



The **HIGHLANDER**

May 2026

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

These are services at Highlands for May 2026

10:30 am Sun 3 rd	Morning Worship Café Church	Anne Briant
10:30 am Sun 10 th	Morning Worship Holy Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
4:00 pm Sun 17 th	All Age Worship & Praise	Matt Bunkall
10:30 am Sun 24 th	Morning Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 31 st	Morning Worship United Service at the Fishermen's Chapel	Rev Heather Simmons



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

9:30 am Sun 3 rd	Morning Worship Holy Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 10 th	Vespers Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 17 th	Evening Worship Taizé Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 24 th	Mindfulness	Rev Heather Simmons
11:00 am Sun 31 st	Morning Worship United Service at the Fishermen's	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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From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

Alleluia the Lord reigns, **Let the earth rejoice! Alleluia!**

We are in this beautiful time of Eastertide and spring. Amongst the sadness, trauma and devastation there continues to be hope and renewal. We experienced that last month in such a wonderful way with our Art Week at Highlands Methodist Church. Everyone of all ages was involved, whether through exhibiting, doing some art at the church, viewing the art or buying art in our auction, which raised money for Little Havens Hospice. The conversations, relationships built, gifts shared, and money donated were extraordinary. This week was such a blessing to us all. Thank you to EVERYONE who took any part, no matter how big or small.



And the blessings just keep coming – our next event is **Highlands in Bloom** with a Flower Festival inside the church. The theme is *All Things Bright and Beautiful*.

We'll also be featuring our church gardens outside with pots and wildflowers planted by our uniformed groups that meet at Highlands. AND we are highlighting some of our neighbours' front gardens for you to visit.

The times for this event are

- **10:00 am – 1:30 pm Saturday 16 May and**
 - **10:00 am – 4:00 pm Sunday 17 May,**
- followed by All-age worship at 4:00 pm and supper. Refreshments including Rossi's ice-creams will be on sale to**

raise money for Aspirations (local charity¹) and Christian Aid.

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!

My reflections for this month are going to concentrate on belonging. Why is belonging important? What does it encourage us to do for one another? If we say we belong, how does that make us feel?

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.

[Ephesians 2 :19].



We all belong to the family of God. It's up to each one of us whether we choose to acknowledge that and take part. Perhaps the first step can just be thinking about what it means to belong.

For most of us it's a hard decision. And it's not always a comfortable journey once you've decided to belong. But it's a road we tread together and that for me is precious.

Please come and join us at Highlands Methodist and see what belonging means in this place. We welcome you and hope you will change us and challenge us!

Heather x

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

¹ See www.aspirationssouthend.org for further details.



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 *Andrew Savile* in respite at Beauleigh Court. 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.



Table Tennis, Board Games and Puzzles.



We meet on Thursday 28 May 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

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 donation of £3.00 including refreshments.



- 7 May Silk flower baskets with Jean in preparation for the forthcoming Highlands Flower Festival.

- 21 May Design and colour greetings cards with a variety of peel offs.

All are very welcome.

Highlands Toddlers

Following our Easter break, Highlands Toddlers have re-opened. Their usual spot remains on Mondays at 9:30 am. However...

There will be no Highlands Toddlers on 4 May or 25 May since both of these dates are Bank (Public) holidays.

Ros (478631)

Margaret Wood writes:

HIGHLANDS TODDLERS

Explanatory note from Margaret

Many of you have been asking why I am no longer helping Ros at Highlands Toddlers. Sadly, this was not my choice.

Having been volunteering for nearly 20 years on the basis of previous safeguarding training and current DBS² check, I was advised that the current Methodist Guidelines require updated training. The Circuit Safeguarding Officer informed me that without it, I had to resign with immediate effect.

I consider that Ros and I have always been extremely conscious of the importance of safeguarding.

