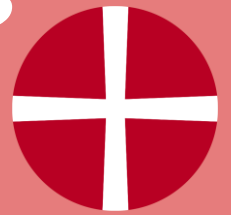


# *Southend & Leigh* CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER



Summer Edition 2025

*Third Quarter*

## *Contents*

- Celebrations
- Circuit Calendar
- Church Activities
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## Welcome to our Circuit

We are a group of 15 Methodist Church fellowships, including a Zimbabwean fellowship, on 16 sites in the southeast corner of Essex. Our Circuit also incorporates 'Westerley', a Christian care home.

Our churches provide traditional services alongside an increasing number of contemporary and family-friendly expressions of worship.

We have a growing sense of service and mission to our communities, with a desire to love our Lord, and our neighbours.



## **FOLLOW / CONTACT US**



[Southend and Leigh Circuit Facebook Page](#)

[Southend and Leigh Circuit Website](#)

[Southend and Leigh Circuit Instagram](#)



# Message from a Community Outreach Enabler

*Dear Friends,*

I have been in post as a Community Outreach Enabler at Rayleigh Methodist Church since August 2023. My role is to try and engage with the community, as well as the groups that use our building, including the Uniformed Organisations (Scouts and Guides). A particular focus is to engage with young people and families.

There were already lots of great things going on at the church when I arrived – for example our two toddler groups, which continue to run and allow us to connect with people who wouldn't normally come to church. We wanted to increase the number of opportunities we had to invite the community into the building, whether it was for something faith related or not, in order to start to build relationships with people, show them something of God's love and hopefully invite them to something else in the future.

One initial priority was to get our website up-to-date, and thanks to students from Corporate Business Concept Academy, we managed to create a whole new website, making it much easier for people to see what is going on. Alongside this, we have been posting to Facebook more regularly and using adverts to create awareness of our events, which we've noticed has brought new people through the door. *(I must here give a shout-out to Lolu for all her work on the website and social media!)*

The events we've been running include Christmas Quizzes, a Bazaar, two Oddments Theatre productions, Parade Services and a Summer Holiday Club with our local URC church. We've also put on Prayer Stations during Holy Week, held three more Alpha courses and started a Drama Club for primary school children.

Messy Church was something already running once a month at RMC and is always a lot of fun. Last year we did a special October Messy Church as a light party, which brought along some new faces, some of whom have visited us again since. Last month, our new Drama Club came and performed the Bible story during our worship section which was really special and brought a few of them to church for the first time.



*Dan in the Den Show  
(by Oddments Theatre)*



*'Over and under' at our Father's Day Parade*

Our parade services have been a particular focus of my work. We have found new ways of re-energising our parades and including the children, be it through drama, games, puppets, showing crafts that the groups have made in their weekly sessions, or most recently having tabletop games, motorbikes and a BBQ for Father's Day. We have had some really positive feedback from leaders and parents, although the time of a Sunday morning service continues to be difficult for a lot of families.

Another area of my work has been engaging with schools. I have lead lessons in a couple of primary schools, and we regularly host one school's singing concerts in our church. I also now visit a secondary school on a weekly basis with Bar'n'bus.

There's a lot going on! It's all a huge team effort, but what an awesome team I have around me at RMC and in Rayleigh. Everyone does such a lot, and I want to thank them all for their incredible dedication, hard work and wonderful encouragement.

I'm excited for the future - with a church panto planned for this year, along with a choir concert and talks of creating a youth group between the churches in Rayleigh. I'm excited to get out in our community more and I'm excited about the plans God might have that I don't even know about yet! Praise be to Him for all that has and is happening at RMC; may he take the seeds we are planting and grow them into a wonderful harvest!

**Jo Lee**  
Community Outreach Enabler, Rayleigh Methodist Church



*Campfire at Messy Church  
Light Party*



*Team BBQ at our recent Father's  
Day Parade*





# Circuit Calendar 2025

## JULY

Wed 2nd – Worship Academy, 7pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sat 5th – Circuit Prayer Meeting, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> – Sun 13<sup>th</sup> - The Fishermen's Chapel is one of the venues of the Leigh Art Trail. The Chapel will be open all week for art fans to visit and view the art.

Wed 9th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Sun 13th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Mon 14th – CLT, 7.30pm, Highlands Methodist Church

Sun 20th – 2-4pm Community Karaoke (this event precedes the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday service at 4pm). People are welcome to join us just for the Karaoke or stay on for supper and modern family worship.

