



The **HIGHLANDER**

April 2020

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

Cast all your
anxiety on him
because he
cares for you.

-1 Peter 5:7

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 Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church



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**Highlands Methodist Church
Hospitality in the Midst of our Community**

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From the Editor

For reasons that need no explanation, this issue is very different from previous issues. There is, to be frank, virtually nothing to announce, which wipes out most of the content.

There is little useful I can add to literally millions of words that have been written and broadcast across the world. I have tried to keep things as light as possible in the circumstances, including some guest contributors.

Contemplating the state of our nation and world at this moment, it is a fair question to ask: 'Where is God in all this?' You probably need a learned theologian to answer that, and that person is not me. For a complete understanding, you probably need an epidemiologist as well. That is not me either! However I have lifted a social media post that is really important reading for all of us. Please read it on page 15.

Returning now to God's role in this. The root cause is apparently not agreed by scientists. There is a suggestion of human agency, and for all I know that could be true. If so, then Coronavirus COVID-19 takes its place alongside other examples of humans messing up our planet, alongside pollution, global warming and so on. I don't see that I can blame God for that.

What I can do is to look at some of the outcomes. Generally speaking, our society (and our world) has responded with the best of humanity and compassion. People greet me warmly (but distantly) in the streets. NHS workers risk their own health to help others. The NHS has asked for 250,000 volunteers and has been swamped by twice that number asking how they can help.

It's true there have been negatives. Some really selfish behaviour is taking place in our shops. Not everyone understands 'essential'. Some politicians (not necessarily in the UK) have tried to use the situation for personal advantage, even resorting to disgraceful racism. Some employers appear to put the financial interests of

their shareholders above the health of their employees.

But these are exceptions. My overwhelming impression is that this crisis has prompted people everywhere to take a really good look at their values and priorities; to decide what is important and what is less so; to put others first and act for the common good.

I asked earlier: 'Where is God in all this?' The answer is that he's right beside us, showing us through His Son how to do the right thing, and to get our families, our nation, our world through this time of danger.



Puzzle of the Month

Four Methodists happen to go out for their daily permitted walk at exactly the same time, and by chance they meet at the corner of London Road and Sutherland Boulevard, and pause to exchange greetings. Being Methodists, they like to follow rules exactly; but they are also hard of hearing, so they do not wish to be any further apart than necessary.

Hence they decide to stand in such a way that each Methodist is exactly 2 metres away from each of the other three. What shape do they make? **Answer on page 11**

(for a clue to this puzzle, in the unlikely event that you need it, see the footnote¹)

The Lord will keep you from all harm - He will watch over your life.
Psalm 121: 7

¹ Luckily, one of the Methodists was carrying a stepladder.

From your Minister

Can I just start by saying how much you all are on my heart and in my thoughts? These are incredible days to be living through and even though we are seriously restricted from meeting up and seeing each other I do trust that we feel connected in other ways.

I would like to share a little story about my mum - HESSIE. She died aged 97 in May 2012; if you knew her, you'd say that she really was very lovely and special, and I'd be not in the least bit biased in agreeing with you.



When I was growing up, I was often puzzled at the way mum added two little letters at the end of any plans she had for the future. So she might say: 'In the summer we will go on holiday to Portavogie² - DV.' I often wondered what she meant, and eventually asked, 'Why do you always say DV at the end of the things you hope to do?'

To this she responded by saying 'If God is willing!'

God has made everything beautiful in its time.
Ecclesiastes 3: 11

² Fishing village on the Ards peninsula, illustrated in the mural copied above.

It was some time later that I read in the Bible James 4: 13-15 where it says:

Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow... Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that...'

As a young boy this got me thinking, and after a little research I discovered that...

'D.V.' refers to the Latin phrase, 'Deo Volente' and means, 'God willing.' I am quite sure my mum didn't read or write Latin, but I do know she believed that it was important always to place the future into the hands of God.

So back to the present; who would ever have believed, when we were celebrating the start of the New Year, that by the middle of March we would be locked away in our homes with shops, cinemas, sporting events and even our churches closed by order of the government. When my family was planning my birthday celebrations in June, or when Jan and I were organising our contribution to the New Wine Festival in August, we never thought to add DV. I know my mum would have, and of course she had it right.

I wish you all could have known mum, who lived at Westerley Care Home in the final years of her life. However the wonderful thing is that we can know the God who assures us that no matter what we face, his peace and grace will be there to see us through.

Stay safe and know God's blessing, Norman.

God bless, Norman.