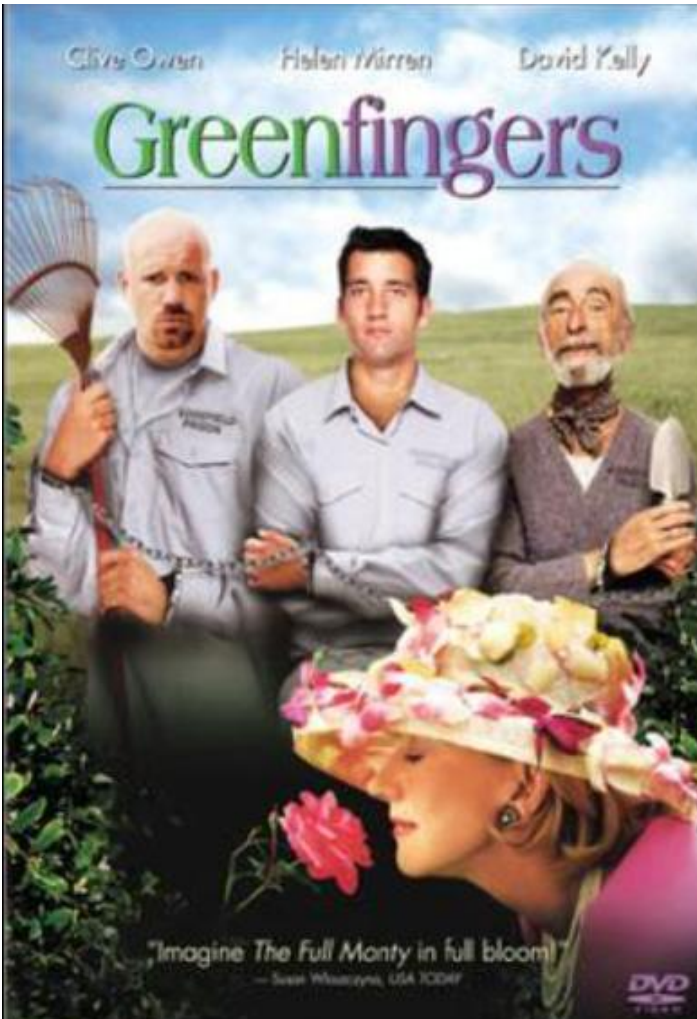
I suggested amendment of the Methodist Guidelines to exclude organisations such as Highlands Toddlers, where responsibility for the children lies with their accompanying adults. However, it appears that the safeguarding officials are happy with the Guidelines as they stand, and I respect their views. I feel I have done all I can. Ros, who has the updated certification, is continuing as leader, so you are in safe hands! I sincerely hope this proves possible. I know she will appreciate any help.

As I had no advance warning, I regret being unable to say goodbye personally. Thank you all so much for your support. I've loved working with you.

Margaret

² Disclosure & Barring Service

Classic Film Club



This month's feature is showing at 11:30 (for 12:00) on Friday 1 May. *Greenfingers* is a 2000 UK comedy film directed by Joel Hershman and starring Clive Owen, Dubliner David Kelly and luminous local lass Helen Mirren in the story of some long-term guests of HM Prisons who turn from crime to horticulture. It's loosely based on a true story (in which no members of Highlands were involved).

Humour Corner

Sherlock Holmes: *'Case solved Watson, I now know that the person guilty of this despicable crime lives in the house with the large yellow front door, over there.'*

Watson: *'Holmes, that is absolutely brilliant! How on earth did you deduce that?'*

Holmes: *'A lemon entry, my dear Watson...!'*

Puzzle of the Month³

In this list of words we've left out several letters from each word. As you find the missing letters, you'll find that they also spell out a word. For a helpful example, number 3 has LION as the answer.

Just to help further, the dashes indicate the number of letters missing. Also, the answers have something in common, and the clues get harder towards the end.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. APPR - - IMATE | 7. VER - - - IM |
| 2. MEAD - - -ARK | 8. SI - - - - URE |
| 3. BIL - - - - AIRE | 9. - - - ORKER |
| 4. AF - - - - OON | 10. MI - - - - AVE |
| 5. BENE - - - - NT | 11. EXE - - - - BLE |
| 6. B - - - ZEBUB | 12. CONT - - - - - E |

From the Editor

Did you know that 24 May 2026 is 'Whit Sunday? You may also know it as Pentecost⁴. It is a Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit, and of course a Bank Holiday, so named because typically banks closed for business. I must admit that being retired I miss Bank Holidays. It was a day when I woke early and began the ritual of getting up – collar and tie, hasty breakfast, tramp down to the station...