## AUGUST

Sat 2nd – Circuit Prayer Meeting, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Sun 10th – The Gospel Service is being held outside on The Wharf in Old Leigh. Please bring a flask and chair, 7.30pm

## SEPTEMBER

Wed 3rd – CLT, 7.30pm, Highlands Methodist Church

Sat 6th – Circuit Prayer Meeting, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Tue 9th – Circuit Meeting, 7.30pm, Rayleigh Methodist Church

Wed 10th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Sat 13th – BEH Synod, 10am-3pm, Belfairs Academy

Sun 14th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

Mon 15th – Local Preachers Meeting, 7.30pm, Hadleigh Methodist Church

## OCTOBER

Wed 1st – Worship Academy, 7pm, Benfleet Methodist Church

Sat 4th – Circuit Prayer Meeting, 8.30am, Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

Wed 8th – Minister's Staff Meeting, 2pm

Sun 12th – Gospel Vespers 7pm for 7.30pm, The Fisherman's Chapel

## Circuit Services

Lectio Divina on Zoom (details available from Circuit Office)

– Wednesdays 7.30pm-8.15pm with Rev Heather and Clive Johnson

All welcome. Each session is stand alone.



# Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

## BELFAIRS METHODIST CHURCH

Boys Brigade - Mondays, Anchor 5:30pm, Junior 6:30pm, Company 7:30pm  
Badminton - Tuesdays, 8pm  
Parent & Toddlers - Wednesdays, 10am  
Girls Brigade - Wednesdays, Explorers & Juniors 5:30pm, Seniors & Brigaders 7pm  
Thirsty For? (Café Worship) - second Thursday of the month, 7pm  
A.C.T.I.O.N. (Fellowship) - fourth Thursday of the month, 2pm



## BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH

Bible Study - Thursdays, 3.30pm  
Wesley Art Group - Mondays, 7.30pm in Wesley Hall  
Light Worship - third Tuesday of the month, 12noon  
Sunday Lunch - second Sunday of the month, 12.30pm (book in advance with John Stokes at [johnstokes660@yahoo.com](mailto:johnstokes660@yahoo.com))  
Coffee Mornings - Monday-Saturday, 10am to 12 noon (with a Beading Craft session on Wednesdays)  
Ladies' Thursday Club - first Thursday of the month, 7.45pm  
Women's Fellowship - first and third Wednesdays of the month, 2.30pm  
Wives' Club - Tuesdays, 1.45pm  
Benfleet Hope Group - Mondays, 10am-2pm  
Messy Church - third Saturday of the month, 3.30pm-5.30pm  
Little Bunnies (Mother & Toddler group) - Mondays, 9.30am-11.30am  
Fusion Children Groups - Fridays, ages 5-11 yrs 5.30pm-7pm & 11+ yrs 7pm-8.30pm



## CANVEY ISLAND METHODIST CHURCH

Bible Study - Tuesdays, 8pm  
Wives Club - Thursdays, 2pm  
Coffee Morning - Wednesdays, 10.30am-12noon  
Coffee Morning - Saturdays, 10.30am-12noon  
Wednesday Fellowship - first two Wednesdays of the month, 2.30pm  
Midweek Communion - third Wednesday of the month, 10am



## CHALKWELL PARK METHODIST CHURCH

Ladies Monday Club - 2nd & 4th Mondays (except BH & August), 2-4pm  
Caterpillars Baby & Toddler group - Wednesdays, sch. term only, 9.30am-11.30am  
Coffee Morning - 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month, 10am-12noon  
Crafty Friday (for adults) - 2nd & 4th Fridays, sch. term only, 10am-12noon



# Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

## HIGHLANDS METHODIST CHURCH

Coffee Morning - Saturdays, 10.00am-12noon

Lunch Club - second Tuesday of the month, 12noon (registration essential)

Chatter (Fellowship Group) - Tuesdays, 10am-12noon

Hobbies - first and third Thursdays of the month, 10am-12noon

Prayer Meeting on Zoom - Tuesdays, 9am-10am (4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month 9.15am in church)

Toddlers - Mondays, 9.30am-11.30am (term time only)

Bible Study - 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 2pm in the Snug

House Group - 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month, 7.30pm in the Snug

