

The Highlander

December 2016

“For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2 : 11



Sunday Worship in December 2016

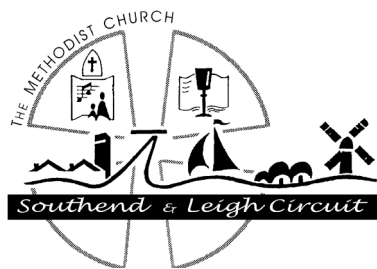
4th Advent 2	9.30	Breakfast Fellowship
	10.30	Joint Service of Holy Communion with Wesley Church - Rev Julia Monaghan
11th Advent 3	10.30	Parade and Toy Gift Service - Worship Leaders
18th Advent 4	10.30	Holy Communion - Rev Julia Monaghan
	4.00	Carol Service by Candlelight - Rev Julia Monaghan
25th	10.30	Christmas Morning Worship - Kathy McCullough

“S Club” meets at 10.30 am on Sundays

No. 821 Vol. LXVXIV



Come in and FaceTime with Jesus



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

Minister	Rev. Julia Monaghan	483827
Secretary to Church Council	Patrick Smith	557702
Church Stewards	Lesley/Andrew Hyde	473111
	Jean/Frank Edmonds	525250
	Steve Jones	553898
	Kathy McCullough	714528
Worship Leaders	Jennifer Courtenay	556140
	Frank Edmonds	525250
Church Treasurer	Janet Watson	555702
Property Co-ordinator	Anne Lane	01268 565644
	e-mail: annelane8@btinternet.com	
S Club Leaders	Jean Edmonds	525250
	Ros Bryant	478631
Pastoral Co-ordinator	Maureen Kelly	556152
Church Flowers	Jean Burgess	556278
Lettings/Use of Premises	Les Davis	558381
Mission Enabler for Older Persons	Julie Peek	479804
Website :	www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk	

All items for the **January 2017** issue of *The Highlander* should be handed in writing to

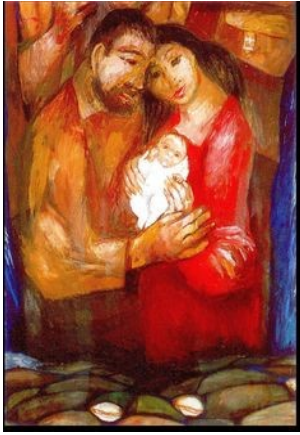
Frank Edmonds (or put in the "E" section of the pigeon box in Jubilee Room) latest 10.30 a.m.

Sunday 11th December 2016. Preferably, items may be emailed to frank66thecroft@sky.com

The *Highlander* will be ready for distribution on **Sunday 18th December 2016.**



A Message from your Minister



JOSEPH

Man of Faith

Looking a bit care worn

I have just come down from the manse loft after retrieving the Nativity Set and two thoughts occur to me. The first is, what a tip it is up there and how Sam and I need to get our act together and do some sorting out. The second is, that Joseph needs a polish, clean and his paint touched up – he's looking a bit care worn!

Two of the Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, relay the story of Jesus' birth. Matthew, a Jew, writing for Jewish converts points to Jesus as Messiah and King, the fulfilment of God's promises through the old testament, from Abraham to David. While Luke, the doctor and gentile, emphasises that the good news is for all people everywhere, for every race and nation. In pulling his story together, Matthew writes from Joseph's stand point, while Luke concentrates on the experience of Mary.

As this Christmas, the bible readings set by the wider church are from Matthew's gospel, I thought it would be good to take a few moments to ponder 'care worn' Joseph and consider what a man of faith he was.

