



The **HIGHLANDER**

February 2026

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

These are services at Highlands for February 2026

10:30 am Sun 1 st	Morning Worship Café Church	Colin Turner
10:30 am Sun 8 th	Morning Worship Holy Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
4:00 pm Sun 15 th	All Age Praise & Worship	Matt Bunkall
10:30 am Sun 22 nd	Morning Worship	Rev Heather Simmons



These are services at The Fishermen's Chapel for February 2026.

9:30 am Sun 1 st	Morning Worship Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 8 th (Refreshments from 7:00)	Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 15 th	Taizé Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 22 nd	Mindfulness	Rev Heather Simmons



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

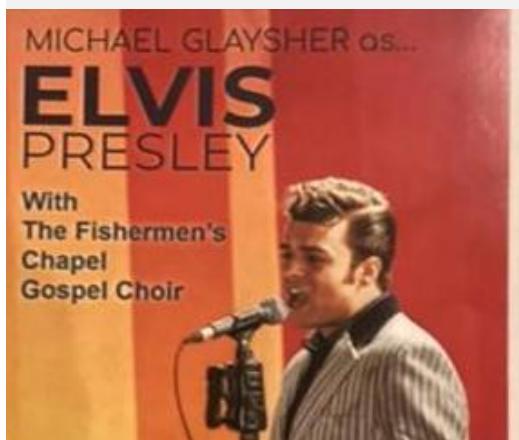


The **Highlander** is published by Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland Blvd, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PT. Highlands Methodist Church is a member church of the *Southend and Leigh Circuit*, 34/10, which is part of the Beds, Essex and Herts District

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

All telephone numbers are '01702' unless stated

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Pastoral Co-ordinator	Jean Edmonds	801517
Church Flowers	Jean Edmonds	801517
Lettings/Use of Premises	Sam Watson highlandslettings@gmail.com	07510 808519



Don't forget your tickets!
You'll be *All Shook Up* and *Cryin' in the Chapel* if you do.
Contact Frank or Jean on 801517, or use Eventbrite (see page 12)

From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

It seems a little tardy saying 'Happy New Year' in February but as we publish a December/January edition of the Highlander (to give our hard-working editor/publisher a break), this is my first opportunity to convey my wishes.

So... 'Happy New Year!' May it be wonderful for you all.

Sometimes I like to have a theme for the month to give continuity to my services and worship times. To begin 2026 I have chosen the theme of 'journeys', which was initially inspired by my reflection on the wise men and their interrupted journey.

We are all on a journey of discipleship, and life does its fair share of interrupting, wouldn't you say? In our discipleship we can find ourselves travelling in so many directions, often as a result of good and bad influences.

How mindful are we of those influences? Do we notice how the choices we make are affected by those around us, or the news, or social media?



When we think about journeys we think about a destination, a route, what we will need to pack for the journey, what we want to experience on the way, what

we would like to see, who we will travel with, how much will it cost us... and so on. At the beginning of this year I invite you to take some time to plan your discipleship journey for this year ahead, with those things in mind.

Is your church offering you what you need to make this journey? *If not, please speak to me and let's see what we can do to help.*

There may be many influences, interruptions, surprises, pitfalls and unexpected moments of pure joy. What is so wonderful is that God is there for the ride ALL the way. God is our guide, our strength and our light. One of the ways God expresses this incredible presence is through us all here at Highlands Methodist Church. So, let's travel together. When we travel let us consider this quote:

Discipleship is a daily discipline; we follow Jesus a step at a time, a day at a time. [Warren W Wiersbe]

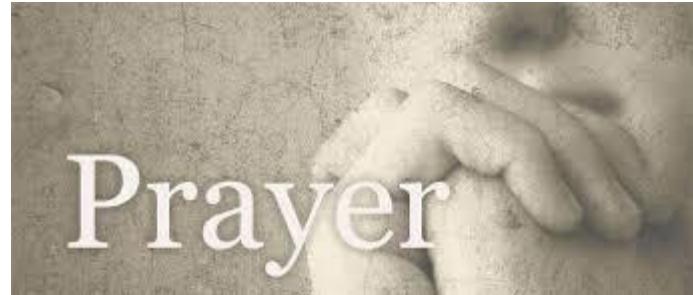
When we go on a journey it is one step at a time. Let's not hurry through this 100th year of Highlands Methodist church, let's savour it and be mindful of God's grace for each one of us.

I look forward to spending time with you in our services and celebrations.