Classic Film afternoon with ice-cream - Last Friday of every month, 2-4pm



## ROCHFORD METHODIST CHURCH

Cake and Kindness (Tea and homemade cakes) - Mondays, 2pm-3.30pm

Prayer time on Zoom - Mondays, 7pm

Bible Studies on Zoom - Tuesdays, 7.30pm

Housegroup - usually third Wednesday of the month, 8pm

'Happy Cup' Breakfast Club for children under 5 and carers - Fridays (term-time), 9.30am



## THORPE BAY METHODIST CHURCH

Mid-week Communion - third Wednesday of the month, 10am

The Tuesday Café - first & third Wednesday, 2-4pm

CrackerJacks - first Monday of the month, 2-3.30pm



## THUNDERSLEY METHODIST CHURCH

Coffee Morning - Wednesdays (term-time), 9am-12noon

Coffee Morning - second Saturday of the month, 10am-12noon

Afternoon Club - Tuesday fortnightly, 2.30pm



## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (Great Wakering)

'Brew, Chew, Renew' (Bible Study with refreshments) - Fortnightly on Monday, 10.30am

Funtime Toddlers - Wednesdays & Thursdays (except 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs of the month) 9.30-11.30am (term time)

Home Group - Tuesdays, 7.30pm (contact [office@umcsouthend.org.uk](mailto:office@umcsouthend.org.uk))



# Churches Mid-Week Activities / Events

## THE FISHERMEN'S CHAPEL

Coffee Morning - Wednesdays, 10.30-12.30pm. In August we meet at the same time at the Woodland Centre in Belfairs woods.

Gospel Choir Rehearsals (contact Rev Heather 07879 232231)

Regular Music and Arts Events - please visit website: [www.fishermenschapel.org.uk](http://www.fishermenschapel.org.uk)

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month at 7.30pm the service content has changed from being a creative service to a reflective Taizé service.



## RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH

Sunbeams Baby & Toddler Group - Mondays (term time), 1.15pm to 2.45pm (under 5 £2+50p parents/carers)

Townswomen Guild (Speaker, tea & cake) - Last Monday of the month, 10am to 12pm

Memory Worship (30mins service followed by Coffee & Craft) - First Tuesday of the month, 2pm

Free Drama Group Years 2 to 5 - Tuesdays (term time), 4pm to 5pm

Ladies Club (informal and fun All age tea, biscuit, speakers, outings, meals) - Wednesdays, 1.45pm to 3.15pm

Wesley Guild (Everyone welcome any age Women and Men varied program of Devotional, Christian Service, Cultural and Musical, Social events) - Thursdays, 2pm

Toys & Toast (Baby & Toddler) - Fridays (term time), 9.30am to 11am (£3 last 30 minutes is singing)

Trefoil Guild - Third Friday of the month (exc. Bank Hols), 1.30pm to 3.30pm (all 18+)

Coffee Morning - Third Sat of the month, 10am to 12pm

(each month in aid of community / church projects)

Messy Church - Last Sunday of the month except August and December, 4pm to 6pm



Hello Friend,

We are so excited to tell you about all the community activities taking place at Wesley and to invite you to join us for fun activities, fellowship, friendship and community! We look forward to welcoming you.

Leigh Wesley Methodist Church

Wesley **Methodist** Church

### THE SANCTUARY CAFÉ

FRIDAYS 10AM-12PM

SATURDAYS 10AM-1PM

Join us for hot drinks, cake and a good chat in a safe space. A play area, buggy park and quiet space for prayer/reflection are available.

### FUSION YOUTH & KIDS

2ND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

(TERM TIME ONLY)

6PM-7.30PM

Youth Club for children in school years 1 to 6. £1.50 entrance, Xbox's, craft, sports, circus skills, music, food and so much more!

### HOUSE GROUPS

A RANGE OF MIDWEEK MEETINGS

DAYTIME AND EVENING

Explore faith and Christianity in these informal groups.

### TODDLER GROUP

WEDNESDAYS

10AM-12PM

Playgroup for ages 0-4 and their parents/carers (older siblings welcome in school holidays). Playtime, storytime, parachute, crafts. £2 entry and free tea/coffee and homemade cake.

### WESLEY THEATRE GROUP

MONDAYS

8PM

Welcoming all who love acting and/or working backstage.

### MUSIC GROUP

SUNDAYS

DURING WORSHIP

Singers and musicians of all abilities welcome!

### TALKING POETRY

WEDNESDAYS (FORTNIGHTLY)

2.30PM

Choose, read & discuss a different poet or subject each session.

Please get in touch or see our website for further details (including some restart dates) & details of activities run by our hirers.