So here is Joseph, chosen by God to be head of this Holy Family. He belongs to the 'House of David' and, in Jewish law, any adoptive son legally belongs to his adoptive father's line of descent. He is an ordinary man, working with his hands as a carpenter. He is described in scripture as a '*man of honour*,' (Matthew 1:), a quality borne out by his compassionate response to Mary on hearing the news of her pregnancy. He chooses to quietly dismiss her, rather than have her face being stoned, as was the law, outlined in Deuteronomy 22. Having got his head around the pregnancy, he is told in a dream that Mary has conceived by the Holy Spirit; that she will give birth to a son; and '*you*,' will call him Jesus, meaning *God saves*. No wonder our Joseph is looking a bit care worn.

Let's take a moment to think about the impact of this on Joseph. In light of the full gospel message, we are able to relate to God through Jesus, our friend, shepherd, suffering servant and King. Joseph, however, had no such experience. For him, God was Yahweh, Adonai, El – Shaddai, the Lord; so holy he couldn't be named. Hence when Moses encountered him, as a vision of holiness in Exodus, his instinct was to fall on his knees and cover his face. His initial reaction was, 'not me, I'm not worthy, no one will believe me.'

It seems to me that Joseph by contrast, accepts. He doesn't understand, but he believes in God's power. It's as simple as that. He believes that almighty God has chosen him to be the husband of Mary; and father to her son. Both his and Moses' responses to God can be food for thought for us today. We can pray for a deeper understanding of the holiness of God, so that we can spiritually fall on our knees, like Moses in wonder at who God is. But at the same time, if we believe like Joseph and surrender to God, there is no limit to what God can achieve in our own very ordinary lives.

Prayer

God of all hope and all joy,
 Open our hearts in welcome,
 That Your Son Jesus Christ at his coming
 May find in us a dwelling prepared for himself;
 Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 One God now and forever.
(New Zealand Prayer Book)

Wishing you all the joy and wonder of the Christ child.

Rev Julia November 2016



Christmas at Highlands



Parade and Toy Service Sunday 11th December 10.30 am

Worship Leaders

Carol Service Sunday 18th December 4.00 pm

Rev Julia Monaghan

Christingle Service Saturday 24th December 5.30 pm

Rev Julia Monaghan

Midnight Communion Saturday 24th December at 11.15 **at Belfairs**

Rev Julia Monaghan

Christmas Morning Sunday 25th December at 10.30 am

Kathy McCullough.





The message for our home based congregations in Leigh

Christmas Greetings to our home based congregations spanning across the 3 Leigh churches. If you are unable to leave your home this Christmas to join the festivities in our church buildings, this message is directly for you. How are you? Have you put your Christmas tree up yet and are you looking forward to the coming of Jesus with a hopeful heart? Well to spur you on your way, here are a few verses of Psalm 96, the inspirational *'song of praise,'* set for Christmas Eve, along with a few of my thoughts on these verses. So make a coffee, find a mince pie and know this is directly for you.

Psalm 96: 10-13

10. *Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."*
11. *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;*
12. *let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy*
13. *before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.*

This beautiful enthronement psalm sings a new song to the God above all gods, calling all who hear it, to declare God's glory and proclaim God's salvation. The psalmist who sings this song, calls upon Israel's history and remembers the Song of Miriam, as she danced with tambourines celebrating the deliverance from death to new life, after crossing the Red Sea.

The psalmist goes on to evoke creation, reminding us that as we sing this song, we do so in a chorus that includes the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that fills it, the trees of the forest, as well as all the families of the earth. The overwhelming good news in verse 10, is that the stability of the world is a done deal - *"it shall never be moved,"* says the psalmist. The Lord of this psalm is the Lord of all, so there can be no more warring among the nations about whose truth or rightness shall reign on earth.

P.T.O.

I also note that the verbs in this psalm are often in the future tense. The world *will* never be moved; he *is coming* to Judge the people with equity. When this happens all the trees of the field “*will sing* for joy”. It’s like the good news of salvation is anticipated into the future, as if that might be the only place where it might be believable!