³ Solution page 18

⁴ derived from a Greek word meaning 'fiftieth' because it's 50 days after Easter. 'Whit' by the way is a corruption of 'white' the colour of robes worn by church officers at Pentecost.

HANG ON! No need for any of that! It's a Bank Holiday. Yesss! I am free to do whatever I please, even if that means sitting in a traffic jam watching the teeming rain and listening to the clicky-clack of the windscreen wipers. Never mind – one of the countless TV channels will be showing *The Great Escape*. Again.

Nowadays, of course, most High Street banks are closed every day. Whit Monday lost its status in 1972 and it's just 'Spring Bank Holiday Monday' on Monday 25 May. So what does Whitsun/Pentecost mean now? What's to celebrate? (Especially folk like me, for whom every day is a holiday, according to some). The answer is in scripture.

Fifty days after the Resurrection, the twelve – sorry, eleven – disciples were in a locked room, fearing arrest and hiding from the authorities, when suddenly...

'... a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw ...tongues of fire that ... came to rest on each of them [and] filled .. them with the Holy Spirit [Acts:2, 2-4 abridged]'



Sometimes as Christians we might yearn for the sanctuary of that room, shut away, like a hermit, from the rest of the world. But we can be sure and certain that the Spirit will come to us at Pentecost (sooner if we need it) just as it did for the disciples. Pentecost is all about change, but the change that the Spirit brings might not be what we expected. Rather than changing the world to what we want, the Spirit may choose to change us to what God wants, as it did the disciples

That's why Pentecost matters to each of us. Enjoy the holidays of May.

Anne

May 2026 Calendar

All events are at Highlands unless otherwise stated)

Fri	1 st	Film Club ' <i>Greenacres</i> ' 12 noon (11:30 for refreshments)
Sat	2 nd	Coffee Morning (Lesley & Andrew) 10:30 onward For Alzheimer's Society
Sun	3 rd	Café Church 10:30
Mon	4 th	No Toddlers
Tue	5 th	Prayers 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Wed	6 th	Lectio 7:30 pm
Thu	7 th	Hobbies 10:00 – 12:00 noon Local Elections 7:00 am – 10:00 pm
Fri	8 th	
Sat	9 th	Coffee Morning (Guides) 10:30
Sun	10 th	Morning Worship – Communion 10:30
Mon	11 th	Toddlers 9:30 House Group 7:30 pm
Tue	12 th	Prayers 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00 Lunch Club 12:00
Wed	13 th	Lectio 7:30 pm
Thu	14 th	Highlands in Bloom - Setting up
Fri	15 th	Highlands in Bloom - Setting up
Sat	16 th	Coffee Morning for Christian Aid Highlands in Bloom – Display 10:00 – 11:30
Sun	17 th	Highlands in Bloom – Display 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm 4:00 pm - 3 rd Sunday All Age Praise & Worship
Mon	18 th	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	19 th	Prayers 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Wed	20 th	Lectio 7:30 pm
Thu	21 st	Hobbies 10:00 – 12:00 noon
Fri	22 nd	
Sat	23 rd	Coffee Morning 10:30 onward

Sun	24 rd	Whitsun Morning Worship 10:30 Team 100 meeting 12:00 noon
Mon	25 th	No Toddlers
Tue	26 th	Prayers 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Wed	27 th	Lectio 7:30 pm
Thu	28 th	Table Tennis & Games 10:00 – 12:00
Fri	29 th	
Sat	30 th	Coffee Morning 10:30 onward
Sun	31 st	Morning Worship United Service 11:00 at The Fishermen's Chapel

Highlands Front Gardens **16-17 May**

- Do you love your front garden
- Are you justly proud of it?
- Is it less than 10 minutes' walk from Highlands Church?