LEIGH WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH IS AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH  
AND DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



# Circuit Prayer Diary July-September

*On the following Sundays and during the week  
we ask you to pray for:*

## JULY

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 27 – Rev Zena Smith and family  
Prayer for Sunday 6th – Church Council Secretaries  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 28 – Rochford Methodist Church  
Prayer for Sunday 13th – Circuit Stewards  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 29 – Havens Hospices  
Prayer for Sunday 20th – The Experience Project, its staff and volunteers  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 30 – Church Councils and Committees  
Prayer for Sunday 27th – Rochford Section



## AUGUST

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 31 – Supernumeraries  
Prayer for Sunday 3rd – Highlands Methodist Church  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 32 – The Fishermen's Chapel  
Prayer for Sunday 10th – Mid-week Communions  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 33 – Mission Enablers and Evangelists  
Prayer for Sunday 17th – Rev Margaret Deans and family  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 34 – Castle Point Council, Councillors and Leaders  
Prayer for Sunday 24th – MIST Methodist Independent Schools Trust  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 35 – Thorpe Bay Methodist Church  
Prayer for Sunday 31st – Mission Planning Groups



## SEPTEMBER

Mid-Week Prayer of Week 36 – President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference  
Prayer for Sunday 7th – Circuit Meeting  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 37 – Circuit, Synod and District Representatives  
Prayer for Sunday 14th – Westerley Christian Care Home  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 38 – Local Preachers  
Prayer for Sunday 21st – For the Harvest and Farmers  
Mid-Week Prayer of Week 39 – Thundersley Methodist Church  
Prayer for Sunday 28th – Parade Services and Leaders of Uniformed Organisations





# Thank you from Rev Heather Simmons

Dear Southend and Leigh Circuit Family,

Thank you so much for all the love and support I have received from when I first mentioned to Rev'd Pete that I felt a call to ministry, to today, when I am fully ordained.

It has been a journey of seven years – first, my Local Preacher training, which was invaluable for beginning college again as a “mature” student! Then, a year of candidating and putting together a portfolio, shadowing ministers, and presenting at various panels in the District and at Connexional level. I took the route of 3 years at Queens Theological College part-time for academic theological training and attained my practical experience in the Chelmsford Circuit. Finally, I completed my two years' probation.

During this time there has been a great deal of work that has gone on behind the scenes to discern my calling and ability to fulfil this role. I have had many people give up their time to come to my services and meetings, all of which required multiple form-filling. I have also had lay and ordained friends offer their time and wisdom in guiding me through my many 'firsts' and uncertainties.

Both my Welcome Service and Testimony Service (with Rev'd Agnes) were joyful and confirming and attended by so many dear friends.

To be called to this role, to serve God, and you all, is an honour and a privilege. I want to thank you with all my heart for everything you have done and continue to do. God bless you brothers and sisters in Christ.

With love

Heather x (Rev Hev!)



*Testimony Service at Rayleigh Methodist Church*

**UMC**  
**Crafty Easter 2025**  
**5<sup>th</sup> April 2025**



Resources for decorating an Easter hat ready for the Hat Parade at 3.45pm!  
(see the results above)



About 50 young people of all ages came with their Adults and there was a real buzz in the room as the young people moved around the activities.

The afternoon was well appreciated with people coming from Barling, Thorpe Bay, Shoebury as well as Great Wakering.

We provided scrummy cakes and drinks and people kindly donated towards the Refreshments.



Held from 2pm – 4pm on Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup>

UMC hosted our 'no charge' Easter Activities afternoon, with 11 activities including jeweled polystyrene eggs, stone decorating, scratch art Bookmarks, Sticky spot crosses, Easter card making, Iced Biscuits, and decorating their 'Freebie Bag' which was filled at the end with an Easter comic, pencils, chocolate lolly, free crisps and an Easter newspaper for their accompanying adults!



People kindly donated Easter Eggs for the Shoebury Ark Project  
A BIG THANKS to all who helped on the day. WELL DONE!  
Next one?.... Christmas!



# Chalkwell Park 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition

At Chalkwell Park Methodist, for our Church Anniversary weekend we had an exhibition on the theme 'Gift of Colour' with organisations and individual members contributing some form of craft / photos. One of the exhibits consisted of photos. Cards had also been printed with their outlines for people to colour. As people were chatting over refreshments, you could see them colouring or putting in jigsaw pieces in one of the colourful jigsaws that had also been put out. A lovely social occasion.



