one interested as many local places are included. One cannot but admire the depth of knowledge that he expresses on various subjects; police procedure, book making, religion, dementia etc. and how much research must have gone into making it such an interesting volume. How on earth do prolific writers like Jeffrey Archer, Victoria Hislop and Daniella Steel cope with all the research that is required?

Well done!

Can we hope for a further tome from Andrew?⁴

Frank

⁴ Bad news I'm afraid, Frank - the answer is yes.

SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week

Children and Young People

Group	Time	Contact
Scouts	Thu 7:30 to 9:00 pm	Carl Mason 07814 226133
Cubs	Thu 5:45 to 7:15 pm	Lesley Bacon 07947 116891
Rainbows	Wed 4:00 to 5:00 pm	Julie Griffiths 07834 321724
Brownies	Wed 5:30 to 7:00 pm	Dilys Haddow 710207
Guides	Fri 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Rangers	Thu ⁵ 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Toddlers	Mon 9:30 am to 11:30	Ros: 478631 Margaret: 557512

Fellowship Groups

Group	Time	Contact
Prayer	Tue 9:00 to 10:00 am	Andrew Hyde 473111
Chatter	Tue 10:00 am to 12:00 noon	Rosalind 478631

Services to the Community


Group	Time	Contact
Lunch Club	2 nd Tuesday 12:00	Registration essential

Social and Recreational

Group	Time	Contact
Hobbies	1 st /3 rd Thu 10:00 am to noon	Jean 525250

⁵ Every fortnight

For updated news keep following
www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk

or  Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church
also www.methodist.org.uk is an excellent source of information
and inspiration.

Items for the February 2024 issue should be emailed to
andrewghyde@aol.com before the **deadline of Sunday 21
January**, and earlier if possible. No email? Don't despair; just
telephone 473111 to arrange an alternative.

A Final Image

Hadleigh Castle - of course - showing the south east tower. No
matter how many times I visit this place it still inspires.

