



The **HIGHLANDER**

February 2025


The monthly newsletter of Highlands Methodist Church, Leigh on Sea

These are services at Highlands for February 2025

10:30 am Sun 2nd	Morning Worship Café Church	Sanya Strachan
10:30 am Sun 9 th	Morning Worship Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
4:00 pm Sun 16 th	All-Age Event See below*	
10:30 am Sun 23 rd	Morning Worship	Rev Heather Simmons

*On Sunday 16 February we are trialling a new way of 'doing church'. The format is one that we will build as we go along, according to what works and what doesn't. So we don't exactly know what will make up the first event, led by Matt Bunkall. Expect songs and stories and opportunities for participation for anyone who wants to join in. Otherwise, no pressure. Just enjoy.



 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 for February 2025.

9:30 am Sun 2nd	Morning Worship Communion	Rev Steve Mayo
7:30 pm Sun 9 th	Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 16 th	Evening Worship Anchored	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 23 rd	Evening Worship Mindfulness	Rev Heather Simmons

Someone asked me for some further information. Here are some very abbreviated guides.

The *Gospel Service* consists mainly of gospel music performed by our own choir and by the Monday Singers, our resident guest choir. Gospel music is characterised by dominant vocals with Christian lyrics, strong use of harmony and insistent rhythm. It traces its roots to the early 17th century and has influenced many superstars such as Aretha Franklin, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley. Be ready to tap your feet, clap, sway and ultimately join in the chorus...

'*Anchored*' is aimed at exploring Christian faith through creative activities, asking questions, practical action, film, food, and anything else we think of. '*Mindfulness*' is a practice of meditation based on looking inwards at one's own thoughts, cares and hopes, so as to be 'in the moment'.





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	Vanessa Mayes)	557702 (473787)
Church Stewards	Andrew Hyde Donald Mayes Lesley Hyde Jean Edmonds	473111 473787 473111 525250
All Age Community Builder	Matt Bunkall	
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	Sam Watson highlandslettings@gmail.com	07510 808519

From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

It might seem a little late to say this, but because we don't have January Highlander.. HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all!

Wow! What a Christmas we had. Such wonderful celebrations in church services and celebrating with our community. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, spread the word and attended. You made it such a special time for us all.



We have also made our Covenant promise again for the year, at one of my favourite services. As Methodists we are not a church with a huge amount of traditional liturgy, so when we stand together and say these words during a service of Holy Communion, I find it very poignant and profound. I am privileged to lead us together. If anyone missed the service and would like to make time with me to say their promise to God, please get in touch.



As it is the beginning of the New Year, I thought I'd share with you the things at Highlands that I'm involved with. Then you can see if anything interests you to join me.

- As a minister I obviously spend time preparing the Sunday services, one Holy Communion and one "ordinary" (although I hope they aren't ordinary!).
- I run a bible study once a month, which I prepare for, choosing the passages and reading around the different theologians' take on scripture.

- I take prayers in church once a month and now I have started to attend the Zoom sessions run by Jennifer Courtney. If you'd like to come and pray with us, we meet on Zoom at 9:00 am every Tuesday apart from the 4th Tuesday of the month, which is at 9:15 am in church. Prayers last 30 minutes. We pray for individuals, world events and the church as well as thinking about a short piece of scripture. You're very welcome to just be present, or to contribute, whichever you prefer.

- Highlands now also has a house group that meets on the second Monday of the month from 7:30 pm in the Snug. We spend time checking in with each other and discussing a topic around our faith journeys. It is very informal, just as it



- It would be in your own lounge. We try to encourage one another in our Methodist Way of Life. Clive Johnson (interfaith minister) and I prepare and run the sessions. This gives breadth to the subject matter; tricky questions are encouraged!

- I share a lovely lunch (round of applause for Jackie and the kitchen team) and a chat with everyone at the monthly Lunch Club - every 2nd Tuesday 12:00, registration on 07951 963730 is essential.
- I also spend time on pastoral visits either in people's homes or in hospital. I care for members and people who are part of the Highlands community.
- I prepare and take baptisms, weddings and funerals.
- I attend groups in the church, as and when I can, and visit uniform camp nights. This is one of the mission parts of my ministry where I spread the Good News for those who don't always join us in church. I can walk with them in their lives,

join in with their joys and be there for them in times of struggle.

- I am also part of Leigh Churches Together (which meets monthly) and of Citizens UK.
- I am now involved in the role of our Community Builder and the work Matt is doing. We are working as a team, with Andrew Hyde as line manager, to begin all-age activities and services to encourage more people to engage with God.
- I chair or take part in a lot of meetings to help us talk to one another and share ideas and plans. I write reports and promote events and services on social media.