We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound or bereaved and for those in residential care: Pat Gare in *Admirals Court*, Jean Burgess in *St Martins Care Home*, Doll Edwards in *The Cedars* and Marie Moore at *Rosedale Court, Rayleigh*. Marie would welcome visitors. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

We remember

- friends and family of Percy Pritchard who died on 7 February aged 88. Percy, a retired gardener originally from Shropshire, used to be a regular at Highlands, and then at Wesley. Many will remember him as a garrulous but warm-hearted friend.
- friends and family of Noël Kelleway who died suddenly aged 68. Many will remember Noël as a tireless fund raiser for various charities

Get well soon

Alison Hall (Betty's daughter) who went down with corona virus 10 days ago and is just coming through it. Betty reports: 'After the first few days of feeling rough the main feeling is of exhaustion, not wanting to get out of bed etc. Yesterday she was doing washing and some housework, so she is getting there. When Alison is well she will be back to teaching. Interestingly, Alison works 4 days a week and the teacher who covers the 5th day has gone down with it. Sending God's blessing to you all. Keep well and keep safe.'

As your days so shall your strength be.
Deuteronomy 33:25

Congratulations

Tony Downing who will be 90 on 5 April.

Norman writes that Tony was reminiscing of some of his experiences during wartime.

'I was 10 years old when the first air raid shelters were built. Life was so very different then, but we just accepted it.

'I remember being off school, just like the children today, but back then us boys had to go to the nearby farms to harvest the potatoes, and the girls did housework. We had very little in so many ways - to make a phone call you had to find a phone box and even then, very few people had phones in the homes. No fancy electronic devices or games, we had to make our own entertainment, but when I look back on it now, to be honest, it was a good life.

'With all that is going on now, what is scary is the fact that we can't see an end to all this coronavirus stuff, but I know we will get through it!

'Irene and I so missed church this morning but we just have to get on with it! We have so much to be thankful for!'

Thanks

To everyone in the NHS who has the task of caring for people struck down by the Coronavirus, and their support staff. They have to carry out their duties regardless of risk; if this is a war then they are at the front line.

'For I know the plans I have for you' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29:11

Poem (1) for April

This month's first poem is *Smiling Is Infectious*. I'd dearly love to tell you who wrote it, but neither I nor Andrew Savile who suggested it have any idea. It has been attributed to comedian, writer, and ex-Goon Spike Milligan (1918-2002) and it certainly fits his style. Other suggestions include Karen McLendon-Laumann who seems to be a retired lady living in Baltimore USA with no other distinctions recorded. Never mind that – just enjoy the poem.

*Smiling is infectious, you
can catch it like the flu.*

*When someone smiled at
me today, I started
smiling too.*

*I passed it round the
corner, and someone
saw me grin*

*When he smiled, I
realised - I'd passed it
on to him.*

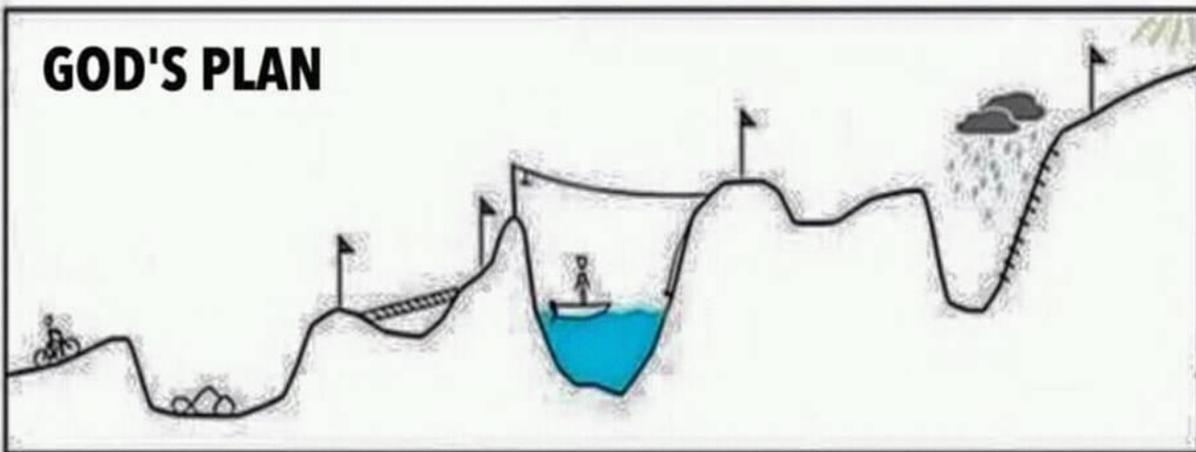
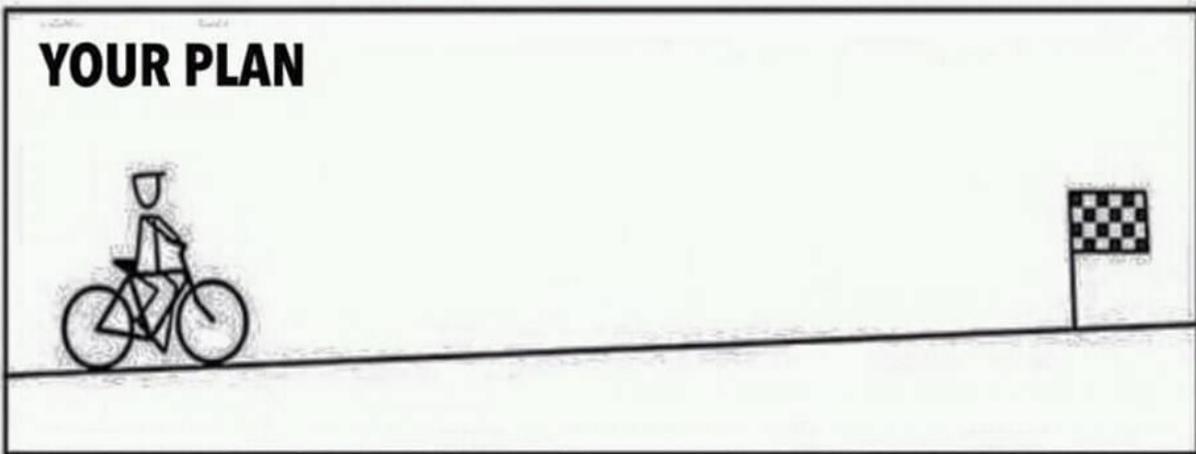


