



The HIGHLANDER

April 2026

The monthly newsletter of Highlands Methodist
Church, Leigh on Sea

These are services at Highlands for April 2026

7:30 pm Thu 2 nd	Evening Worship Tenebrae – Maundy Thursday United Service @ Fishermen's Chapel	Rev Heather Simmons
10:30 am Fri 3 rd	Morning Worship Good Friday. 9:10 Walk of Witness to United Service @ Wesley	Rev Steve Mayo
11:00 am Sun 5 th 6:30 pm	1. Morning Worship Easter Sunday Holy Communion 2. Easter Prayer & Praise United Circuit Service @ Belfairs	Rev Heather Simmons
10:30 am Sun 12 th	Morning Worship	Paul Saunders
4:00 pm Sun 19 th	All Age Worship & Praise	Matt Bunkall
10:30 am Sun 26 th	Morning Worship	Rev Heather Simmons



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

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10:30 am Fri 3 rd	Morning Worship Good Friday. United Service @ Wesley	Rev Steve Mayo
9:30 am Sun 5 th 6:30 pm	1. Morning Worship Easter Sunday Holy Communion 2. Easter Prayer & Praise United Circuit Service @ Belfairs	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 12 th	Vespers Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 19 th	Taizé Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 26 th	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

Minister	Rev Heather Simmons heather.simmons@methodist.org.uk	07879 232231
Secretary to Church Council	David Watson	555702
Minutes Secretary	Vanessa Mayes	473787
Church Stewards	Andrew Hyde	473111
	Donald Mayes	473787
	Lesley Hyde	473111
	Jean Edmonds	801517
	Paul Travers	07970 894347
All Age Community Builder	Matt Bunkall mattbunkall@gmail.com	07305 769086
Church Treasurer	Steve Watson	07543 905641
Children's Worker	Ros Bryant	478631
Pastoral Co-ordinator	Jean Edmonds	801517
Church Flowers	Jean Edmonds	801517
Lettings/Use of Premises	Sam Watson highlandslettings@gmail.com	07510 808519

From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

In the time of Lent we have explored the Methodist theme of “letting go of what weighs us down and being open to what lifts us up”. In one of our bible studies we looked at the word *respair*, which is the emotional healing that happens after despair. We all loved the word!

After talking in our safe group about times where we had experienced despair, I encouraged us all to look for the signs of hope that come about after despair. Some of these signs of hope happened through no effort of our own – for example, through the love and kindness of friends and family. However, in some things, we realised that we needed to take an active part in ourselves. In order to respair, we needed to let go of what was holding us down, be it

- * negative emotions,
- * ways of thinking or
- * not forgiving.

We also discovered that respair was about caring for our own health, putting boundaries in place, doing acts of kindness and noticing the joy of nature and goodness in others.

We should not always jump into respairing too quickly. It is good to reflect and think about our appropriate actions. If we think about when Jesus went to raise Lazarus from the dead, he didn't go



immediately. Jesus had his reasons. In spite of the despair he must have felt at first, he paused before acting. He listened to others too, in their despair, and when they healed, they healed together.



As we celebrate Easter, we have the opportunity to let go of the things that are weighing us down. We have the time from Maundy Thursday to Easter Saturday to wait and consider; and then, on Easter Sunday, we have the wonderful occasion of God's ultimate gift of eternal life for us all. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ gives us hope; we can celebrate that TOGETHER.

Talking of celebration - this month we have our **Art Week** at Highlands, **Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 April** inclusive. Please see our posters for details. Everyone of any age can be involved whether through exhibiting, doing some art at the church, viewing the art or buying art in our Auction raising money for **Little Havens Hospice**. Then our next event in May is Highlands in Bloom with a flower festival inside the church, so if you live in the local area and would like your front garden to enter into our competition, please get planting your spring bulbs and contact Matt Bunkall for an entry form.

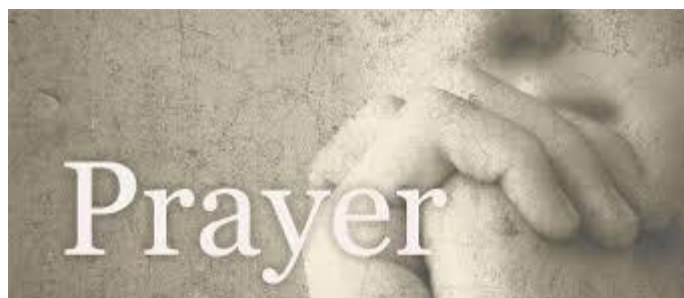


You will also see that Highlands is designing and planting a Reflective Garden for you to sit amongst nature and contemplate or remember loved ones. Watch this space!