God bless you, Rev'd Heather (Rev Hev!) x

Rev Heather x





Prayer

We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound, or bereaved and for those in residential care: particularly *Peggy Gosling* in Westcliff Lodge, *Doreen Morby* in Brambles, *Glenda Green* in Legra and *Marion Chapman* in Chalkwell Grange. 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. Also for those of us whose families are far away.

We send our condolences to family and friends of dear Ian Bristow who died shortly before Christmas. He regularly took part in Sunday worship at Highlands, always positive and ready for a chat.

Also remembered with affection is Paul Dawson, musician and long-time member of the Music Man Project, who died on 3 January. Also Irene Downing. News of her death came very recently.



Table Tennis, Board Games and Puzzles.

February dates are Thursdays 12 and 26, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Donations are £3 p.p. and refreshments are provided. Come and join the fun, since all are welcome. Jean Edmonds.01702 801517

Highlands Toddlers

There will be no Toddlers morning on 16 February on account of it being half-term. Otherwise all as usual.

Ros (478631) and Margaret (557512)



Humour Corner

Perhaps it's unkind but some of my favourite jokes are the accidental ones to which (unfortunately) churches are prone. Try these gems and be sure to avoid them:

This morning's sermon: Jesus Walks on Water. This evening: Searching for Jesus.

Don't forget the rummage sale, a super way of clearing out things for which you have no further use. Bring your husbands.

For those who have children and don't know it – downstairs you'll find the nursery.

Tonight's sermon: What is Hell? Come early and listen to our choir practice.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind and can be seen in the basement on Friday afternoons.

To mark Easter Sunday we'll ask Mrs Hamilton to come forward and lay an egg on the altar

Finally, I love this non-church example by the side of a country road: CATS EYES REMOVED, to which a passing wag has added the words: MICE VERY HAPPY.

Hobbies



We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 10.00 am to 12:00 noon in Room 1, with a charge £3 including refreshments. All are welcome, and for the next three sessions we will be concentrating on Easter cards.

5 th February	Die cut découpage which is always a popular activity.
19 th February	Making a gold cross card with thread. Something different.

Advance dates for your diary.

5 th March	Easter cards on vellum
14 th March	Easter Coffee Morning when there will be a lovely selection of Easter cards to buy. All hand-made by our members at Hobbies. More details to follow.

Puzzle of the Month ¹

Just one quick puzzle. Can you draw a polygon with 2 sides and 2 90-degree angles? If so, how?

(Clue: a man named Gerardus Mercator would help you - had he not died in 1594)

¹ Solution page 15

From the Editor

*O Wind, if winter comes,
can spring be far
behind?*

[Percy Bysshe Shelley:
Ode to the West Wind]

We certainly have had a touch of winter. January turned out a bit chilly in places, but we were glad to see photos of grandchildren in Wales enjoying themselves in the snowdrifts. Global warming has made us rather blasé about the weather, but we still record zero temperatures now and again. We may not have winter disasters such as the great 1962/63 freeze, but this type of disaster seems to be replaced by floods. Again, here in mild Essex we have missed the worst of the recent bad weather, so perhaps we should be thankful for that.



This well-known line by Percy Shelley speaks of bad and good weather, but it clearly refers to difficult circumstances more generally. It reminds us that these

Percy Bysshe Shelley

metaphorical winters are always followed by periods of



renewal and hope – in other words, spring. This is after all the natural cycle of life and rejuvenation. Better times are inevitable and just around the corner.

We should do what we can to avoid and mitigate tough times. Keep the insurance up to date! It may seem that God is doing little to help, but the

truth is that He has already sown the seeds of recovery.

Anarca

February 2026 Calendar

All events are at Highlands unless otherwise stated)

Sun	1 st	Morning Worship (Café) with Colin Turner 10:30
Mon	2 nd	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	3 rd	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00