If you answered 'yes' to any of these we'd love your garden to take part in our flower festival. It doesn't matter if your front garden is large or small, as long as it has some green or some flowers. Tubs and pots are fine. Likewise window boxes

All you need to do is give your address. We will provide visitors with a list, and strict instructions as follows

1. You must remain on the public highway, or pavement
2. You must not pick flowers or take cuttings (not without permission anyway)

100th Birthday Celebrations

Highlands Flower Festival

- Saturday 16 May 10:00 am – 1:30 pm FREE
- Sunday 17 May 12:00 noon - 4pm FREE

To celebrate our Centenary, please come and visit our display. Refreshments will be available, and an all-age service will follow on from the display. No need to book - ALL ARE WELCOME.



Free FLOWER FESTIVAL

Can you can help this special production in any way?

**ALL ARE
WELCOME**



On Thursday 14 May we'd welcome greenery and flowers so that we can condition them ready to work on our displays the next day.

On Friday 15 May we'll be setting up our displays. If you can help in any way with

- watering, preparing flowers and greenery, or
- working with silk flowers in a basket or
- clearing up or
- providing refreshments for the many folk working on the windows we'd really much appreciate you.

Please talk with Jean Edmonds 01702 801517

Church Flowers for May

We invite you to donate in memory of a loved one. Spaces are available, for flowers to be displayed on every windowsill at our flower festival to the theme of

All Things Bright and Beautiful.

There will be a Remembrance Book at the back of the church near the Communion Table.

Outcomes

The big story this month is the Art Week. Thanks to everyone who expressed to me their appreciation, but...

...I need to make it clear that the hard work of designing, curating setting up (and taking down) the displays was done by Matt. The job of 'minding' the building and the art was carried out by a number of volunteers. **Huge thanks to all of you.** It's true that not everything went exactly as planned. But a mistake is more than rectified by learning the lesson of how to avoid repeating it.

So this brings us to some important feedback. The point being that we had two salient objectives for Art Week:

1. Footfall. We had to get people into the building and let them know a bit about who we are, what we've been doing here for the last hundred years and how art matters to us. (☑)
2. Cash. Specifically, money to support the wonderful work done by Little Havens Hospice⁵. Money is still coming in, but it seems that the final result will be somewhere north of **£2,200**. Well done everyone!

⁵ To find out more, go to www.havenshospices.org.uk and follow the link.

Upcoming Events in Highlands 100

- **June** - Music & Theatre. Our resident young theatre group show off their talents in a special show.
- **July** – Showstoppers. The *Music Man* team will give another of their extravagant performances.
- **August** – Holidays at Home. Our catering and entertainment teams present holiday fun in the Highlands tradition
- **September** – Barn Dance. Do-si-do and strip the willow to your heart's content, to the music of the *Famous Potatoes*.
- **October** – Panto! Your favourite Highlands stars from way back are definitely NOT returning. OH YES THEY ARE!

You'll find full details of each of these events (and everything else) in your monthly copy of the Highlander. To be added to the electronic mailing list, write to andrewghyde@aol.com. Or you can download a copy from www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk or our Facebook page Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church.

Folk who don't use computers can usually pick up a hard copy at the church.

Dining In **Courgette, Asparagus & Goat's Cheese Tart [V]**

If you go to Germany at this time of year you'll notice many of the locals chomping on home grown *spargel*. For the most part they love it. Like us they can buy their favourite veg at any time, but they like to celebrate their local produce, rightly I think, at the local *spargelfest*, until midsummer. If you find yourself overwhelmed by the little fellers, this is a delicious way to use them up.



Ingredients

2 courgettes sliced v thin across
200g asparagus
½ tbsp olive oil
½ tsp sea salt
1 lemon zest only
Ground black pepper

Fresh dill, chopped
1x320g puff-pastry sheet
2 tbsp crème fraîche
100g goat's cheese with
rind, thin sliced

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C fan/200°C fan/gas 6. Mix courgettes & asparagus with the oil, salt, lemon zest, pepper & dill
2. Lay the pastry in a lined roasting tin and spread with the crème fraîche, leaving a 2½ cm border round the edge. Lay on top first the courgette slices (like fish scales) then the cheese and finally the asparagus.
3. Cook for 30 min. Serve hot with salad. Or baked tomatoes.