With all the scary and traumatic events around our globe, we pray for all the victims and campaign on their behalf, hoping to be a beacon of hope and love in our community for future generations. So, to keep your church an active part of Highlands life, please join us at our services and events.

A blessed Easter to you all.

Heather x



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 and *Glenda Green* in Legra. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

We send our **condolences to** Alison and Steven on the recent loss of their Mother Beryl Downey whom some folk will remember.

Also we **hold in our prayers** and offer our sympathy to family and friends of Marion Chapman, especially her daughter Anne. Marion, whose funeral took place on 18 March. was a much-loved member of the Chatter group and Lunch club.

Meanwhile, Andrew Savile has taken up respite care for an initial period at Beauleigh Court on the corner of Marine Parade and Hadleigh Road. Visitors are more than welcome - you can find out more 01702 844544.

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.

Finally, **congratulations** to David and Janet Watson on the arrival (in Denmark) of another great-granddaughter, Holly.



Table Tennis, Board Games and Puzzles.



We meet on Thursdays 9 and 23 April for Table Tennis, Puzzles and Games in Room 1 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Come, have some fun and serve a spin, since all are welcome.
Jean Edmonds.01702 801517

Humour Corner

Statistic of the day: 5 out of 6 people – 83.33% - agree that Russian roulette is safe...

Hobbies



We normally meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon in Room 1, with a donation of £3 including refreshments.

2 April: Maundy Thursday, there will be no hobbies on that morning.

16th April: We hope to try a new craft of designing and painting a cotton tote bag, which could be a challenge.

All are welcome.



Hobbies would like to thank everyone who came and supported our Hobbies Coffee Morning when the amount of £200 for church funds was raised. It is very much appreciated. Easter Blessings to everyone. **Robbie Norton** adds: Thank you for attending my charity coffee for Highland Church Garden. And **from me**, a huge thank you to Paul for some really heavy work on the garden.

Leigh West Guide District would like to thank all who supported our Table Sale morning held on 7 March. We raised £45 for District funds from the Teas/Coffees, and the Cakes and Table sale made £102.20 for our Young Leader, Hannah's trip to visit the Guides in Malta in August. We wish all at Highlands a very Happy Easter.

Jess sends a big thank you to everyone who came to the Coffee Morning on 21 March. A wonderful £86.00 was raised for The One Love Project

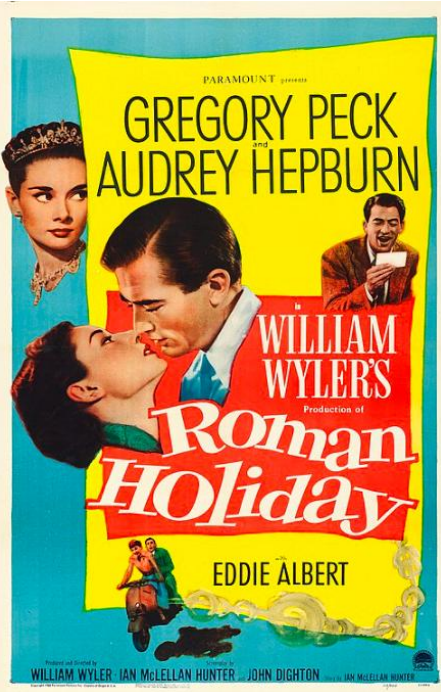
Highlands Toddlers

Following our Easter break, Highlands Toddlers re-opens on Monday 13 April at 9:30 am.

We were pleased to donate the sum of £200 from our Toddler funds towards the reflective garden being created outside the Church, which we hope will be enjoyed by both toddlers and carers alike. Thank you for your support.

Ros (478631) and Margaret (557512)

Classic Film Club



This month's feature is showing at 11:30 (for 12:00) on Friday 10 April. *Roman Holiday* is a 1953 US romantic comedy film directed by William Wyler and starring Audrey Hepburn as a princess out to see Rome on her own and Gregory Peck as a reporter. The film won three 'Oscars' including Best Actress – Hepburn, described by one reviewer as 'luminous in her American debut'.

