

HIGHLANDS METHODIST CHURCH

GENERAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 21st May 2017



Hospitality in the Midst of the Community

Our Mission Statement

Highlands Methodist Church aims to be a
Christian Presence
within the Highlands and Marine estates, with
Worship
central and essential to its life.

We seek to lead others to God in Christ Jesus by being
a *welcoming* and *caring* community, offering God's love
and spiritual refreshment for Life's journey.

Minister Rev Julia Monaghan

www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk

A Reflection from your Minister

And are we yet alive?

'And are we yet alive', Charles Wesley asks in his famous hymn. Well having read this Annual Report, compiled so ably by Frank, the answer would be, 'Yes we are! Alleluia, Glory and praise to Jesus give for his redeeming grace.'

There have been a number of highlights for me. It all began with Tony and Irene, renewing their wedding vows in September, followed by the wonderful 90th Anniversary, when so many friends came back and Rev Margaret led our songs of praise and thanksgiving. On Remembrance Sunday, we entwined fallen autumn leaves in barbed wire wrapped round the communion rail, remembering not only the sacrifice of our Armed Forces, but the sacrifice of Jesus, giving his life for his enemies as well as his friends.

Christmas was soon upon us and my favourite service of the whole season was Christingle @ Highlands, with our regular enthusiastic families forming the circle of light, as we remembered those in dark places at Christmas time. Covenant Sunday and before we knew it, we were challenged in Lent groups sharing in house groups and with our wider church family friends. On Maundy Thursday, remembering before we serve others, we need to be fed, we shared fish and chips and bread and wine in the sanctuary area. We travelled with our section friends on Good Friday, and woke to new life early Easter Morning on Bell Wharf. Here I heard the words any minister longs to hear, *"Julia, how fixed is the service this morning. Jesus is saying to me 'come as you are, come just as you are.'"* So we baptised Jean on Easter Day and remembered through Christ's resurrection, we all reflect the glory of God's light, dying to sin and rising to new life in him.

We have been blessed; our faith increased and we travel towards a new church year with hope in our hearts

Let us pray

*Then let us make our boast
of his redeeming power,
which saves us to the uttermost,
till we can sin no more.*

*Let us take up the cross
Till we the crown obtain;
And gladly reckon all things loss
So we may Jesus gain.*

Alleluia, praise ye the Lord!

Charles Wesley (Singing the Faith 456)

Rev Julia – 11 May 2017

AGENDA

- 1 Opening Prayers and Devotions
- 2 Attendance and Apologies
- 3 Remembering those who have died
- 4 Minutes of meeting held on 17th April 2016
- 5 Reports including Finance Report
- 6 Annual Elections of:
 - 6.1 Church Stewards
 - 6.2 Church Council Representatives
 - 6.3 Representatives to Circuit Meeting and their substitutes.
- 7 Fellowship, Conversation and Mutual Counsel on the Ministry, Witness and Condition of Highlands Methodist Church.
- 8 Closing Devotions

Stewards Report

The number of Stewards has been static at six throughout the past year but we are pleased to note that Donald Mayes is up for election at this Meeting. If anyone else would be prepared to stand we would be very happy to receive their nomination and to spread the load.

It has been an exciting and challenging 90th year at Highlands. The pattern of services has remained the same but we have been disappointed at the lack of turnout of members from Highlands at the joint services at Wesley for whatever reason. The Cafe Church format has been well received. We have discussed these arrangements and hope to bring you a different pattern for your approval before the next Methodist year beginning in September.

The refurbishment of the Sanctuary area has provided us with a much brighter worship area, but we accept that the lighting does not meet current standards and this situation is being addressed. The additional tapestry created by Rev Teresa Rutterford adds further enhancement to our facilities.

We are pleased that the community events are proving very popular and the regular special Church celebrations, some of which we have enjoyed with other churches in the Section, have had a good impact.