When you listen to your wireless; watch the TV and read your newspaper, you may feel that the world is in pretty rough shape and that perhaps proclaiming hope in the future is always a safer bet than encouraging trust in the present. But we can have little faith in the future if we can’t find the seeds of hope in today. And in this season of hopefulness, I’m not going to let the newspapers have the last word that war and disaster and hate are the only stories out there to be heard. There are other stories to be told too, where the gospel of hope and kindness and courage and stability break into the everyday. Where people are looking out for one another, even at risk of their own life; where courage and bravery are found in unexpected places and where unexpected determination and strength are found where it seemed impossible.

If we listen hard, we find other stories that should be honoured and heard. So tonight on the evening news, I listened to the tremendous courage of MP Jo Cox, who, when assaulted by her assailant so brutally outside her office, was heard to call to work colleagues to get back inside, that they might be protected from harm. Or, 4 year old Suzie McCash from Tynemouth, who had the courage and good sense to call 999, when her Mum Rowena collapsed following a respiratory arrest. Or for sheer audacity, 87 year old, cancer surviving *Granny Bin*, who flew down the fastest zip wire at 60mph over the Eden Project, to raise money for Shelter Box Charity, this Christmas. Granny Bin said after completing the run that she would like to fly to the moon next! And well why not, for both this psalm and the news from Bethlehem, announce that in the birth of this holy baby, God does deliver, “*good news of great joy for all the people,*” and that love, is indeed stronger than death. **Amen**

Let us pray

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.
(Phillips Brooks 1835 -93)



May God bless you richly this Christmas through His Spirit, your family your friends and your carers

Rev Julia Christmas 2016



Prayer

We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound or bereaved and for those in residential care: Joan Field at *Merrie Loots Farm*, Pat Gare in *Admirals Court*, Marie Moore at *Archers Court* in Hitchin and Margaret Ross at *Memory House*.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families at this time.

Coffee Mornings in December



Saturday 3rd	Music at Highlands
Saturday 10th	Church
Saturday 17th	Church
Saturday 24th	No Service
Saturday 31st	Church



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Flower Rota for December 2016

<u>Date</u>	<u>Donated by</u>	<u>In memory of</u>	<u>Arranged by</u>
4th	Church	Joint Service with Wesley	
11th	Jean & Frank	Family	Jean Edmonds
18th	Jennifer Courtenay	Parents	Mary & Jean
25th		Christmas Day	



Dates to Remember

Knit and Natter Social Group

We are a friendly group of ladies who meet on Tuesday morning from 10am to noon during term time. Some of us knit, some crochet and some of us just natter. Our Samaritans Purse shoeboxes have now been sent off. We enjoy each other's company and a cup of coffee/tea and biscuit. You will be made very welcome if you would like to join us.

Highlands Hobbies

We meet on 1st December for the making of Christmas Cards and crafts, also some flower arranging. We follow with lunch for those who wish to stay. There is always coffee, tea, cake and plenty of chat.

On 15th December it will be time for fun and games with festive fare and mince pies.

All are welcome

Jean 525250 - Ros 478631

MOTHs

We meet again on 13th December for our Christmas party. Father Christmas will be there to collect our gifts for the Women's Refuge.

Open to anyone who would like to come along and join in.

ABRSM Exams

The music exams continue in the church. December 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th. Please check the list on the Jubilee Room notice board for any blank slots for stewards,

Southend Mencap

Present their annual concert at Highlands on Friday 9th December. Entry is free but tickets are required as it is such a popular event. If you would like a ticket please speak with Frank Edmonds.

Wesley Church Reopening Service

The preacher at the reopening on Saturday 28th January at 3.00pm is The Rev'd Dr Lord Leslie Griffiths. Please make sure the date is in your diary to join with our friends at Wesley in their refurbished Sanctuary.

New Testament Greek Classes at St Clements with Fr Clive

Fr Clive is offering new testament Greek lessons. He says, "The New Testament was originally written in Greek. To be able to understand the scriptures more deeply, learning and reading the New Testament in Greek has great spiritual advantage, and you don't have to rely on the translation of others." Classes are free with donation always welcome.