The film had a disappointing box-office in the USA but went down a storm in Europe, especially in the UK and (of course) Italy. The UK success was partly because the film's plot chimed with a

real-life difficult romantic situation involving a royal princess (Margaret, sister of Queen Elizabeth II) and the divorced air ace Peter Townsend. Pretty shocking in 1953...

Puzzle of the Month¹

With a Shakespeare theme, can you help our librarian sort out the titles of his collection of plays. He has all the right titles. Just not quite in the right order..

The Two Gentlemen of Nothing
The Merry Wives of Timon
Measure for Juliet
Much Ado About Taming
A Midsummer Night's Cressida
The Measure of the Shrew
As You Like Verona

Love's Dream
Titus Cleopatra
Taming of Julius
Troilus and Windsor
Antony and Andronicus
Romeo and Caesar
Labour's Lost Athens

¹ Solution page 18

From the Editor

Sticking to a Shakespearean theme – what do you know of 23 April, a date (as I write this) one month away?

Full marks if you said that if was

- * the approximate date of Shakespeare's birth (in 1564)
- * the approximate date of Shakespeare's death (in 1616)
- * the approximate date of death (in 1616) of Miguel de Cervantes, Spain's greatest writer, creator of *Don Quixote*
- * St George's Day



The reason we can't be too sure about the Bard's birth and death date is that the only records that exist (a church baptismal register and a gravestone, both in Stratford) are not thought reliable. As for Cervantes, the officials in Madrid at the time used a different calendar to the one used in England, which provides a further layer of uncertainty.

So I have decided to concentrate here on St George, the patron saint of England (and Georgia, Ukraine, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Malta, parts of Russia, and of Spain...). In Christianity a patron saint is the heavenly advocate of a particular group of people such as a nation, region, members of a profession, sufferers from a common affliction or condition. The list can be fairly long with respect to a well-known saint such as Peter or Paul. One of my favourites is St Jude the Apostle, patron saint of 'lost causes' and of the Chicago Police Department. Fairly logical I suppose.

Most will know that Patrick, David and Andrew are patrons respectively of Ireland, Wales and Scotland. As such their feast days are widely celebrated. However, there is very little that marks

the feast day of George. Perhaps we should make more of him? I think that the problem might be that there is very little known about his life, apart from ancient legends of his derring-do including, of course, the slaying of a dragon, from whose foul clutches George rescued a princess named Sabra. Apparently. The image here is from 1493, but others exist that are over 300 years older.



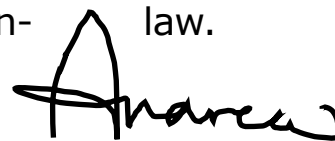
Slightly more reliable is the story that George was an ethnic Greek who grew up in what is now Turkey. He became a Roman soldier, promoted to the elite Praetorian Guard under the emperor Diocletian. Refusing to give up his Christian faith, he was martyred in about 303CE. Some versions have George being crucified three times, being resurrected on the first two occasions. Finally he dies, but Pope Gelasius canonised him (*ie* promoted him to sainthood) in 494 CE.

It's well-known that St Patrick is loudly and bibulously celebrated as patron saint of Ireland every year, all over the world, on 17 March. The celebrations of St David and St Andrew (Wales – 1 March, and Scotland – 30 November, respectively) are quieter but no less sincere. Meanwhile 23 April slips by, year after year, with hardly anybody noticing it, let alone organising a party.

The reason for this may be evidential. Academics have found ample material concerning the careers of Patrick and David, while Andrew pops up in all four gospels, not to mention *Acts 1:13* and the *Apocrypha*. Meanwhile George (with his foe, the dragon) has a medieval legend, a few paintings, maybe half-a-dozen British pubs, and and a forgettable TV sitcom. No wonder he's ignored.

But clearly we should treat the dragon as an allegory of evil, and George as a symbol of defiant virtue. Then we can still raise a glass

on 23 April and appreciate the literature of Shakespeare, the valour of George, and the birthday of my dear mother-in-law.
Cheers!