The Cheshire Cat from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* illus. Sir John Tenniel

*I thought about the smile and realised its worth.
A single smile like mine, could travel round the earth.*

*If you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected.
Let' start an explosion quick - and get the world infected!*

*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.
1 Peter 5:7*

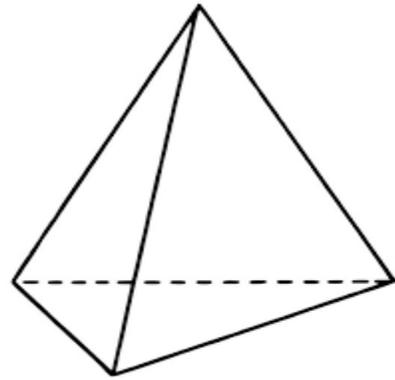


JAMES 1:2-4

Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials,
because the testing of your faith produces endurance...
so that you may be lacking in nothing.

Puzzle of the Month

A tetrahedron, or triangular-based pyramid. Three Methodists is easy to visualise - an equilateral triangle. Placing a fourth point that is equidistant from the first three points requires moving into the third dimension. Luckily there is a stepladder to hand.



Notes on Methodism and John Wesley

The following notes have been assembled from the *Penguin Dictionary of Religions* edited by John Hinnels and from the *London Blue Plaque Guide* written by Nick Rennison.

In our history books, Methodism is classified as a section of the Evangelical Revival led by John Wesley and George Whitefield. Wesley taught justification by faith and Christian perfection, using lay preachers to develop a chain of fellowship societies. After separating from the Anglican church, English Methodism suffered many divisions, but it was largely reunited in 1932.

There are now Methodist churches throughout the world³. They are most numerous in the USA, the largest group being known as the United Methodist Church, with about 12 million adherents.

In the Methodist church, worship combines formal and informal elements. Hymn singing is central and extemporary prayer customary.

³ The World Methodist Council has affiliated churches in 138 countries



John Wesley (1703–91) lived for some time at 47 City Road, London EC1. During his life he wrote,

I look upon the world as my parish.

From Oxford, where he had studied and was ordained - he became a fellow of Lincoln College. He set off in 1735, accompanied by his brother Charles and Georg Whitefield, to take God's word to the indigenous tribes of the American colonies.

The Americans proved uninterested in God's word and some of the colonists were actively hostile to the trio's missionary zeal. Wesley returned to England in 1738. Encouraged by a profound spiritual experience⁴, in which he felt the assurance of God's love and his own salvation, he embarked on his extraordinary journeys around the country, in which he preached to vast crowds of ordinary men and women.

It is said that in his lifetime he travelled 250,000 miles and preached over 40,000 sermons. The first Methodist chapel was founded in Bristol⁵ and in 1744 Wesley held a conference of preachers that was the forerunner of the annual Methodist Conference.