Wed	4 th	Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	5 th	Hobbies 10:00
Fri	6 th	BBC 'Any Questions?' from 6:30 pm
Sat	7 th	Coffee Morning 10:00
Sun	8 th	Morning Worship (Communion) with Rev Heather 10:30
Mon	9 th	Toddlers 9:30 House group 7:30
Tue	10 th	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00 Lunch club
Wed	11 th	Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	12 th	Table tennis/board games/puzzles 10:00
Fri	13 th	
Sat	14 th	Coffee Morning
Sun	15 th	All Age Worship with Matt 4:00 pm
Mon	16 th	No toddlers (half term)
Tue	17 th	Shrove Tuesday Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00 Bible study/house group 1:00
Wed	18 th	Ash Wednesday – start of Lent Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	19 th	Hobbies 10:00
Fri	20 th	
Sat	21 st	Coffee Morning 10:00 Michael Glaysher is 'Elvis' at 7:00 pm
Sun	22 nd	Morning Worship with Rev Heather 10:30
Mon	23 rd	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	24 th	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Wed	25 th	Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	26 th	Table tennis/board games/puzzles 10:00
Fri	27 th	
Sat	28 th	Coffee Morning 10:00
Sun	29 th	There is no 29 Feb this year. Next one 2028...

Any Questions?

This is very much a final call for this event on Friday evening 6 February. At the time of writing a handful seats remain. If the website www.eventbrite.com/organizations/events shows 'sold out' then please email me and I will try to find a few a few extras, especially for anyone with a talent for shifting chairs. Also, if you have booked a ticket and find for any reason that you can't make it, please transfer or get back to me.

He is Back in the Building...



Reports of Elvis's death in 1977 were of course much exaggerated. To prove that he is well and in good voice he is appearing **LIVE** at Highlands – in the persona of the wonderful Michael Glaysher – at 7:00 on Saturday 21 February.

As ever, tickets are selling briskly, so *It's Now or Never*. To ensure you get yours, contact Frank or Jean on 801517, or use the Eventbrite service as above.

Church Flowers for February

8th donated by Sheila Whitelegg, in memory of Ged.

22nd donated by Maureen Kelly, in memory of family and friends.

Poem of the Month

A Daughter of Eve by Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

Rossetti was famously rather glum on occasion. Even this sketch by her brother Dante shows her a bit forlorn.

However, the poem below, set in wintertime, admits the possibility of a 'sun-warm'd sweet to-morrow' that will push aside her cold sorrow. Rossetti is perhaps best known for 'In the Bleak Midwinter' which gives an entirely different and sublime view of winter.

A Daughter of Eve

A fool I was to sleep at noon,
And wake when night is chilly
Beneath the comfortless cold moon;
A fool to pluck my rose too soon,
A fool to snap my lily.

My garden-plot I have not kept;
Faded and all-forsaken,
I weep as I have never wept:
Oh it was summer when I slept,
It's winter now I waken.

Talk what you please of future spring
And sun-warm'd sweet to-morrow:—
Stripp'd bare of hope and everything,
No more to laugh, no more to sing,
I sit alone with sorrow.



Dining In

Sundried Tomato & Mushroom Pasta

This is a dish that will cry out 'Italian' at your first waft or taste. Despite that, it is thoroughly veggie (use veggie parmesan) and easy to cook even for a church magazine editor. Don't worry too much about precision in your ingredients but do get the pasta out in good time if you like it *al dente*.



Ingredients (for 2)

300g mushrooms, sliced	200ml vegetable stock
2 tbsp olive oil	100ml double cream
180g pasta (tagliatelle's ideal)	(or mascarpone cheese)
2 garlic cloves	½ lemon, juiced
2 tbsp sundried tomato purée	20g parmesan cheese
2 woody herb sprigs (eg thyme, rosemary, oregano)	

Method

1. Fry the mushrooms in the oil 10 mins on medium heat until all the natural water has evaporated
2. Boil and salt a large pan of water and cook the pasta for 2 mins less than it says on the pack.
3. Grate or fine-chop the garlic over the mushrooms then stir in the tomato paste, cooking for 2-3 minutes. Fine-chop the herbs and vegetable stock then simmer for 5 mins. Drain the pasta and set aside, but keep a mug of the pasta water.
4. As the sauce thickens, add the parmesan and lemon juice. Then add in the pasta and toss together.
5. Finally add just enough of the pasta water to make the sauce cling to the pasta, and serve in bowls with crusty bread.

Our Christmas collections...

Recipient	Occasion	Amount
All we Can	Carol Service 21 December	£308.00
Trinity Family Centre (for Xmas meals)	Christingle Service 24 December	£355.00
YMCA Southend	Christmas Day Service	£ 68.00
HARP	Alternative Christmas cards	<u>£100.00</u>
		£831.00

You will be glad to know that Highlands also supported Connexional Giving of £149.82 – being £56.10 for World Mission and £93.72 for Mission in Britain.