April 2026 Calendar

All events are at Highlands unless otherwise stated)

Wed	1 st	Lectio Divina 7:30 (on line)
Thu	2 nd	Maundy Thursday Tenebrae 7:30 pm Fishermen's Chapel No Hobbies
Fri	3 rd	Good Friday Walk of Witness, starting at 9:10 on foot if you are able (otherwise join us at Wesley at 10:15)
Sat	4 th	Coffee Morning 10:00 – 12:00 noon
Sun	5 th	Easter Sunday Communion 11:00 am Circuit Service 6:30 pm at Belfairs
Mon	6 th	Easter Monday No Toddlers
Tue	7 th	Prayers in Church 9:15 am Tuesday Chatter
Wed	8 th	Lectio Divina 7:30 (on line)
Thu	9 th	Table Tennis, Puzzles and Games 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.
Fri	10 th	Classic Film <i>Roman Holiday</i> 11:30 am – 2:00 pm
Sat	11 th	Coffee Morning 10:00 – 12:00 noon Craft Fair (for Christian Hope Int'l) @Wesley SS9 1SJ 10am – 2pm
Sun	12 th	Morning Worship 10:30 am Start of Art Week
Mon	13 th	Highlands Toddlers 9:30 am House Group 7:30 pm Art Week Continues
Tue	14 th	Prayers in Church 9:15 am Tuesday Chatter 10:00 am Lunch Club Art Week Continues
Wed	15 th	Art Week Continues

		Lectio Divina 7:30 (on line)
Thu	16 th	Hobbies 10:00 am to 12:00 noon Art Week Continues
Fri	17 th	Art Week Continues
Sat	18 th	Coffee Morning 10:00 – 12:00 noon Art Week Continues
Sun	19 th	Art Week Ends Praise & Worship 4:00 pm
Mon	20 th	Highlands Toddlers
Tue	21 st	Prayers in Church 9:15 am Tuesday Chatter 10:00 am Bible Study/House Group 1:00 pm
Wed	22 nd	Lectio Divina 7:30 (on line) District Lay Gathering (Chelmsford)
Thu	23 rd	
Fri	24 rd	
Sat	25 th	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Sun	26 th	Morning Worship 10:30 am
Mon	27 th	Highlands Toddlers
Tue	28 th	Prayers in Church 9:15 am Tuesday Chatter 10:00 am
Wed	29 th	Lectio Divina 7:30 (on line)
Thu	30 th	

100th Birthday Celebrations

(1) Clive Johnson writes:

As part of our 100-year anniversary celebration, I'm putting together a Time Capsule of small items that can be hidden away for posterity – or at least until a time when our wise descendants feel it's right to discover what we left for them. I'm thinking of something very simple, wholly capable of fitting into an A4 size box file or smaller. Current edition newspapers, photographs, and small items would be best suited for this.

Please let me have your suggestions, and indeed, any contributions! If you have ideas or actual donations, please let me know (my email is clive@mac.com and mobile number is 07956 942980). Please note that anything containing a battery, or which is perishable, won't be suited for storing longer term. Remember to respect people's privacy too, if including anything that might be personal to them.

One item that will be included is the "memories" book, currently on the display table at the back of the church near the coffee area. Do take a moment to add to this, if you haven't already done so. Words of blessing, hopes and prayers for those who may find the book and the capsule in future would be very welcome to include, along with memories of the past, and stories about what activities you currently enjoy, in and around the church.

I suspect that the capsule itself will be kept indoors rather than buried – there are potential problems with stashing things away underground, even if with the relative protection of metal casing. However, exactly what form the capsule will take is yet to be decided. My aim is to have it ready by the end of June. I'll then report back, probably with a photograph or two to show what we're leaving. Many thanks.

Church Flowers for March

Sunday 26th	Jean and Frank Edmonds	donating in memory of brother Mike
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Jean writes:

For the Flower Festival on 16/17th May we plan to adorn our church with beautiful flowers with themes from the hymn *All Things Bright and Beautiful*. We'd welcome all help possible with flower arranging, watering, stewarding, refreshments and donations of flowers and greenery on 14/15th. If you are willing to help in any way please speak with Jean Edmonds 01702 801517

Dining In

Amaretti biscuits

Don't be put off if this seems complicated. because actually it's quite simple. These little beauties are crisp on the outside, chewy in the middle and absolutely delicious; perfect with afternoon tea.

Ingredients

2 large lemons, zested	(2 tbsp
120g caster sugar	almond
200g ground almonds	liqueur - optional)
2 medium egg whites	4 tbsp icing sugar



Method

1. Rub the zest of 1 lemon into the caster sugar. Set 2 tbsp of this aside
2. Add ground almonds to the rest of the caster sugar. Mix until fully combined.
3. Put the 2 egg whites into a large clean bowl and whisk until stiff peaks form. (this should take 3 -5 mins). Now gradually whisk in the lemony caster sugar that you set aside.
4. Mix half the egg mix to the ground almonds/sugar (and almond liqueur if using) and mix well until you have a smooth paste. Gently fold in the rest of the egg mix. Chill for 1 hour
5. Heat over to 190^c/170^c fan/gas 5 and line 2 baking trays with parchment.
6. Roll tablespoons of the chilled dough into small balls - you should get 15 - 18.
7. Add the zest of the other lemon to the icing sugar and roll the balls in this, before placing them on the trays. Dust with a little extra icing sugar and then bake for 13 - 15 mins until lightly golden but still soft. Leave to cool and then enjoy. Will keep up to 10 days in an airtight container.