Mostly my role can be done with any of you coming along with me or helping me prepare. I would love to see more of you joining in our Methodist Way of Life and deepening your faith through exploring scripture/theology and relationships in mission. There is a wealth of opportunities for getting involved that are so rewarding and help us to serve God. Will you choose something new to do for 2025?

I look forward to hearing from you... and if your talents lie elsewhere there are endless volunteering positions around the church that we need to fill - Stewards, Welcomers, Property and Finance roles, "turning the heating on", opening up for hirers, coffee rotas, pastoral befriending, gardening, ECO team, evangelism, local preaching, playing in a worship band and organist (paid) to name but a few. Also, you don't have to be a member of the church to do some of these roles so please get in touch if you are simply looking for volunteering and being part of a community. Have a blessed February everyone – spring is nearly here!

Rev'd Heather (RevHev!) x
heather.simmons@methodist.org.uk

Diary Dates

- **A District Synod** is to take place on Saturday 13 September 2025 at Belfairs Academy from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The organisers need volunteers for different roles. If you could help, contact Jess in the circuit, especially if you have a first aid qualification (though it's not essential)
- Anne Briant has organised a **Quiet Day** ('In the Stillness') to take place at Hadleigh Methodist Church on Saturday 21 June 2025 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Further information on 01702 297508.
- **Further Ahead**, the Church Council will meet on Wednesday 14 May and Tuesday 14 October, both starting at 7:00 pm
- If you want (or need) **Safeguarding Training** it's 9:30 am on Tuesday 4 February at Thorpe Bay Methodist Church. Please contact Judy Taylor: judy@wesleymethodist.org.uk
- A new and exciting spring event will be **Boulevard-in-Bloom** 25 May which will include the Sunday service. Event time 10:30 am to 4:00 pm. Any gardeners in the general area of Sutherland and Highlands Boulevards will be competing to present the best front garden and raise money for charity. More information next month, but now is the time to start planning your display...
- The **Annual Civic Service** of Essex County Council will be held on Sunday 2 March 2025 at 3.30 pm at Chelmsford Cathedral. The Service has been prepared with the help of members of Benfleet Methodist Church and Rev Zena Smith will be the preacher. Also taking part will be the Allegro Music Group and Music Man Project so there will be a high level



of Methodist influence. The Chairman Cllr Jill Reeves warmly invites any friends and fellow Methodists to join for this service and to stay for refreshments afterwards.

Snippets

Highlands Toddlers

Please come and support Highlands Toddlers at their Coffee Morning on Saturday 8 March, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. All are welcome.

More Coffee?

Don't mind if I do, every Saturday at 10:00. Especially the 15 Feb when all profits to Air Ambulance.

Mencap Showstoppers

Full details of the 70th birthday party are on page 18



Christmas Collections

Christian Aid (carol service)	£164.80
Action 4 Children (Christingle)	£312.22
All we Can (Christmas day)	£155.10

Thank you to everyone who contributed and not forgetting those who collected, counted, banked and distributed the money.

Hobbies.

We meet on 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

In February we're doing:

6 Feb: Butterfly making, thanks to Marjorie for ordering the kit.

20 Feb: Free choice of card making.

And all are welcome.

Games.

This month we will meet at 10:30 until 12:30 On Thursday 13 February.

All are welcome for tea, coffee, biscuits and chat to do puzzles or games or just come for the company.

Church flowers This Month

For 9 February are donated by Maureen Kelly in memory of Family

For 23 February are donated by Sheila Whitelegg in memory of Ged

Let there Be Light

I have this report from the Treasurer and from the Lettings Officer:



You may notice some subtle changes to the lighting at Highlands over the last few weeks. About two-thirds of the existing fluorescent fixtures are now LED which uses considerably less power. Also, the lighting is more consistent in each room. Some areas such as the kitchen will be brighter than before.

Apart from the cost savings when running, the new tubes should last much longer. Flickering will be a thing of the past, and there will be instant light. Further changes require an electrician so it will take a while longer to get the job completed.

There were over 70 fluorescent tubes in use at Highlands previously!

S Watson/S Watson

HARP

Please support HARP with some clothing and toiletries donations.

We are very short of the items below that we are happy to come and collect and give to people who use our services:

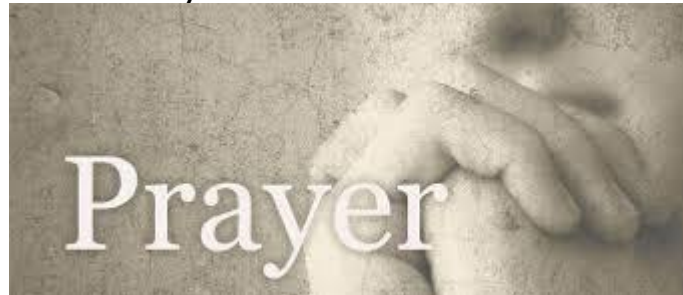
Sleeping bags

Hand warmers

Foil blankets
Take away cups
Ladies' small underwear
Men's boxers small and medium

Leggings
Socks
Deodorants

or donate to the Bradbury Centre 103-107 York Road, SS1 2DL.