Puzzle of the Month Solution

The answer is 'yes' but you must draw your polygon on a sphere. This is how Mercator managed to draw his map of the world, by stretching countries near the north and south poles while keeping their shape.

'Mercator's Projection' is now more or less standard as a world map.

This is despite an unfortunate side effect. A polar country like Greenland looks bigger than Australia.

In truth, Australia is much bigger than Greenland. And, for the time being anyway, much warmer. Don't tell President Trump though...



Anyone Fancy Tickling the Ivories?²

I expect that many of you will remember Joseph Zammit who often played organ for us when he was a 6th former at Southend High School for Boys (SHSB). Joseph writes:

As part of the SHSB Organ Society we've an interesting double bill that might be of interest to people at Highlands - on Saturday 28th February we are running two events in one day:

- 1. Come and Play the King of Instruments - an open morning for anyone (yes, anyone!) to come and try playing the organ, and find out a bit more about how it works. 9:30am to 2:00 pm.*
- 2. A "Showcase" concert in the evening - featuring lots of varied music and talent. 7:30 pm, 18 and under free, adults £7.*



I thought especially the open morning may be of interest to anyone who hasn't had that opportunity, in a friendly and informal setting to come along and have some fun learning what it's like to be an organist.

More info at www.osos.org.uk/events

² On behalf of all pachyderms I'm pleased to say that organ keys are actually now made of plastics like acrylic or polyester; not ivory.

News from the Car Park

My word this is rivetting stuff. I have left a space on the mantlepiece for any awards it picks up. However most of you do not have the advantage like me of living 3-4 minutes' walk (depends on the traffic lights) away from Highlands. So you justifiably use the car park, for which some useful information is here:

- Parking places are available entirely at your own risk. If you do happen to nudge another vehicle, please tuck a note giving your details under the wiper. If raining, try to find a church officer to note down the details.
- On Friday 6 February the car parks (front and rear) will be unavailable. Beware of spotting what looks like an opportunity and nipping in. You may find yourself staying longer than you intended.



- The nearest alternative will be the spaces at the top of Sutherland Bvd, but do watch for time restrictions during the day. There is usually plenty of room on the nearby streets. Please try not to block driveways or make excessive noise as you leave.
- During this week or next, Highways are going to dig up the entrance verge in Olive Avenue. Probably this will block entry/exit for 2 days including overnight. Check with Andreas before you leave your car.

- At some stage soon we intend to reserve the single place on the north side of the building for use by minister and stewards. We will do this by installing a strong steel chain. Do please watch out for this. If you run into it, you will damage your vehicle rather than the chain.

Coffee

We have a coffee morning this coming Sat 31 Jan for the same but only managed to advertise it by word of mouth.

A special coffee morning on Saturday 28 Feb is to raise funds for a special reflective area in the church garden, to include a seating area



planted with some mature colourful shrubs, various perennials, and a wildlife area. If you have any ideas for this venture, talk to organisers Robbie or Marion.

Circuit Prayer Meeting

The next CPM - via Zoom - is scheduled for 08:30 am 7 February. All are welcome. Here is a link

<https://zoom.us/j/94125353903?pwd=Y3O4hxLf5Fyikh6filMGzB37LXIHQI.1> or alternatively use

Meeting ID: 941 2535 3903

Passcode: 210808

Save These Dates

14 March Hobbies Coffee Morning: 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. Easter Cards, Gifts and Raffle and cakes of course will all be available

15 March Mothering Sunday: we are holding a special afternoon tea. Home made cakes will be served in the church hall, suitably decorated for the occasion. Tickets £5 (in advance to help with the catering numbers). Before this will be our afternoon service at 4:00 pm to which all are welcome

Finally, Ros and Clive...

...have set up a display of photographs, profiling Highlands and its history going way back to 1926, to be seen on the walls at the back and around the side of the church.

Ros has also very kindly left on display a treasury of newspaper cuttings, souvenir brochures, and much more from her amazing collection. You can find these in folders left on the tables at the back of the church near the coffee area. Please handle with care and put back items into their folders after perusing.

There's also a book on the table for recording any memories you have of your time at Highlands or our area for posterity. Add the briefest sentence or many more, and as many times as you wish! The plan is to include this book among items buried in a time capsule later in the year.

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 ³ 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 801517

Any material for the March edition of *The Highlander* needs to be emailed to andrewghyde@aol.com (or put a hard copy in the pigeonholes) by 22 February 2026.

³ Every fortnight