Serves 4

Poem of the Month

An Evening Walk When Spring is Already Old

Jason Allen-Paisant (1980-)

On the third of June
I re-enter the woods

The trees' souls
have bloomed into canopies

There is volume
not just skeletons

Breeze passes into the placenta
of this womb

There is hiding place
in the trees

and the birds sing differently
the leaves

have become a sea
in my body



Born in Jamaica and educated at the Universities of the West Indies and Oxford, Jason Allen-Paisant is now a professor at Manchester Uni. Since publishing a first collection of poems, *Thinking with Trees*, in 2021) he has now won multiple awards for his work, attracting praise for his 'great imaginative capacity, freshness and technical flair'.

A Day Out

At this time of year the weather is sometimes too nice to stay indoors all day, but not warm enough to sunbathe. The answer may be a day out.

I can recommend both the Horniman Museum and Dulwich Picture Gallery, which may be fitted into a single day and accessed by public transport. Take C2C to West Ham, then the Jubilee 4 stops south to

Canada Water, finally change to the southbound Windrush for an easy signed walk from Forest Hill station.

Highlights include a scary torture chair, and a collection of Benin plaques, brought to you by the globetrotting Horniman tea traders. Best of all is the park, including a butterfly collection and a superb view across London. If the sun is out, bring a picnic. Free apart from the aquarium and butterflies.

From there a 10-minute P4 bus ride can take you to Dulwich Picture Gallery, housing at least 160 paintings. Almost up to the standard of Highlands, you'll see works of Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Hogarth, Rubens, Constable, Poussin and many more. Tickets priced from £1 to £20.

Puzzle of the Month Solution

Well done if you got them all:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. APPR OX IMATE | 7. VER BAT IM |
| 2. MEAD OWL ARK | 8. SI GNAT URE |
| 3. BIL LION AIRE | 9. COW ORKER |
| 4. AF TERN OON | 10. MI CROW AVE |
| 5. BENE VOLE NT | 11. EXE CRAB LE |
| 6. B EEL ZEBUB | 12. CONT RAVEN E |

Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week 10-16 May



Please help in any way you can to promote Christian Aid Week. As just one example, CA helps urban farmers in Nairobi, Kenya so that they can be trained by our partners in pest management, compost production and seed cultivation as well as business skills – helping to

protect their children from hunger and malnutrition.

The sprawling informal settlement of Dagoretti in the SW of Nairobi is home to an estimated ½ million, predominantly in the 10-40 age group. With your help, children growing up in Dagoretti now can find education and eventually throw off the shackles of poverty.

We will be holding a church collection and delivering a few envelopes if folk are willing; also holding a coffee morning.
Jean Edmonds 801517

Alzheimer's To repeat that Andrew and Lesley are fundraising for the Alzheimer's Society. We're running a coffee morning on **Saturday 2 May**. If you can't make that, send us what you would have spent on coffee and cake before **9 May** (or after for that matter). Less tasty than the coffee morning...

Follow this link

www.justgiving.com/page/andrew-hyde-1

Giving is anonymous if you wish.

After that **Highlands in Bloom** is next⁶...

⁶ 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 ⁷ 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Toddlers	Mon 9:30 am to 11:30	Ros: 478631

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

⁷ Every fortnight

Any material for the June edition of *The Highlander* needs to be emailed to andrewghyde@aol.com (or

put a hard copy in the pigeonholes) by 24 May 2026.

Coffee!

Lesley and Andrew
present their
Charity Coffee
Morning
For

Alzheimer's
Society

Cake!

Chat!