Craft group marbled some stones and painted shells



Cross-stitch embroidery



Jill, our blind lady decided to exhibit the buttons she uses to determine colour for clothes, towels, knitting wool etc. Each shaped button represents a colour E.g. Red is a cross, black is a square, orange is an octagon. These buttons have been the best help to her as a blind person. As she was born with sight, she can still remember colours whilst her friend Peter was born blind and has no concept of colour.

'When you can see, you take colour for granted'



**Saturday 13th September 2025, 10am-3pm**

**BEH District**  
**(Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire)**  
**Representative Autumn Synod**

**Venue - Belfairs Academy**  
**Highlands Boulevard, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3TG**



**Sandown Park, Surrey 15-16 Oct 2025**



The Circuit Office can help churches with their registration as an Eco Church with A Rocha and their applications for Eco Awards, as part of our environmental mission toward net zero. Please contact us for support via [southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com](mailto:southendandleighcircuit@gmail.com)



# The Experience Project

## Activities and Events



Highlights from our Easter Celebration 2025,  
and article in the local newspaper



Community Pop-Up and Cake Selections



Follow / Contact Us

[The Whittingham Experience Project Facebook](#)

[The Whittingham Experience Project Website](#)



**Southend & Leigh Methodist Circuit**

**Quiet Day 10am - 2pm**

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025**

**Hadleigh Methodist Church**

**Theme: "In the Stillness"**

Explore what  
'Stillness'  
is for you



Lots of  
resources  
will be available  
to use

Come and listen out  
for God's voice  
for you!



'Be still and know  
that I am God'  
Psalm 46:10

Worship

Quiet places  
to pray and reflect

A time to pause  
in our busy lives

28 people came to take time out from busy lives to find a time of Stillness and Calm during our Quiet Day at Hadleigh Methodist Church on the hottest day of the year so far!



There were 2 Meditation slots in the Fellowship Room led by Rev'd Heather and Deacon Sarah which were greatly appreciated and inspirational allowing people to focus on a scripture passage and hear God's voice for them in the stillness and calm of a quiet space.



Mike Spaul led our Opening & Closing Worship times and Anne Briant set the theme for the Day suggesting ways to engage with the resources, whilst allowing time to become aware of God's voice guiding their focus.



There were resources to engage with in the Church, the Cruess Hall with 'Help yourself Refreshments', the Youth Hall and the Fellowship Room.



The resources available ranged from: Prayer/ reflective tables, Collage, Paint, Chalks, Reflecting on Art pieces, Bookmark/Card making, Prayer Umbrellas, Creative writing...and more, even Pond creating! (see below)





A rainbow selection of paper offcuts for collage use, were available in the Youth Hall, along with Material and Felt to stick or sew to create an image.



The variety of resources enabled people to find what resonated most for them and to challenge themselves to venture into using resources that they may not have previously considered.



4 Restful scenes to reflect on to encourage people to remember places where they have found peace and stillness.

A variety of Books were on offer to browse through for inspiration.



Prayer Umbrellas – now that's something different!

Thank You to...

- Hadleigh Methodist for hosting the event
- Anne & Bob for setting up the day
- Mike for leading our Worship Slots
- Deacon Sarah & Rev'd Heather for the Meditations
- Everyone who attended the day
- Members of Hadleigh Church who helped during the day and to tidy away at the end of the event.

A day where Peace and Stillness could be felt as People heard God's voice for them in their lives.

When is the next one? We wait in anticipation!

# Worship Academy 2025-2026

## Season 13

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH EXCEPT AUGUST,  
SEPTEMBER & JANUARY  
BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH SS7 5LH

7 PM FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

8 PM WORSHIP & LEARNING

### Autumn

1st October – Language in Worship  
HEATHER SIMMONS

5th November – Activities in Worship  
SUE HOCKETT, STEVE HOCKETT & ANNE BRIANT

3rd December – Planning a Lectionary Service  
RICHARD ARMIGER

### Spring

4th February – Prayer & Healing  
BOB BRIANT

4th March – Poetry & Drama in Worship  
ANNA TURNER

1st April – Planning a Lectionary Service  
PETER MOORHOUSE

### Winter

6th May – All Age Worship | Senses in Worship  
COLIN AND CATHY TUTNER

3rd June – Small Group Devotions  
MAUREEN SPINKS

1st July – Food, Fellowship, Feedback, a new approach  
STAFF TEAM