

# Belfairs Methodist Church

Where old friends meet  
and strangers feel at home



Issue 239

February 2026

## Minister:

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## Thought for the month

*Christian prayer is the language of those who choose to live for God in the company of Jesus, whatever is happening in their lives and wherever they find themselves.*

*The BRF Book of 100 Prayers*



Our mission is to provide an open, welcoming and accepting, living place of Christian worship and service in our community, in which we seek to serve and follow Jesus Christ.

[www.belfairsmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.belfairsmethodistchurch.org.uk)



At this time of year, for some of us, the deadline for self-assessment tax has come, and gone! Whilst on the Martin Lewis website, [MoneySavingExpert.com] I noticed an article about what HMRC says are some of the most bizarre excuses for late tax returns that they have received over the past decade.

They are:

1. I was up a mountain in Wales, and could not find a post box or get an internet signal.
2. My dog ate my post. (again)
3. My hamster ate my post.
4. I've been cruising round the world in my yacht, and only pick up the post when I'm on dry land.
5. My mother-in-law is a witch and put a curse on me.

We are assured in the article and none of these excuses were upheld by HMRC as legitimate!

But what excuses do *we* sometimes make when it comes to what we should be doing for Jesus?

- ♦ How often we read our Bibles?
- ♦ How often we pray?
- ♦ How often we serve Jesus?
- ♦ How often we show God's love to others?

But making excuses is no new thing! Many biblical characters made excuses when it came to serving God. Moses is a fine example.

His excuses were;

- ♦ Doubts about his ability to lead.
- ♦ His thoughts of unworthiness.
- ♦ His presumed lack of authority.
- ♦ His fear of what people would say
- ♦ and his physical weakness.
- ♦

But in the end Moses allowed God to use him, he came through for God, but *more* importantly, God came through for Moses.

I wonder what God could do through *us* this year if we would only allow Him?

John 12:26 says; *'If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you'll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The Father will honour and reward anyone who serves me.'* [The Message]

May we all pray verse 4 of hymn 353 from Hymns and Psalms:

*Master, speak: and make me ready,  
When thy voice is truly heard,  
With obedience glad and steady  
Still to follow every word.  
I am listening, Lord, for thee;  
Master, speak! O speak to me!*

Every blessing,

*Revd. Steve*

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## Sunday Services February 2026

1st	11.00 a.m.	Mr. Mike Spaul
8th	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Steve Mayo - Holy communion
15th	11.00 a.m.	Mrs. Anne Briant - Parade Service including Girls Brigade re-dedication
22nd	11.00 a.m.	Mrs. Eileen Simmons

## Other February dates for your diary



7th	Coffee Morning - Girls Brigade - Cake Stall
14th	Valentines Day
17th	Shrove Tuesday
18th	Ash Wednesday
26th	A.C.T.I.O.N at 2.00 p.m. - All are welcome.



## **Point of Contact**

Below is shown details of the Sunday Stewards, Communion Stewards, Musician, Flower Rota and coffee/tea stewards relevant for this month.

### **Sunday 1st February**

Sunday Steward - Jan Andrews

Musician a.m. - Sue and Mike Spaul/Midi Box

Coffee/tea stewards Ann Kendall & Sue Spaul

### **Sunday 8th February**

Sunday Steward - Phil Gladman

Musician a.m. - Patrick Dromgoole/Backing tracks

Communion Stewards – Jim Halstead & Dawn Howard

Flowers - Hilary le Marie - remembering her Mum - arranged by Jan

Coffee/tea stewards Mike Spaul & Phil Gladman

### **Sunday 15th February**

Sunday Steward a.m. - Mike Spaul

Musician a.m. - Small band

Coffee/tea stewards Jan Pope & Jackie Heinrich

### **Sunday 22nd February**

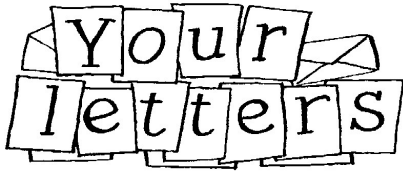
Sunday Steward a.m. - Alan Pace

Musician a.m. - Patrick Dromgoole

Flowers - V A C A N T - arranged by Smitha

Coffee/tea stewards -Sue Spaul & Margaret Bailey

# Letters Page/Church family news



This Lent, take part in Climate Steward's Carbon Fast. Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God. The Carbon Fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation.

Beginning on 5 March, you'll receive a weekly email containing key facts, suggestions for how you could reduce your carbon footprint and a prayer to lead you through this Lenten season. Each week features a different theme designed to help us take climate action in manageable ways that bear witness to a God who has promised to restore all of his creation.