We aim as always to bring the word of God to the Highlands Community as outlined in our Mission Statement led by our hard working Minister. We are excited that Rev Julia has been granted an extension to her appointment at Highlands for a further year until August 2018 and we look forward to working with her until she moves on to pastures new.

In the meantime Rev Julia will be on a well earned sabbatical from the beginning of October until the middle of November. We wish her a quiet time for a recharging of the batteries and refreshment during this time.

If you feel that we can enhance your worship experience at Highlands please do mention it to the Minister or one of the Stewards for discussion.

“Crafty Church”

S Club finally lost its critical mass and we usually find ourselves with no children on a Sunday morning. It has been an amazing journey through many years remembering when the whole building was full of children. However the world has changed and it seems that parents and children prefer a family day elsewhere on a Sunday.

Nevertheless we are still prepared to meet children wherever they are at learning about Jesus.

To that end we have purchased Christian books with stickers and puzzles so that we have something to hand should a child appear which does sometimes happen, particularly on a Parade Sunday.

It is also rewarding to us that the young people who have passed through Highlands over the years return feeling that Highlands is their home - which was wonderful when they performed their pantomime last October wishing their children to know of the fellowship and fun that they experienced in their youth.

We can but sow the seeds of faith.

Knit and Natter

We meet every Tuesday morning from 10am until 12 noon. Many knit and all of us natter. Throughout the year we have made several blankets for the homeless, but as fleece blankets are more acceptable now we are exploring new ways of using our knitting skills.

We support the Samaritans Purse each year and last Christmas sent 10 boxes to Thundersley Methodist Church for them to be taken to the distribution centre.

Although we have 14 regular members, many others join us on occasion for a drink and a chat. So, anyone is welcome on a Tuesday morning to drop in.



MOTHS - Meet on Tuesday at Highlands

Every second Tuesday of the month in the afternoon from October to June we meet for MOTHS. Some of us have a soup lunch between knit and natter and our meeting. However several others, men and women, join us for the start of the meeting at 2.15 pm. We have various speakers, a Christmas Carol afternoon and a lunch at Affinity in February. Our numbers vary between 12 and 15 - we would welcome any new members to join us.



Coffee Mornings

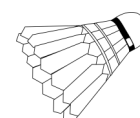
Every Saturday a coffee morning is held from 10 am to 12 noon. Several people run these for various charities or funds. Sadly at Easter this year Brushstrokes, the Saturday art group, ceased to meet and this has meant a drop in the money raised. However, it is worth holding as a good social get-together for the church and community. We would like to see more of our church friends and members on a Saturday morning. Do come and support us if you can, and thank you to our faithful regular supporters.



MONDAY NIGHT BADMINTON CLUB REPORT 2016-17

We have 15 members (9 male and six female) the ages ranging from 19 to 67

The club had another successful year meeting regularly. Indeed playing has become so popular that some members meet at Bank Holidays and over the Summer holidays. We have lost 4 members for personal reasons but they have been replaced as we have a waiting list. The club not only provides useful exercise but is socially vibrant and we have end of term dinners that have been well attended and are popular. We support Church functions like the Xmas fair where we had a raffle stall and support each other in local charity events like "Movember". Peter Knight



9th Leigh Scout Report

Our numbers continue to increase and we have 22 scouts at the moment. We have the same leaders - Andrew, Andy & Sally. We are always looking for new leaders and offers of help. Three scouts have left us and 2 of them are joining Explorer Scouts in Leigh - the next stage in their scouting life. Two received their Gold Awards at scouts and Lewis is doing his Duke of Edinburgh Award and helping at cubs. Tom continues to help in Scouts. We have just welcomed three new scouts from cubs

During the winter months we have worked on both Challenge Awards (toward their gold awards) and Activity Badges. The scouts designed and made cushion covers for Mothering Sunday. They have also enjoyed indoor games, challenges, cooking, the ropes and rifle shooting at Belchamps.

Andrew organised and ran a great camp in October.