Highlands Church
10:00 am to 12:00 noon
Saturday 2nd May
ALL WELCOME

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

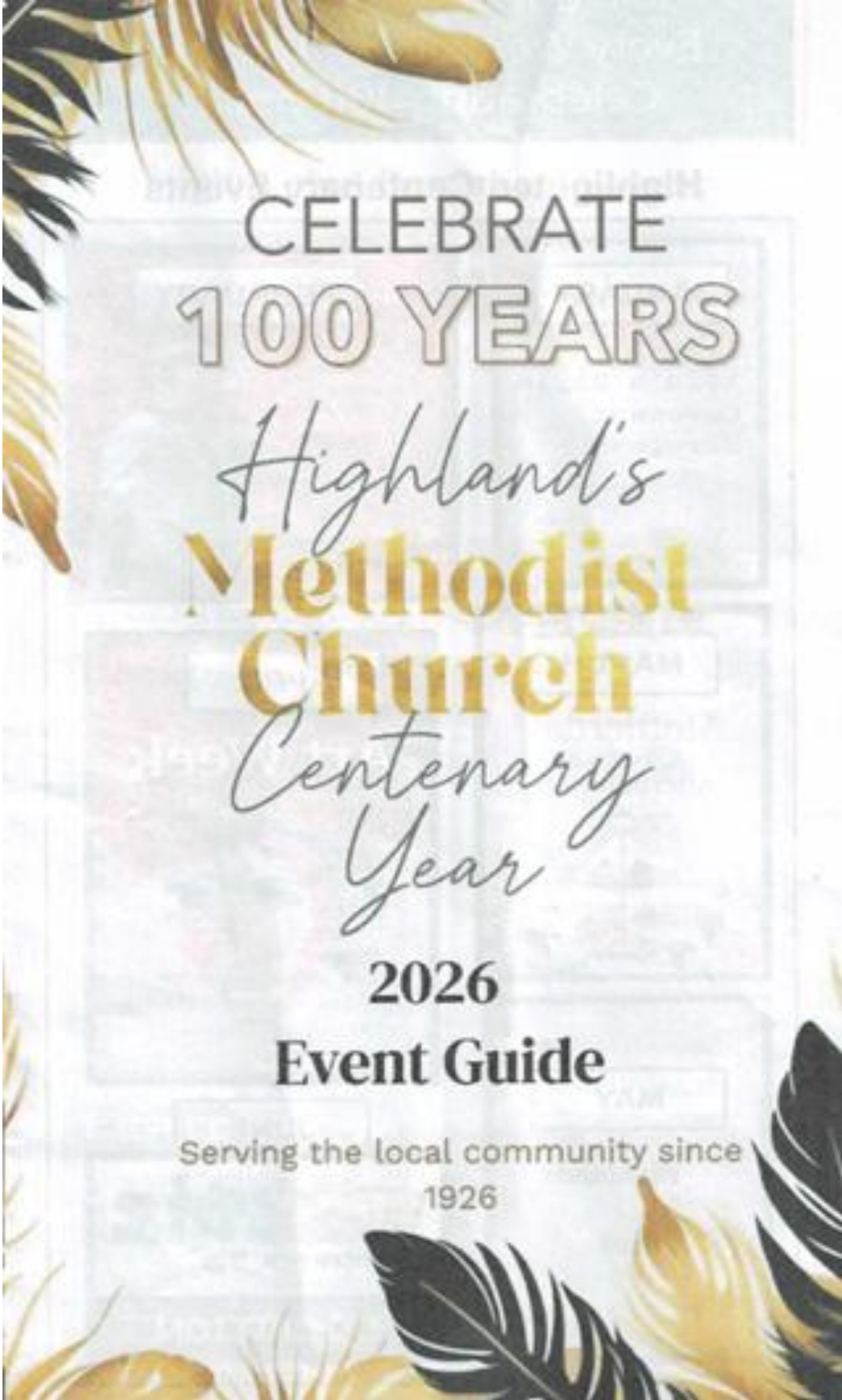
Voting

And while I have your attention – don't forget to cast your vote on **Thursday 7 May between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm**. It's no part of my role to say who you should vote for, but I feel OK with encouraging everyone to take the trouble to vote.



Most people reading this will have a nice convenient Polling Station. It might even be Highlands.

Do check before you leave home. And don't forget your ID!



Celebrating 100 Years of the Highlands Methodist Church

Highlands in Bloom
Flower Festival
2026

"All things bright and beautiful."

Held on 16th & 17th May
OPEN CHURCH

Saturday 10am - 1.30pm

Sunday 12pm - 4pm

(Light Refreshments & Rossi Ice Cream)

Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland Boulevard,
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, S59 3PT
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