Poem of the Month

Being Boring by Wendy Cope OBE (1945-1971)

Born in Erith, Kent, Wendy Cope read history at Oxford. She now lives in Ely with her husband, the poet Lachlan Mackinnon. Although she only started writing poetry at the age of 35, and her output has been relatively slim, she has received numerous awards and accolades for what is termed 'light verse'.

Being Boring

If you ask me what's new, I have nothing to say,
Except that the garden is growing.
I had a slight cold, but it's better today,
I'm content with the way things are going.
Yes he is the same as he usually is,
Still eating and sleeping and snoring.
I get on with my work, he gets on with his.
I know this is all very boring.

There was drama enough in my turbulent past.
Tears and passion I've used up a tank full.
No news is good news, and long may it last,
If nothing much happens, I'm thankful.
A happier cabbage you never did see,
My vegetable spirits are soaring.
If you're after excitement, stay well clear of me.
I want to go on being boring,

I don't go to parties, well what are they for,
If you don't need to find a new lover?
You drink and you listen and drink a bit more,
And you take the next day to recover.
Someone to stay home with was all my desire,
And now that I found a safe mooring,
I've just one ambition in life - I aspire:
To go on and on being boring.



A Day Out

Are you impressed by this tower? I grant you that it's not as tall or as old as the Leaning Tower of Pisa but at least it's straight. (This tower is about 80 feet tall, completed in the reign of Henry VIII around 1523. The one in Pisa is 185 feet tall and was mostly finished by the year 1300)² The one very clear advantage held by the Layer Marney tower is that of being in Essex, just under an hour's drive if you're lucky. It's a perfect place to visit, lying between Colchester and Tiptree. The latter is famous for its superb fruit jams, the nearby A12 for its traffic jams. CO5 9US is the postcode.



It has some interesting history. The tower and village take their name from Lord Marney, a great pal of the Tudor kings Henry VII and VIII. Marney intended to build a residence to outshine the Tudors' place at Hampton Court. Sadly, Marney and his son both died before they could get any further than this tower, an attractive church and some outbuildings. Subsequent owners have added and refurbished, making it an ideal picnic site. Adult admission is £12 but under 13s are free. Full details at www.layermarneytower.co.uk

² The two towers have in common that they have survived earthquakes – in fact 4 major tremors in the case of Pisa. The British tower survived an 1884 tremor of 4.6 on the Richter scale that caused much damage and 1 fatality.

Puzzle of the Month Solution

Well done if you ended up with these 14 titles:

The Two Gentlemen of Verona
The Merry Wives of Windsor
Measure for Measure
Much Ado About Nothing
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Taming of the Shrew
As You Like It

Love's Labour's Lost
Titus Andronicus
Julius Caesar
Troilus and Cressida
Antony and Cleopatra
Timon of Athens
Romeo and Juliet

Alzheimers Just a quick message to let you know that Andrew and Lesley have decided to fundraise for the Alzheimer's Society (responding to a family circumstance) and would really appreciate your support. We're running a coffee morning on **Saturday 2 May**. Also on **9 May** we are joining Trek26 London Challenge - Fulham to London Bridge and back. Follow this link www.justgiving.com/page/andrew-hyde-1
To Jesus, 50p is as important as £50 (see Mark 12:41). Giving is anonymous if you wish.

Art Week starts on 12 April. We very much need your input! It could be a small watercolour that you (or a friend, or family) dash off specially for the occasion, or a Rembrandt that you no longer like. Or some practical help you can give. Whatever it is, get in touch with Matt or look at any of the leaflets.

After that **Highlands in Bloom** is next³...

³ See page 14 for more

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 ⁴ 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 May edition of *The Highlander* needs to be emailed to andrewghyde@aol.com (or put a hard copy in the pigeonholes) by 26 April 2026.

⁴ Every fortnight

Don't forget to pick up your copy of the Centenary Event Guide