This term we will spend most Thursday evenings outdoors. Activities will include cycling, a hike and an evening on the beach. In April, Andrew led a very successful evening on Leigh cliffs, listening for the nightingales. We plan to take the Scouts on a special outing as they missed out at Christmas



9th Leigh Cub report

Cubs have had a challenging year but there is (and has been) a thriving pack of 25 boys and girls. It's really great to have girls in the pack again. 3 boys went up to scouts recently and 3 have moved with their family to Devon, which gave us the opportunity to welcome 5 more boys into cubs.

Last autumn, 5 cubs enjoyed a weekend camp with the scouts.

Unfortunately, Dan & Dan had to step down from running the pack just before Christmas and so Lesley Bacon from Southend West District has assumed responsibility as Akela, assisted by her husband, Bob. Lesley and Rosalind who used to run the pack are also helping Lesley & Bob. Also we have the help of 2 young leaders, Jordan & Lewis. This is just a temporary solution and the future is still uncertain – but we don't want to let such a great pack close. If anyone would like to help or knows somebody who would like to help, please get in touch

Since Christmas we've got into our badge work in earnest and have also been to Bounce Village for a special evening treat. We've had a visit from Graham Mee from RSPB who gave us an excellent presentation. And last Friday 28th April, at the District Cub Football Competition, 9th Leigh came first, winning the trophy.

10TH LEIGH RAINBOWS FOR 2016

There are 15 Rainbows in the unit with two warranted Leaders, who are there every week. They are supported by 3 Young Leaders (girls aged between 14-18) and a rota of Mums.

The girls meet on a Wednesday between 4 - 5p.m. during term time. They take part in a number of activities. There are a set of badges that the Guiding movement set out for them called Roundabouts. The girls have done the Roundabout Festivals, Get Healthy and The World. There are 3 or 4 causes that the Rainbows have to complete to gain each badge. The Rainbows joined other Rainbow, Brownie, Guide and Senior Section units to celebrate Lord and Lady Baden-Powell's joint birthdays at Southend High School for Girls. This event is usually held as near to the 22nd Feb as possible and is called World Thinking Day. It was great to see the girls all mixing and having fun. They have also done some challenges that have been organised by other units in the UK. The most recent one was the Robin challenges, which linked into their Christmas programme. The Rainbows went and did China painting in Leigh and did a design on a plate to leave out for Father Christmas. They did some challenges to gain the 'Sky's the Limit' badge to celebrate the Senior Section 100th birthday and had a badge to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. They love playing games and doing anything related to food!! They have also had an Easter Egg hunt and in June they had a campfire with the Brownies. This was held at our local campsite called Guideacres. They had a Guideacres fund raising evening at Kids Kingdom. When a Rainbow is due to leave and move on to Brownies, a special party is held and the Rainbow has a 'Pot of Gold' badge and card present to her. This shows that she has reached the end of the Rainbow and this badge can be worn on their Brownie sash.



Highlands Toddlers

Highlands Toddlers meets every Monday morning in term time. After losing some of our older toddlers to pre-school, numbers have now increased and we receive up to thirty children each week, accompanied by parents/grandparents/carers. Most of the "toddlers" are very young and include two sets of twins – one set newly born! At present we have 3 volunteer staff who set up the play areas, man the desk, provide refreshments and offer craft activities, stories and songs. Recently we welcomed Les Davis to provide piano accompaniment to the songs, which has been well received. Our end-of-term parties with entertainers and Santa (thank you, Frank!) are also very popular.

REPORT FROM 10TH LEIGH BROWNIES FOR 2016

There are 39 Brownies in the unit with 3 warranted Leaders, 1 Leader in training plus 3 reg. Unit helpers. They are supported by 3 Young Leaders (girls aged between 14-18), 1 Guide helper and a rota of Mums. 2 of the Unit helpers are also in the Mum rota.