Wesley had wished his movement to remain within the Church of England, but by the time of his death, Methodism had effectively burst the bounds of orthodoxy and Methodist chapels were officially designated 'Dissenting⁶ Meeting Houses'.

Andrew Saville

⁴ John Wesley's conversion 24 May 1738. Ref Aldersgate Street, London EC2Y 5HN

⁵ See Kathy McCullough's booklet, 'From the Cross to Leigh'.

⁶ Other 'dissenting' groups had included such delightfully named groups as the Barrowists, Enthusiasts, Familists, Grindletonians, Muggletonians, Quakers and Ranters.



Serving the Homeless

Serving the Homeless

Serving the Homeless regrets that until further notice all fund raising efforts have been cancelled.

Cheques have been issued to HARP for the next two months, to enable them to purchase directly, the fresh meat, cheese, vegetables etc. that we usually collect and deliver to them. We will continue to monitor the situation with them and Southend YMCA and offer any assistance whenever we are able.

Frank

Winter Night Shelters

The winter night shelters have had to close but a new pop up shelter was set up in Short Street, Southend. Andrew, Jo-Anne (Hall) and I were helping there over the weekend. There was a great spirit amongst the volunteers.

But it was overcrowded and a risk to all so the council have now provided B&B accommodation for all rough sleepers. Such a relief. There is still a need for lunch, dinner and fellowship but it's such good news that they have their own rooms.

Lesley



Jobs for the Garden **From our Special Gardening Correspondent**

I am sure that all of us who have gardens are counting our blessings at the moment. Although I can't go out, just to be able to go in the garden, to see the spring flowers, the birds, the buds on the trees, gives me hope for the future and lessens any stress. It gives me a purpose to get up in the morning and get out there, especially as the weather has been so lovely this last week.

As always, there's lots to do. Having chitted my potatoes, I've planted the ones that are ready and sown vegetable seeds directly into my prepared seedbed. I've sown leeks, spinach, rocket, beetroot and lettuce. These are all seeds that I had from last year so fingers crossed that they'll germinate. I'm going to plant some herbs later, sowing a small amount every couple of weeks so I should get a constant supply.

There's time now for those jobs that I've been putting off - washing and maybe even painting my patio pots so they'll look really good later this summer, scarifying the lawn and repairing damaged areas. And if you haven't used weedkiller on your lawn, you can use the moss for your hanging baskets.

Keep smiling - SGC

Social Distancing - Everything You Need to Know.

Here is some further information from an expert, Jonathan Smith⁷, that was originally posted on social media. I have infringed his copyright, but I feel that he intended as many people as possible to read it, so I have taken that liberty:

As an infectious disease epidemiologist (although a lowly one), I feel I can provide some information on the social distancing measures. Like any good scientist I have noticed two things that are either not articulated or not present in the 'literature' of social media. Specifically, I want to make two aspects of these measures very clear and unambiguous.

First, we are in the very infancy of this epidemic's trajectory. That means even with these measures we will see cases and deaths continue to rise globally, nationally, and in our own communities in the coming weeks.

This may lead some people to think that the social distancing measures are not working. They are. They may feel futile. They aren't. You will feel discouraged. You should. This is normal in chaos.

But this is also normal epidemic trajectory. Stay calm. This enemy that we are facing is very good at what it does; we are not failing. We need everyone to hold the line as the epidemic inevitably gets worse. This is not my opinion; this is the unforgiving mathematics of epidemics.

I want to help the community brace for this impact. Stay strong and with solidarity knowing with absolute certainty that what you are doing is saving lives, even as people begin getting sick and dying. You may feel like giving in. Please don't.

⁷ Infectious disease epidemiologist focusing the dynamics of disease transmission. PhD en route at Emory, Lecturer at Yale

Second, although social distancing measures have been (for the moment) well-received, there is an obvious-but-overlooked phenomenon when considering groups (such as families) in transmission dynamics.

While social distancing decreases contact with members of society, it of course increases your contacts with group/family members. This small and obvious fact has surprisingly profound implications on disease transmission dynamics. Studies demonstrate that even if there is only a little bit of connection between groups (i.e. social dinners, playdates/playgrounds, etc.), the epidemic trajectory isn't much different than if there was no measure in place. The same underlying fundamentals of disease transmission apply, and the result is that the community is left with all the social and economic disruption but very little public health benefit.

You should perceive your entire family to function as a single individual unit; if one person puts themselves at risk, everyone in the unit is at risk. Seemingly small social chains get large and complex with alarming speed.