Find out more and sign up at [Carbon Fast for Lent – Climate Stewards](#)

Tina Gowers



Please remember you are free to put your prayer concerns on the board at the back of the church. If it is not for you, please make sure you have the named persons consent .

Please add your name and date to the request on the reverse of the white cards provided which are by the board. These will be removed after two months, but can be updated if necessary (please make sure you re-date the update).

If you have any questions or queries, please speak to Sue.



## **Birthdays**

For all of you who celebrate birthday/anniversaries, or remember loved ones during this month, the following is for you, although of course everyone can read it!

**F**rom death to life may God lead you

**E**ndless be God's blessings upon you

**B**etween you and each person may there be peace

**R**icher may you be through the gifts of God

**U**nderstanding from God's word guide you

**A**nd the good shepherd bless you

**R**aising you up, when you are brought low

**Y**earning for love - may he hold you in his arms.

Ed.

Some of us are approaching 80, some are already there, but for us all, here is  
a poem to celebrate it

**80 YEARS OF WAITING!!**  
**A baby boomers' ode to 8 decades of anticipation!**

**1-10**

The first decade was easy.  
We waited for our food.  
We waited to be told to go  
Or stay, and don't be rude  
We waited to be sent to school  
For arithmetic to gel  
For playtimes, stories, spelling tests  
And waited for the bell.

We played games with each other  
On the beach or in the woods  
We dug in bomb sites, took Virol,  
Wore vests and pixie hoods  
We waited for our friends to call  
We didn't have a phone  
And wandered home when it got dark  
And never seemed alone

We waited for our birthdays  
And when would Christmas come?  
We waited for the holidays  
And mostly life was fun  
We didn't make decisions  
We loved the Coronation.  
And waited for the thrilling day  
That sweets would come off ration!

**10-20**

The second decade came along  
The waiting carried on  
Would we pass the 11+  
Would friendships carry on?  
Would new teachers like us?  
Could we do the work?  
How early should we shave our legs?  
And simple worries lurked.  
We waited as the wars broke out  
Korea, Vietnam  
We waited for a victory  
But peace seemed just a sham  
We waited for a 3<sup>rd</sup> World War  
And followed the advice  
To shelter underneath the stairs  
And bulk bought tea and rice

We waited hopeless, helpless  
For boys to take us out,  
And fell in love with Elvis,  
And the Beatles made us shout  
More waiting for exam results  
And college choices made  
What to wear at interviews  
As pros and cons were made

### 20-30

By decade 3 most of us  
Had flown our homely nests  
To college, university or jobs  
We did our very best  
I personally made my way  
To land locked Derbyshire  
But made a group of lifelong friends  
That's lasted 60 years

Throughout our time we waited  
To find out how to teach  
It never seemed to be made clear  
This goal we need to reach.  
But many other things were learned  
Piaget, Pavlov, Skinner,  
What did they mean we asked ourselves  
While waiting for our dinner.  
During this time there did take place  
A world cup football game  
We've waited ever since for them  
To win the thing again!

Then waiting for job interviews  
This made us rather crankie  
Some people fancied posh Sloane Square  
I ended up in Hackney  
And so to work we sallied forth  
And waited for our pay  
Would it be sufficient to  
Pay rent AND eat each day?

We also waited fearfully  
For Irish bombs to boom  
And waited up all night to see  
Neil Armstrong on the moon

### 30-40

By decade 4 we'd waited  
To see which men we'd meet  
Where was that blonde Adonis  
To sweep us off our feet?  
Well some of us were lucky  
And some of us were not  
And some of us would compromise,  
Put up with what we got!

We waited for bank statements  
And babies to arrive  
And should we move or renovate  
And would these children thrive.  
We waited for promotion  
Or drastically changed course  
Or left the job entirely,  
Or even got divorced!

### 40-50

But suddenly in decade 5  
A calmness overcame.  
We worked and earned and holidayed  
And generally kept sane.  
The wall came down, uneasy peace  
Perhaps no nuclear war  
And still we waited, hoped to see  
A world cup win once more

But no, the waiting came again  
As family worries niggled  
We're split between the old and young.  
Piggies in the middle.  
Our kids were broke, our parents ill  
All causing some despair.  
And we were in the menopause  
But no-one seemed to care!

### 50-60

In decade 6 retirement loomed  
We waited for the news  
Of what our pension pot would be  
To stop work we could choose.

But suddenly there came the crash  
Things were not quite so cool  
We waited for the impact  
The news seemed very cruel.

Our savings were not quite what we  
Had hoped for, sad to say  
But better than some people got  
To keep the wolves at bay.