The girls meet on a Wednesday between 5.30 - 7p.m. during term time. They take part in a number of activities. They have a Brownie book to work through. Each section gives them different challenges to complete and when they have completed a challenge, they gain an Adventure badge. There are 3 Adventure badges to achieve. They also have a section called 'Go for It', which gives them challenges linked to the Guide unit. The Brownies in February joined the other Guiding units in the Southend West Division to celebrate World Thinking Day. This is something that units in this country and abroad celebrate. The girls enjoy mixing with the other units. The Brownies have also done the 'Butterfly' challenge set by other units in the UK. They also did the 'Sky's the Limit' challenge, which was set by the Guide County (Essex South East) to celebrate the Senior Section centenary. All the Brownies and leaders got a badge to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. Easter egg hunt at Guideacres with the Rainbow was a great evening and we returned to Guideacres in June for a campfire. The Brownies had a great visit to the Southend RNLi station in July. There was much laughter as they tried on some of the equipment - helmets and boots were a bit large for them!! The older Brownies went on a Pack holiday to Paxwood, near Dartford during October half term. We all had a wonderful time and were blessed with wonderful weather. We did shoe boxes for the Samaritan's Purse appeal. It was then time to fill our jars with goodies to support Highlands Christmas Fair. Our 'Jar Tombola' is always popular. The Brownies visited Kids Kingdom to support the Guideacres fundraising week. The Brownies and Leaders try and get to all the Church Parades they can and we were pleased with the numbers that do come regularly. When the time comes for a Brownie to leave she has a special evening with the other girls that are leaving. They get a gift, a metal leaving badge (which can be worn on their Guide uniform) and certificate. It is always great to see the girls move on to Guides and take the opportunities that Guiding offers them. Even better when as Young Leaders they come back to help with the units and even better when they come back as Leaders. The Rainbows and the Brownies are running at full capacity and also have a very full waiting list. We are always looking out for help, especially to get warranted help. We are doing our best to keep the Guiding movement alive at Highlands.

I (Dilys Haddow) am very grateful to Teresa, Trudi, Brenda, Natalie, Jacqui for all the support they have given me during my cancer treatment. I am nearly at the end of it and hope to start returning gradually in June.

P.T.O.

REPORT FROM 10TH LEIGH BROWNIES FOR 2016 - continued

Because I have been unable to be at meetings they, along with a lovely rota of Mums, have kept the meetings going. They have done such a great job - I might have to think about retiring!!!! I would also like to thank Highlands for all the good wishes that I have received.

Property Report for Annual Church Meeting 2017

Looking back over the last year the following property items have been done:

- The electrical system has been updated throughout the building
- In the Sanctuary area:
 - a) The sound operating system has been moved to the middle of the sanctuary.
 - b) The whole sanctuary was painted and new lights put in.
- Highland Methodist Church received a Methodist Insurance visit and they produced a report about the building and the records that we keep. On the whole they were really satisfied with how the building is run and the upkeep of it. There were a few recommendations including cleaning the gutters, an inventory of items on the premises, updating of the Health & Safety Policy and sending them a copy of the Electrical Inspection report which had been carried out – these items have been completed. The other item regarding SmartWater application to the lead on the roof is in hand.

Looking forward the Property & Finance Committee will be looking at the roofing, soffits and fascia's, car park resurfacing and painting the vestry.

Anne Lane - Property Co-ordinator



Home Group

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm at Glenda's home, our Home Group meets.

Ten to a dozen of us meet to pray, to share, to study the Bible and to encourage each other. It's a fun time and you are welcome to join us. Kathy



LETTINGS REPORT

Lettings continue to be a very necessary source of income for Highlands Methodist Church (David Watson can give you an actual monetary figure). Regular users are the main contributors. Unfortunately we lost three regulars in 2016/17 in the Pre-school, Brushstrokes and Foresters. However we were able Partly to replace them with the Southend Symphony Orchestra, who now rehearse in the Hall on Wednesday evenings. Other regulars include Mencap who use the Hall for music and drama classes, and two Bridge Clubs as well as the Dickens Fellowship, the Doll Club, Art Classes and of course, the uniformed organisations.