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*, *Peggy Gosling* and *Joan Ford* (new address *Brook Lodge Care Home, Ghyllgrove Close, Basildon SS14 2TT*). 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 or recovering from surgery; may God grant in each case a speedy recovery.

Congratulations to David Watson, Donald Mayes and Andrew Saville who have all celebrated landmark birthdays (the ones with an '0' on the end) since we last published.



From the Editor

At this time of year, the second half of the winter can seem a bit wearisome. We will come back to that theme in a moment, but it seems right to dwell on some world events this time.

The conflicts in Palestine and Ukraine continue to make the news. We want a peacemaker to step in and succeed. The dreadful wildfire in the northern suburbs of Los Angeles USA has been a shocking disaster, one which may recur. The USA is perhaps, rather more than Palestine and Ukraine in a position to help citizens to recover. The stance of the Israeli government is unclear to say the least. Nevertheless, our prayers are with all of the people involved.

Still on a world stage, the inauguration of President Donald Trump is a difficult matter for a Christian Church to address. We wish the people of the USA well, but President Trump is not everyone's choice. He claims however that God saved him from the assassin's bullet, so that he could be President. This seems to be (excuse the Latin) based on a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* argument – in other words, you look back at what happened and then fit the explanation to match it.

We can't hope to solve this. Instead, we can offer some general prayers that allow God to sort out what He wants to do. Something like this:

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done...

Returning to the theme of the opening paragraph, Lesley and I try to alleviate the impact of winter by organising one or two trips out during January and February. One such day out was a visit to a South London museum and nearby art gallery.

The museum in question was the Horniman, established by a family that made a fortune by selling tea. Horniman is still a leading brand of tea in Spain and Uruguay. For the museum I would say 'quirky'. Where else would you see an ancient Egyptian coffin lid displayed next to a torture chair used in the Spanish Inquisition?

The museum stands near Forest Hill in a small park, free to enter, which has a beautiful view across the whole of South London and up towards the city centre. The park houses an aquarium and tropical butterfly house (not free).



After lunch, we hopped on a bus that took us to the Dulwich Picture Gallery. This is well worth a visit on its own. The 1817 Grade II listed gallery (the oldest public art gallery in England) shows important works by Rembrandt, Gainsborough, van Dyck, Poussin and Canaletto among many others. My favourite work here was by a lesser-known Italian artist known as Guercino.



This canvas is entitled *The Woman taken in Adultery* (1621). Many of you will recognise the story – it's in John 8: 3-11. I love the expression of Christ arguing with the Pharisee. There is no way He is going to give way. The positions of the hands also tell the story.

I took the central theme - *Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.* [John 8:7] but also another message: sometimes you have to dig your heels in.

Anarcan

Dining In

Yummy Scrummy Carrot Cake



I had several requests for the recipe that I used for the carrot cake we had at church on 12th January - so here it is. It's an old recipe (first printed in May 2002) but Mum and I haven't found one that we like better or that's easier.

175g muscovado sugar
175ml sunflower oil
3 large eggs, beaten
140g grated carrot
100g sultanas
grated zest of 1 orange
175 g SR flour,
1 tsp bicarb of soda

1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp grated nutmeg

For the icing

65g unsalted butter
25g icing sugar
125g full fat cream cheese
Orange essence (optional)

- Heat oven to 160C fan and oil/line 2 x 8in sandwich tins.
- Tip sugar into mixing bowl, pour in oil and add the eggs. Lightly mix and then stir in the grated carrot, sultanas and orange rind.

- Mix flour, bicarb and spices, then add to bowl and mix all the ingredients. (It will be almost runny - that's as it should be)
- Pour into tins and bake for about 30 mins until cakes feel firm and springy.
- Cool for 5 mins and then turn out onto wire rack and cool completely.

Make the icing by mixing softened butter and icing sugar and then stirring in the cream cheese. Sandwich the 2 cakes together and then use the rest to spread over the top.

Notes - you can make this cake in 1 x 8in tin - just bake for 45-50 mins. Or make it in a 7-inch square tin and bake for 40-45 mins. I like a creamy icing on my cake (as given above) but Mum makes a frosting with icing sugar and orange juice. Experiment and enjoy. LH

A Million Cousins

A story someone gave me...

