



The **HIGHLANDER**

March 2026

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

These are services at Highlands for March 2026

10:30 am Sun 1 st	Morning Worship Café Church	Maureen Spinks
10:30 am Sun 8 th	Morning Worship Holy Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
4:00 pm Sun 15 th	All Age Praise & Worship Mothering Sunday	Matt Bunkall
10:30 am Sun 22 nd	Morning Worship	John Philips
11:00 am Sun 29 th	Morning Worship United Service at Wesley	Rev Steve Mayo



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

9:30 am Sun 1 st	Morning Worship Communion	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 8 th (Refreshments from 7:00)	Gospel Service	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 15 th	Taizé Worship	Rev Heather Simmons
7:30 pm Sun 22 nd	Mindfulness	Local Arrangement
11:00 am Sun 29 th	Morning Worship United Service at Wesley	Rev Steve Mayo





Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk



The **Highlander** is published by Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland Blvd, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PT. Highlands Methodist Church is a member church of the *Southend and Leigh Circuit*, 34/10, which is part of the Beds, Essex and Herts District

Highlands Methodist Church Hospitality in the Midst of our Community

All telephone numbers are '01702' unless stated

Minister	Rev Heather Simmons heather.simmons@methodist.org.uk	07879 232231
Secretary to Church Council	David Watson	555702
Minutes Secretary	Vanessa Mayes	473787
Church Stewards	Andrew Hyde	473111
	Donald Mayes	473787
	Lesley Hyde	473111
	Jean Edmonds	801517
All Age Community Builder	Matt Bunkall mattbunkall@gmail.com	07305 769086
Church Treasurer	Steve Watson	07543 905641
Children's Worker	Ros Bryant	478631
Pastoral Co-ordinator	Jean Edmonds	801517
Church Flowers	Jean Edmonds	801517
Lettings/Use of Premises	Sam Watson highlandslettings@gmail.com	07510 808519

Some Advance Notice for You

Highlands Methodist Church

Services for **HOLY WEEK**

29 th March	Palm Sunday	11.00am	Morning Worship at Wesley Rev. Stephen Mayo
2nd April	Maundy Thursday	4.00pm	Tenebrae Service at Belfairs Rev. Heather Simmons
3 rd April	Good Friday	9.20am	Walk of Witness from Highlands for Hot Cross Buns @ Wesley
		10.30am	Service at Wesley Rev. Stephen Mayo
5 th April	Easter Sunday	10.30am	Holy Communion at Highlands Rev. Heather Simmons
		6.30pm	Prayer & Praise Circuit Service at Belfairs

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¹ Tenebrae (literally 'darkness')

From Your Minister

Dear Church Family,

So! How is your spiritual journey going so far this year? Did you have a think about what you would like from our church to support and guide you? If not, there is always enough time, particularly as we are now in Lent, a beautiful time of reflection.

The Methodist Church is encouraging us to 'let go' this year. We are working through resources that help us to let go of idols; of the form; of scarcity; of appearances; of despair; of violence; of certainty; and of fear.

When we have cleared these out, we can replace them with room for God; with embracing the Spirit; with embracing abundance; with looking inside our hearts; with embracing repair, gentleness, mystery and joy. Isn't that wonderful?

Whether we can let go is often about our mindset: how we think; how we react and respond. To change a negative response, we might first have to notice how we respond generally. We might also need to notice the other person or situation to hear what is *really* being said. We read that in Matthew Ch 4 - Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days and nights before he did or said anything. What was he noticing about himself and his surroundings? What was he reflecting on?

Once we have noticed what we are holding on to, or our ways of thinking about situations or people, we can then decide what needs addressing. If we immerse ourselves in prayer and give time to God, it can be transformative. I personally, have struggled recently with several situations and my husband said, 'Go and pray.' You wouldn't think you'd need to remind the minister (ha ha!) of that. But he was



right. I did as he suggested and gave myself time to fully immerse myself in being at one with God. It felt like a warm blanket, a weight being lifted and a gentle voice guiding me to "let go" of my hurt. I spent time thinking through what it must be like to be the other person in each situation - they too needed to be loved and supported.



I pray for each of you 'dearest gentle readers' (you're right, that is from *Bridgerton*, but I like the introduction, don't you?) that your journey of noticing and letting go is a fulfilling and transformative one that brings you closer to God each day.