The Hall is very popular for children's parties.

We also provide venues for the Leigh Music Festival and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) examinations. The latter is only possible with the voluntary provision by the church of stewards who welcome and register the candidates. ABRSM have been very appreciative of the help given and thanks are due to all who have contributed their services

Important as the income is, we believe that the Lettings Programme also provides a useful outreach to the local community and helps to keep Highlands in the public eye



Pin Point

This is a new venture which is a spin off from Hobbies. It is the vision of the very talented Rev Teresa Rutterford that on the second and fourth Wednesday we meet at 10.30 am to share the talents of all things needlework. Teresa has started off by planning a wall hanging for the Coffee Lounge depicting all that happens at Highlands throughout the week. Everyone is welcome, whatever their talent.



Church Flowers

Our flower rota has been greatly enhanced with the inclusion of Pauline and Margaret who gained their confidence in arranging flowers through the Hobbies Group. Also many of our Hobbies ladies enjoy creating arrangements for the coffee tables.



Mission Enabler for Older People

Highlands ACM report 2017

It became evident when I first came to Highlands that it would be as important to support existing activities as to initiate new ones as the older people's worker. Therefore I now support "Hobbies" on first and third Thursday of the month. This assistance is most needed when the group shares a lunch after Hobbies. With several members with mobility issues the role is very much a practical one.

Also my connectivity with a wider group of people in a number of churches makes it easy to offer assistance and MOTHS enjoyed a most knowledgeable talk from Geoff Fulford on the American Civil Rights movement in January this year because I asked him.

HOLIDAYING@HOME

This successful event took place at Highlands on 27th July last year, bringing 32 people into the church for a lively nostalgic seaside day that was very well received. This event was self-funded with no additional church expenses incurred and surplus funds went back into a future events fund.

I am now planning this year's Holidaying at Home to take place on 19th July 2017.

MONTHLY MOVIES

This activity has become an established date on the calendar for between 10-20 people a month at Highlands. In recent months I have altered the day to always be on a Wednesday coinciding with new HIGHLANDS HUB initiative.

I always aim to screen appropriate and thought provoking films and where ever possible source films that people request. This month's film; A Street Cat Named BOB has been requested.

Donations received after films have so far raised money to fund musical accompaniment for MOTHS sing along in Sept and Christmas event along with a gift for all the MOTHS members at Christmas and cards at Easter. In November after Calendar Girls a charitable donation to Cancer Research UK was made.

JULIE PEEK

Mission Enabler for Older People

Wesley and Highlands Methodist Churches

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Pastoral Report

Firstly we record the joy and pleasure on our Easter Sunday Service, when our dear friend Jean Edmonds was Baptised and then made a Member of the Methodist Church at Highlands. It was something Jean had in mind for a long time. Suddenly it became clear this was just the right moment. When someone said - but you haven't got any Godparents, Jean turned to the congregation and said, but you are all my Godparents. When we consider all the years both Jean and Frank have worked tirelessly for our Church Membership in so many different roles we give God thanks for them both.

Doris Watson was welcomed back into our fellowship.

So many of our members are frail and quite a few are unable to come to church now. I know that Joan Ford, Kay Tipping and Betty Hall would welcome a social visit from anyone who would care to call. Check up to find out if it is convenient. Betty Hall remains a Pastoral Leader despite her difficulties at home which I think is highly commendable.

Our pastoral leaders do their best to keep in touch with those on their lists, and we should all do our best to care for one another.

Our Pastoral Leaders are : Rosalie Bryant, Jennifer Courtenay, Jean Edmonds, Betty Hall, Maureen Kelly, Kathy McCullough and Patrick Smith

Our Membership stands at 46

Maureen Kelly

Hobbies Group

Over the last year we have averaged about 9 loyal members who have mainly enjoyed flower arranging and card making. The flowers enhance our church building and our cards are selling well for church funds (We even managed to sell several to our local Member of Parliament) In the last few months we have welcomed three new members sharing their card making skills.