That piggy in the middle role  
Was getting ever wider  
We wait the next catastrophe  
'cos we're the care provider  
We wait for phone calls, emails, texts  
To gallop to their aid  
And bale them out with money, time,  
Our nerves are somewhat frayed.

And as for us, we wonder why  
We lose things all the time.  
Why did we go upstairs, what for?  
We're searching for a sign.  
We check we've locked the door and car  
Where did we put the keys  
And did we take that vital pill  
Or is that why we wheeze?

#### 60-70

We near the end of decade seven  
Our 3 score years and ten  
The fact we've made it to this stage  
It's quite beyond our ken

But now the waiting's more intense  
As bits begin to fail  
We wait for pills or blood tests and  
Appointments through the mail.  
For eye tests, physio and teeth,  
Replacement hips or knees  
For checks on our cholesterol  
Blood pressure and our pee!

We wait for workmen to arrive  
So many let us down  
And as for wretched call centres  
Who're all in foreign towns.  
We wait on phones for many hours,  
Wasting precious time  
that we don't have at our age To waste it is a crime!  
And then there's new technology  
Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter.  
We wait for some instruction  
We feel we're all a-jitter.

There's constant innovations  
Whatever do they mean  
We're always getting messages  
But cannot see the screen

Our children if we have them  
Still think we're forty five  
We wait in vain for them to see  
We struggle to survive.  
Don't want to be a burden  
Should we consider care?  
And what is Woke? is Trump mad?  
It seems normal is rare

### 70 - 80

Now 80 looms for some of us  
You'd think we'd seen it all,  
Our world has changed beyond belief  
We can't take many more! BUT.....

Just when we thought things might calm down  
Another crisis came  
A virus hit us on the nose  
And didn't play the game  
We weathered a Pandemic  
Wore masks and stayed indoors  
Had jabs galore and washed our hands  
And met in 3s or 4s

We followed all the rules and kept  
Our distance from each other  
While Boris partied, lied to us  
We wondered why we bothered

We knew how we could entertain ourselves for months or years  
We had box sets, and knitting wool, for us it held no fears.  
We did survive, we did come through, we showed the youngsters how  
Our years of waiting practice had helped us you'll allow

We lost our Queen, a dreadful blow Her reign we celebrated  
And welcomed new King Charles the 3<sup>rd</sup> A long time HE had waited

So finally we wait for what we know must come to all  
But Switzerland's not far away. Why not give them a call!  
We could sign up for multi-buy or get a half price deal  
An 8<sup>th</sup> decade in Zurich? It has macabre appeal!



But just a mo, we're not done yet  
I have no hesitation  
We've lived full lives, done lots of good  
We've still anticipation  
Life's still much fun, we join our friends  
For lunches out and trips  
We've got respect, we've earned our stripes  
Pour wisdom from our lips

We're confident, we know our minds  
A lucky generation,  
No great world wars, good education,  
Stable jobs and pensions  
The NHS has been our friend  
As Bevan had intended  
And all our pills are on the house  
As we have all depended

We know what styles suit us  
Don't have to follow tastes  
A mini skirt when we were young  
But now elastic waists!  
Can dye our hair or get false nails  
Have massages and spas  
Have taxis if we need to  
And discount travel pass

For nearly 80 years we've lived  
With huge anticipation  
We baby boomers, rock and rollers  
Full of imagination  
We've touched the lives of thousands  
Enjoyed many occasions  
And made a difference good or bad  
Life's really been amazing.

Anthea Meek



# **ORGAN CONCERT**

**with**

**DAVID STANLEY**

**And**

**SPECIAL GUESTS**

**Benfleet Methodist Church**

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February**

**3:00pm**

**Supporting the Musicman project  
to perform their Broadway Dream**

**Tickets £10 or at the door**

**For tickets call 07402868667**

**Refreshments available**



**Southend & Leigh Circuit invites you  
to our**



**Wholeness &  
Wellbeing  
Services  
2026**

**28th January**  
Zoom

**22nd April**  
Benfleet Methodist  
Church

**24th June**  
Benfleet Methodist  
Church

All dates are on Wednesdays and services begin at 7:45pm

For more details contact [southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com](mailto:southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com)



## Foodbank Project Manager – Southend Foodbank

**Location:** Southend-on-Sea

**Hours:** 20 hours per week Flexible (includes occasional evenings/weekends)

**Contract:** Permanent

**Salary:** £29,250 pro rata for 20 hours



Southend Foodbank is seeking an experienced and compassionate **Foodbank Project manager** to lead the operational, strategic and community-facing work of our charity. As part of the Trussell network and supported by local churches, we provide emergency food and support to people in crisis. This role is central to ensuring our services run smoothly, safely and with dignity for every guest.