Ooh! And while/if I have your attention - Highlands Methodist Church is hosting two events for Mothering Sunday. You are welcome to both or one or the other. We are having a service at 4pm with Matt Bunkall and myself doing an all-age service with mixture of traditional worship and modern singing.

Then, at 5pm there will be a delicious Mothering Sunday Afternoon Tea served in the hall. For this event you need to buy tickets. Even though the food will be restaurant quality and served beautifully, the tickets are only £5 AND children are free! If you know of any families who might struggle to pay the high prices of an afternoon tea, please promote our wonderful and affordable event.

I'll be there ...more tea vicar?

God bless you,
Rev Heather x





We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound, or bereaved and for those in residential care: particularly *Peggy Gosling* in Westcliff Lodge, *Doreen Morby* in Brambles and *Glenda Green* in Legra. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

Sadly I must report that *Marion Chapman* of Chalkwell Grange. has died. I have no further detail. Our thoughts are with the family.

We **pray especially for** a number of church members afflicted by long-term illnesses and short-term accidents or recovering from surgery. Also for those of us whose families are far away.



Table Sale

Leigh West Guide District are holding a Fundraising Table Sale on Sat 7 March from 10:00 to 12:00 noon. Refreshments & Cakes will be available. The money raised will be split between the District and Hannah, a Ranger and Young Leader. Hannah has been selected to join a group of Guides from the County of Essex to visit Malta and join up temporarily with the Maltese Guides in August 2026.

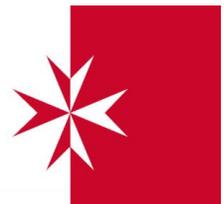


Table Tennis, Board Games and Puzzles.



We meet on Thursdays 12 and 26 March for Table Tennis, Puzzles and Games in Room 1 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Come and join the fun, since all are welcome.

Jean Edmonds.01702 801517

Humour Corner

Caller: Hello, is that the police? I'm afraid that my ice-cream van has broken down and is completely blocking the main road.

Police call handler: OK we'll get someone out there as soon as we can. In the meantime put some cones out...

Hobbies



We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 10.00 am to 12:00 noon in Room 1, with a charge £3 including refreshments. All are welcome, and on 5 March we'll concentrate on Easter cards on vellum, with varied cards on 19 March.

Advance notice: There will be no Hobbies on 2nd April, Maundy Thursday.

Puzzle of the Month ²

A maths puzzle (which only the very smart can do).

$$A + B = 76$$

$$A - B = 38$$

$$A \div B = ?$$

UMC, Gt Wakering
Mondays 10:30 in
the back hall
2nd March
9th March
16th March
23rd March
30th March

Lent Lectio Divina hosted
by Highlands &
Fisherman's Chapel
Five Wednesdays from 18
March 7:30-8:30pm, using
the online service
Whereby. Simply use the
link below at the time of
each call to join
(no download or app is
needed)
<https://whereby.com/clive-johnson>

Lent sessions from
Rev Agnes
Tuesdays from
7.30pm to 8.30pm
24th February
3rd March
10th March
17th March
Zoom
Meeting ID:
948 2779 0660
Passcode: 425539

Lent
is a spiritual reboot.
A journey of pausing, breathing and
making space for God.

Pause. Breathe. Make space for God.

From the Editor

*The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes...*

Wm Shakespeare (1564-1616) *The Merchant of Venice* Act 4 Sc 1

You will surely recognise these familiar lines from one of the Bard's best-known works. Even if you do not, you might recognise the late Prunella Scales in the role of Portia. Or you might remember having to study the M of V for a GCSE or 'O' Level (in which case any enjoyment or learning will have been relentlessly squeezed out of it).



Meanwhile the season of Lent is upon us, and a principal theme (Rev Hev reminds us) is that of forgiveness. These lines from the M of V are all about mercy, which surely is a close relative off forgiveness. Shakespeare makes the point far better than I could ever do it – *it blesseth him that gives and him that takes*.