Many of you will know the old Indian story in which Lord Krishna appears in disguise to a king and challenges the king to a game of chess. If he wins, Krishna says that he wants a prize of some grains of rice. Krishna does win.

Claiming his prize, Krishna wants the grains of rice counted out in a special way. A single grain of rice must be placed on the first square of the chess board; two grains on the second square; four rains on the third square and so on, each time doubling the number of grains of rice. Halfway across the board, the king owes Krishna more than 4 billion grains of rice. Continuing, the rice for square 35 would be about 1,000,000 kilos or roughly the weight of 5 blue whales. On the 64th and final square the king would need more than 92 million trillion grains of rice. Enough to cover the whole of India with rice to a depth of one metre.



Everybody has or had two parents, four grandparents, eight great grandparents and so on, the number doubling with each generation. That's obvious (though not entirely true for certain historic European Royal families).

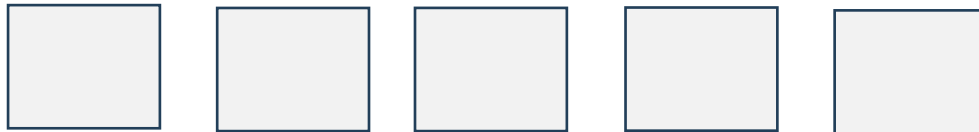
But what happens as you go further back? You only need to look back 31 generations - about 750 years - to find that you have more ancestors than the whole population of the planet. That means that everybody has the same ancestors. All Europeans alive today are descended from Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne (748-814) and his twenty children from a dozen or so partners. Yes, we are all related to each other. So, next time you go out, greet your cousins as if they were members of the family; because they are.

Puzzle of the Month¹

A medium puzzle. The five lists below each have one element missing. All you need to do is fill in the missing name or word. To check if you're right, take the first letter of each of your five answers and write them in the same order below to spell out a familiar word.

¹ Solution page 17

1. ITALY 2006: SPAIN 2010: GERMANY 2014:
_____ : ARGENTINA 2022
2. ARMSTRONG: _____ : CONRAD: BEAN:
SHEPARD
3. ECHO: FOXTROT: GOLF: HOTEL: _____
4. CADMIUM: INDIUM: TIN: ANTIMONY: _____
5. MICAH: NAHUM: _____ : ZEPHANIAH:
HAGGAI



Poem of the Month

It Couldn't Be Done

Edgar Albert Guest (1881–1959)

Born in Birmingham England, but moved as a child to the USA with his family, Eddie Guest wrote sentimental, but inspirational and optimistic poems about everyday life. Intellectuals tended to scorn his hugely popular work, but this example was recited by Idris Elba on the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year Award 2012, celebrating Team GB and Paralympics GB winning an award.



Somebody said that it couldn't be done
 But he with a chuckle replied
 That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
 Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
 So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
 On his face. If he worried he hid it.
 He started to sing as he tackled the thing
 That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

Puzzle of the Month (Solution)

List 1: FRANCE 2018 (*FIFA World Cup winners*)

List 2: ALDRIN (*Humans who walked on the moon*)

List 3: INDIA (*E to I in the NATO alphabet*)

List 4: TELLURIUM (*Elements in the Periodic Table*)

List 5: HABAKKUK (*Books of the Old Testament*)

F	A	I	T	H
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**Southend Mencap 70th Anniversary
Church Service**

**Highlands Methodist Church
Sutherland Boulevard, Leigh-On-Sea**

Sunday 23rd March 2025

10.30am

Special church service including a short performance
by our Showstoppers Project students.

Teas, coffees and cake will then be served after the event.

Please contact General Manager Marc McOwens
on (01702) 341250 to secure your place.



SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week

Children and Young People

Group	Time	Contact
Scouts	Thu 7:30 to 9:00 pm	Jack Reeve 07847 355859
Cubs	Thu 5:45 to 7:15 pm	Jordan Rutherford 07804 065933
Rainbows	Wed 4:00 to 5:00 pm	Julie Griffiths 07834 321724
Brownies	Wed 5:30 to 7:00 pm	Teresa Thompson 07809 219729
Guides	Fri 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Rangers	Thu ² 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	Rosalie 478631


Services to the Community

Group	Time	Contact
Lunch Club	2 nd Tuesday 12:00	07951 963730 Registration essential

Social and Recreational

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

² 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 March 2025 issue should be emailed to me andrewghyde@aol.com before the **deadline of Sunday 23 February**. No email? Don't despair; just telephone 473111 to arrange an alternative.

A Final Image

An official sign on the A6 that doesn't *quite* mean what it says. And below it, a prankster's witty response.