Every member is valuable and we all have a part to play in sharing friendship, laughter and talents. Lately we have tried a new craft promoted by Marjorie when we painted butterfly mobiles. It is always a pleasure when most of us also come together for a shared lunch afterwards.

Everyone is welcome to drop in and share a tea/coffee at any time.

Treasurer's Report 2017

Current Financial Year 1st September 2016- 31st August 2017

Our refurbishment programme continues, £9052 having been spent this year on the Sanctuary; this of course has impacted our reserves which are lower than we would normally want . Currently we have approximately £7,000 in our 2 current accounts, £7,000 in our savings account and £9,000 in the TMCP (Trustees for Methodist Church Purpose Fund - Mary Cornwell Bequest)

Our Gift Aid rebate is awaited which will boost funds.

Since the beginning of our financial year we have received £3,500 in donations. Notably £2,340 of this was received in memory of David Gare Lettings remain a significant part of our income , for which Les should take great credit. Regrettably the Pre School decided to close. This accounted for £6,069 of the lettings revenue for the last financial year; revenue which we will not have this year .

Financial year 1st September-31st August 2016

Lettings income for the last financial year was £38,021 of a total overall useable income of £65,382 against an expenditure of £68,530.

Other income included, but not exclusively, Offerings of £15,561 & Gift Aid rebate of £4,665.

The main items of expenditure were £27,189 for repairs, maintenance & renewals (£13,428 of which was for the completion of the Kitchen/Lounge refurbishment). £21,405 was paid as our annual Circuit Assessment and £11,684 for utilities & insurance.

Funds at the end of the year amounted to £33,431.

We still continue to support various charities on a regular basis.

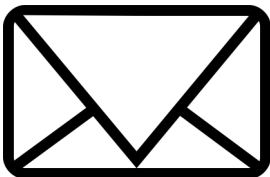
Thanks should go to Jackie Williams & Sylvia Cornwell who count & bank the weekly income & to all those who continue to help boost church funds.

David Watson 5/17



Envelope Scheme

If you are a taxpayer and donate on a regular basis to the church collection please consider joining the band of people who use the weekly offertory envelopes to record their giving and enable us to claim a tax refund.



Highlands HUB

The HUB started in January, the vision being that each Wednesday our church would be open for the community and our members to call in for refreshment of all kinds.

Most Wednesdays it is fairly quiet. It seems our Keep Fit Ladies are not yet comfortable with staying for a special coffee or hot chocolate.

Once a month we continue through to our film show offering soup to add to picnic lunches. This is proving popular.

We have just started Pin Point on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays with Rev Teresa Rutterford and we are gathering keen needle workers.

Towards the end of the morning we open the front doors to the church and light the candles for anyone who wishes to spend a quiet time in the church.

We have a small supportive team who are determined to open each Wednesday for anyone to call in, whatever they need, whether it be refreshment, a listening ear, or an enquiry.



10th Leigh Guides

26 members plus 4 leadership team – In the last 12 months the girls have completed many challenge badges. 8 of the Guides along with the leaders attended the Essex international Jamboree with 10000 other Guide and Scout members. 4 members are due to complete their Baden Powel award this term. 1 of the Guides has been awarded the Jack Petchy award for her services to both Girl guiding and the community. Last month we held a bring and buy evening and raised £98 for Children in Need. We are now preparing for our summer camp where there will be 11 girls and the leaders attending. 5 Girls are moving up to the Senior Section (Rangers) in September this year.



10th Leigh on Sea Rangers Legra

9 members plus 3 leadership team – Girls continue to plan and make decisions for themselves guided by the leadership team. 8 of the members along with the leaders attended the Essex International Jamboree. All the members are young leaders for other groups within Guiding. This includes Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. A couple of the girls have almost completed their Chief Guide Award.

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Singing The Faith 409

A very big thank you to all the organisations that have provided a report for this meeting. It is wonderful to see how much goes on in our buildings and in our community. *Editor*