**Taster Session -
Saturday January 7th at 2pm.
Classes start Saturday
January 21st 11am.
Fortnightly on Saturdays**



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Other Highlands dates

Friday 9th December - Mencap Concert
Sunday 15th January 2017 - Covenant Service

Circuit Events

Saturday 10th December - New Road
Lantern Making for Strand Wharf Carols

Further details in the Jubilee Room
or the Circuit website at
www.southendandleigh.org

Alternative Worship

Belfairs Methodist Church - "Thirsty For ??" - 2nd Thursday
Next date — 8th December at 7.00 pm

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Wesley Methodist Church - Informal Worship - 4th Tuesday
27th December at 8.00 pm

MEMORY WORSHIP, Worship for those with and without dementia

3rd Monday of the Month 2pm-4pm



You may recall in the July edition of the Highlander I posed the question "Did you know Southend-On-Sea is working towards becoming a Dementia Friendly town and that this status has been awarded thanks to the partnership work of the Southend Dementia Action Alliance (SDAA) which was launched in March 2015. The SDAA is made up of local businesses, services and community groups all working in partnership with the council.

I am very pleased to share the news that Wesley Methodist Church along with a growing number of churches has joined the SDAA. In order to be accepted as part of this group Wesley has had to commit to an Action Plan that clearly outlines how the church can improve their support for people living with dementia and their carers.

It is our vision that people with or without dementia can approach God, Worship and praise God and feel Gods caring presence together.

Worship can be a channel for recalling the past, creating feelings of comfort, familiarity and spiritual fulfilment. We all have a continuing need to worship and experience a loving encounter with God and the afternoon will take a regular pattern of welcome; singing well-known hymns, reading familiar passages of scripture and saying the Lord's Prayer together.

The formal part of the service will last 30 minutes, before leading into a craft activity and hospitality, which provide an opportunity for conversation to reinforce the theme of the service.

If you know of anyone who you think would enjoy participating in this service please pick up a Memory Worship programme available in the Jubilee Room at Highlands .

Julie Peek, Mission Enabler for Older People

Wesley & Highlands



Serving the Homeless

On Friday 16th December our Annual Service of Carols and Poems for Christmas will be held at Our Lady of Lourdes Church followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the parish centre. There will be solos and a contribution from members of YMCA together with your favourite carols. We would love to see you there.

On Sunday 29th January 2017 our Annual Sunday Lunch will this year be held at Affinity Restaurant. Full details soon.

For further details contact Frank Edmonds on 01702 525250

Thank you for your continued prayers and gifts at the back of the church.

Winter Night Shelter

The Night Shelter begins for the Leigh Section on Saturday 3rd December and then every first Saturday in the month through to March. We have a good selection of volunteers but if you would like to help Janet Watson would like to hear from you in case of sickness etc..

Donations of toiletries and clothes would be very welcome. At present there seem to be more young men who are homeless so their needs are for hard-wearing jeans, track suit bottoms, pants as well as hats and socks. There is very limited storage space, so this year we are asked each month to take clothing with us.

Please leave any contributions at the back of the church.

Please also remember the volunteers and the clients in your prayers.

News from 10th Leigh Rainbows and Brownies.



The Rainbows enrolled 2 new girls in to the unit, which brings our numbers up to 15. The rainbows are doing the Robin Christmas challenge. They have visited the Made by You shop in Leigh and have painted a plate for Christmas and will be going to have a fun evening at Kids Kingdom at the beginning of Dec. They will then be putting on their glad rags for a party on their last evening before the holidays. They wish everyone at Highlands a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The older Brownies that went away in Oct half term, had a great time. The weather could have not been better and we were very grateful to Jacqui Hendle for stepping in to help us out - I don't think we put her off!!! The Brownies managed to fill 40 shoe boxes for the Samaritan's Purse appeal. The Brownies are also going to the Guideacres fundraising evening at Kids Kingdom at the beginning of Dec. The Brownies are in for a fun filled last evening, which will be organized by the older girls that are due to leave at Christmas. The Brownies wish everyone at Highlands a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank You



I would like to thank everybody from Belfairs, Highlands and Wesley Churches who supported and sponsored me on the **Big Barnardo's Bike Ride**. It was a real adventure and challenge, which I enjoyed much more than I'd ever anticipated. Thanks for the messages that a number of you sent me en route - but even more so for the money that you raised across the 3 churches to support Barnardo's work across Essex.