If your son visits his girlfriend, and you later sneak over for coffee with a neighbour, your neighbour is now connected to the infected office worker that your son's girlfriend's mother shook hands with. This sounds silly, it's not. This is not a joke or a hypothetical. Epidemiologists see it borne out in the data time and time again and no one listens. Conversely, any break in that chain breaks disease transmission along that chain.

In contrast to hand-washing and other personal measures, social distancing measures are not about individuals; they are about societies working in unison. These measures also take a long time to see the results. It is hard (even for me) to see how 'one quick little get together' can undermine the entire framework of a public health intervention, I promise you, it does.

You can't cheat it. People are already itching to cheat on the social distancing precautions just a "little"- a playdate, a haircut, or

picking up a needless item at the shops, etc. From a transmission dynamics standpoint, this very quickly recreates a highly connected social network that undermines the work the community has done so far.

Until we get a viable vaccine this unprecedented outbreak will not be overcome in grand, sweeping gesture, rather only by the collection of individual choices our community makes in the coming months. This virus is unforgiving to unwise choices. My goal in writing this is to prevent communities from getting 'sucker-punched' by what the epidemiological community knows will happen in the coming weeks. It will be easy to be drawn to the idea that what we are doing isn't working and become paralysed by fear, or to 'cheat' a little bit in the coming weeks. By knowing what to expect, and knowing the importance of maintaining these measures, my hope is to encourage continued community spirit, strategizing, and action to persevere in this time of uncertainty.

Humour Corner

Just to lighten things up a little:

Answering a 999 call, a paramedic finds two vegans who have overdosed on vegetables:
'OK,' he says, 'first I'm going to take your pulses.'

Policeman stops a lion and a witch in the street, carrying a large wardrobe. 'Ello, ello, ello – what's goin' on 'ere then?'

'Narnia business,' says the lion.

Poem (2) for April

This month's second poem is *Unaware, We Pass Him* by Helen Steiner Rice (1900-1981), suggested by Julie Peek, and very apposite for the times. Born in Ohio, USA the poet had a successful career as a businesswoman but also loved penning verses for a greetings card company. Her books of religious poetry sold (and still sell) in millions. She was a tireless campaigner for women's rights. Her personal life was marred in 1929 by the suicide of her husband Frank after the stock market crash destroyed his investments and career.

*On life's busy thoroughfares
We meet with angels unawares-
But we are too busy to listen or hear,
Too busy to sense that God is near.
Too busy to stop and recognize
The grief that lies in another's eyes,
Too busy to offer help or share,
Too busy to sympathise or care.*

*Too busy to do the good things we should,
Telling ourselves we would if we could.
But life is too swift, and the pace is too great
And we dare not pause for we might be late.
For our next appointment which means so much,
We are willing to brush off the Saviour's touch,
And we tell ourselves there will come a day
We will have more time to pause on our way.*

*But before we know it "life's sun has set"
And we've passed the Saviour but never met,
For hurrying along life's thoroughfare
We passed Him by and remained unaware*

*That within the very sight of our eye,
Unnoticed, the Son of God passed by.*

Report from 10th Leigh Brownies

Girlguiding suspended our Unit meetings from the 16 March until further notice. Teresa and I are sorting out parts of the Brownie programme and Interest badges that the girls can do at home. This will be emailed out over the coming weeks.

Our Table Sale & Coffee morning was well supported and we raised £122.75 towards our hall rent. The Guides raised about £60, intended for their trip to the now-cancelled Essex International Jamboree – this will be carried forward. The Rangers did manage to get in a weekend camp at Guidewoods before we had to close down.

On 28 February, the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides & Rangers joined together to celebrate World Thinking Day. It was lovely to welcome some members of Highlands to this event. Girlguiding try to celebrate Lord & Lady Baden-Powell's birthdays (22 February) every year by getting together to raising funds to support Guiding around the world. A great evening was had by all.

On 7 March 8 Brownie teams from the area came up to Highlands to compete in the Southend West Guide Division Browne Rose Bowl competition. They had different puzzles to solve to earn gold coins. They were judged on how well they worked as a team and supported each other. A unit from St. Michael's off the Leigh Road won and our Brownies came second. Congratulation to our 6 girls and to all that took part.

Unfortunately other planned events have been postponed but we hope that everyone stays as healthy as possible. Happy Easter to all at Highlands from the 10th Leigh units.

In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

(Thanks to Kathy for sharing this and the other boxed verses)

SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week

Children and Young People

Fellowship Groups

Services to the Community

Social and Recreational

These services are suspended at the moment. We hope of course that they can be restored soon.

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 May 2020 issue should be emailed to andrewghyde@aol.com before Sunday 26 April. No email? Don't despair; just telephone 473111 to arrange an alternative.

Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?

Matthew 6:26-27