### Key Responsibilities

#### Leadership & Governance

- Report to the Board of Trustees quarterly.
- Provide updates on significant events, risks or issues.
- Prepare agendas and reports for trustee meetings.

#### Operations & Compliance

- Ensure warehouse and distribution centres meet Trussell standards and statutory requirements.
- Monitor key data indicators and maintain accurate records.
- Keep policies up to date and submit the annual Charity Commission report.

#### Communications & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build strong relationships with referral agencies, churches, schools and community groups.
- Host events for key partners and develop a team of charity ambassadors.
- Oversee the annual communications plan and approve press releases/social media content.
- Maintain a regular presence across distribution centres and the warehouse.

#### Volunteer & Staff Management

- Support and oversee paid staff and key volunteers.
- Work with the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure adequate staffing and training.
- Lead regular staff and management team meetings.

#### Development & Innovation

- Identify opportunities for new projects, partnerships and distribution centre improvements.
- Conduct annual assessments of distribution centres and research best practice across the network.

#### Finance & Fundraising

Work with community fundraiser, trustees and volunteers to ensure sustainable funding.

## Person Specification

### Essential Skills & Experience

- Experience managing people and projects.
- Experience working or volunteering in a volunteer-led organisation.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Confident using email, word processing and online systems.
- Ability to work independently and manage competing priorities.
- Comfortable interpreting statistical data.
- Access to own transport.
- 

### Personal Qualities

- Empathy and the ability to work with people facing disadvantage or exclusion.
- Integrity, reliability and alignment with the foodbank's values.
- Comfortable engaging with churches and faith-based partners.
- Flexible and adaptable approach to work.

### How to Apply

If you are passionate about supporting people in crisis and have the leadership skills to guide a growing community charity, we would love to hear from you. Send a CV and covering letter to [natasha@southend.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:natasha@southend.foodbank.org.uk) by the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. Interviews on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

**L** et your heart be filled with God's love

**E** very morning in your waking

**N** ativity child, crucified man, risen Lord

**T** o God who gave you life, be thanks and praise



Forget who hurt you yesterday, but don't forget those who love you everyday. Forget the past that makes you cry and focus on the present that makes you smile. Forget the pain, but never the lessons you gained.

Don't leave anything for later. Later, the coffee gets cold. Later, you lose interest. Later, the day turns to night. Later, people grow up. Later, people grow old. Later, life goes by. Later, you regret not doing something ..... when you had the chance.

Accept what is.  
Let go of what was,  
And have faith in what will be.

You come from dust and you will return to dust. That's why I don't dust, it could be someone I know.

One day a man was crossing a bridge in life but was scared so he turned and asked God, "Can I hold your hand so I may not fall?" God said, "No, my child, I will hold your hand". He asked "What's the difference?" God replied, "If you hold my hand and something happens, you might let go but if I hold your hand, no matter what happens, I will never let you go". May the Lord hold your hand tightly in all your ways.

Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start now and make a brand new ending.

Be grateful for having a place to live, for having good food to eat, for having people in your life who care, for having your dreams, for having faith and trust, for having hope and values. Life is beautiful when you are grateful.

To your second child.

Your second child is your inner child you never got to be. They are funny, free spirited, strong, and full of life. They are your biggest cheerleader, and as much as they drive you crazy, they make you smile on your darkest days.

BELFAIRS METHODIST CHURCH Eastwood Road North, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

## **REGULAR WEEKLY MEETINGS :**

**SUNDAY SERVICES** 11.00 a.m. (6.30 p.m. as announced)

Family Crafternoon 3.00 p.m.-4.30 p.m. (Dates as announced)

**MONDAY**  
6.00 p.m. Boys' Brigade Anchor Boys  
6.00 p.m. Boys' Brigade Junior Section  
7.30 p.m. Boys' Brigade Company Section

**TUESDAY** 8.00 p.m. Badminton Club

**WEDNESDAY**  
10.00 a.m. Parent & Toddlers  
5.30 p.m. Girls' Brigade Explorers & Juniors  
7.00 p.m. Girls' Brigade Seniors & Brigaders

**THURSDAY**

**FRIDAY**

**SATURDAY** 10.00 a.m. 'Open House' Coffee Morning - first Saturday of the month

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Thirsty For?? 7.00 p.m. 2nd Thursday  
A.C.T.I.O.N 2.00 p.m. 4th Thursday

### **March newsletter:**

Articles are welcomed at any time, but the deadline for last minute items is **15th February 2026.**

Articles can be e-mailed to [sue.spauill@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sue.spauill@hotmail.co.uk) or placed in the newsletter box in the front foyer. Thank you