Belfairs, Highlands and Wesley raised £1,700

We were exceedingly fortunate with the weather, with sunshine most days. The 6 of us, who were the core team, also got on really well. I hadn't realised that team work would be so important, especially keeping you going when you got a bit tired. Amongst those who joined us for the odd day was Olympian Daley Thompson, which gave us a real boost mid-way.

The 362 miles were broken down into: Holyhead to Chester; then to Telford; then Worcester; then Oxford; and finally to Barkingside. North Wales proved easier than I thought due to the longest sea-wall - so fewer hills. Crossing rural Shropshire down through Worcestershire to the Cotswolds on crisp sunny days was stunning - if latterly so much more hilly than I'd thought. Finally, crossing North London for 18 miles, I lost count of how many speed bumps I went over, but felt every one of them.

So thank you from me and Barnardo's and the children and families we support. Overall I raised £3,000 and as a team we think we've raised £17,000 - 10% from the Leigh Section alone!

Sam Monaghan



Family Committee **Can you help please ?**

We thank Les Davis for all the work that he has put in as Secretary to the Family Committee and accept his notice of resignation with disappointment but understanding.

We are looking for someone to take Minutes, three or four times a year and to circulate them after each meeting.

Please consider whether you are able to help. Thank you.



Serving the Community 7 Days a Week



Children and Young People

Toddlers Group, Monday	9.30-11.30a.m.	Margaret Wood	557512
		e-mail contact :-	
		highlandstoddlers@hotmail.co.uk	
Rainbows Wednesday	4.00-5.00 p.m.	Karen Packer	474151
Brownies Wednesday:	5.30-7.00 p.m.	Dilys Haddow	710207
Cub Scouts Thursday:	5.45-7.15 p.m.	Dan Raven	07982 840145
Scouts Thursday:	7.30 p.m.	Sally Monk	558857
Rangers Alternate Thursdays	7.30 p.m.	Jacqui Hendle	557147
Guides Friday:	7.00 p.m.	Jacqui Hendle	557147

Fellowship Groups

Housegroup meets on Tuesdays.

Services to the Community

Regular Sunday Worship

Tuesday Morning Prayer Service at 9.00 a.m.

Midweek Communion :-

2nd Wednesday Belfairs Methodist Church at 9.00 am

3rd Wednesday Wesley Methodist Church at 9.00 am

Coffee mornings: Saturday from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon in the Church

Coffee is also available to visitors to the Craft Group on Tuesdays and Hobbies on Thursdays

Traidcraft : Catalogue available for orders. Please contact Pamela and Patrick Smith - 557702.

**Meerkats save your money
Jesus saves your life!**



SIMPLES !

Social and Recreational

Knit and Natter Group Tuesday 10.00 a.m.-12 noon (*Sept.-July*) Sylvia 01702 556433

Badminton Club Monday 8.00 p.m. Sarah 01702 476009
or Sophia 07796 265676

Hobbies 1st & 3rd Thursday 10.00 a.m. - 12.00p.m. Jean 01702 525250

Ladies Badminton Friday 10.00 a.m. Dilys 01702 710207

MOTHs (*Meet on Tuesdays at Highlands*) 2nd Tuesday 2.15 p.m.

Adult Art Classes Thursday 2 - 4 p.m. Susan 07875 079739

Children's Art Club Thursday 4 - 5 p.m. or 01702 551025

Brush Strokes Art Group Saturday 9.15 a.m. - 12.15 p.m. Beverley 01277 627043