When we forgive, we have to do so without any consideration of merit or demerit with respect to the debt that we write off. After all, if the debt is doubtful, we give nothing away by setting it aside. If however it's a real debt that's long overdue, then by writing it off we don't just do a favour for the debtor; we do ourselves a favour, and we do Jesus a favour. I'm sure that Shakespeare would agree.

Ananias

Humour Corner

On a cold winter's morning a farmer finds to his dismay that all his cattle are completely frozen. The local vet is called, and he arrives promptly, with a rather severe-looking elderly woman in his car. After a cursory examination, he beckons to the woman, who exits the car and goes around the meadow touching each beast in turn. The cattle respond by springing to life as if nothing has happened.

Farmer: *Who on earth is that woman?*

Vet: *Do you not recognise her? That's Thora Hird...*

March 2026 Calendar

All events are at Highlands unless otherwise stated)

Sun	1 st	Morning Worship (Café) with Maureen Spinks 10:30
Mon	2 nd	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	3 rd	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Wed	4 th	Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	5 th	Hobbies 10:00
Fri	6 th	
Sat	7 th	Coffee Morning 10:00 – Guides Table Sale
Sun	8 th	Morning Worship (Communion) with Rev Heather 10:30
Mon	9 th	Toddlers 9:30 House group 7:30
Tue	10 th	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00 Lunch club
Wed	11 th	Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	12 th	Table tennis/board games/puzzles 10:00
Fri	13 th	
Sat	14 th	Hobbies Coffee Morning

Sun	15 th	Mothers' Day (Mothering Sunday) service with Matt 4:00 pm. Followed by Afternoon Tea £5
Mon	16 th	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	17 th	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00 Bible study/house group 1:00
Wed	18 th	Lent Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	19 th	Hobbies 10:00
Fri	20 th	
Sat	21 st	Coffee Morning 10:00 – hosted by Jess, for <i>One Love</i>
Sun	22 nd	Morning Worship with John Philips 10:30
Mon	23 rd	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	24 th	Prayers in church 9:15 Tuesday Chatter 10:00
Wed	25 th	Lent Lectio Divina 7:30
Thu	26 th	Table tennis/board games/puzzles 10:00
Fri	27 th	
Sat	28 th	Coffee Morning 10:00
Sun	29 th	United Service (at Wesley) 11:00 with Rev Steve Mayo
Mon	30 th	Toddlers 9:30
Tue	31 st	Prayers in church 9:15

Coffee Anyone?

The Hobbies Easter Coffee Morning is on Saturday, 14 March from 10.00am to 12:00 noon. There will be the opportunity to purchase some lovely hand-made Easter cards. Also gifts, a raffle and refreshments to enjoy. Please do come along to share in friendship and fellowship with others.

On Saturday 21 March, Jess from the Circuit Office will host a coffee morning at church in aid of the *One Love Project*. This local charity, based in Southend, offers practical and emotional support to the growing number of vulnerable adults and families in and around the Southend area through the provision of food & well-being activities.

After volunteering for the last 5 years at The One Love Project, Jess will also be taking part in a half marathon in April. You can show your support at https://www.justgiving.com/page/jessica-ellis-2?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=021

Robbie Norton writes: *I would like to say a big thank you to those that have donated to my charity coffee morning for Highlands Church*

Finally please put Saturday 2 May in your diary...³

Humour Corner

Student, in café: *How much is a cup of coffee, please?*

Waitress: *£4:50*

Student: *What about refills?*

Waitress: *They're free.*

Student: *I'll just take a refill, please.*

Quentin Who?

No, the word you're looking for is 'quinquennial' which simply means 'every 5 years'. I'm sure you knew that, because it's a great Scrabble score.

What it refers to is the regular (every 5 years!) check by an independent chartered surveyor to confirm that everything in and around the building is safe and in good condition. This involves lots of things you'd expect – gas and electricity for example – and some you may not have thought about, such as the lightening (*sic*) conductor and the organ tuning. The inspection is not until April.

So, if anyone mentions 'quinquennial' to you – that's what it is.

³ To find out why, go to page 21

Stuff Elsewhere
Circuit Zoom Prayer Meeting

This takes place on Saturday 7th March at 8.30am.

Colin Turner's Zoom Meeting

 When
08:25 - 11:25

Or use

<https://zoom.us/j/99342843111?pwd=PisLiPAvRoMbgb7hF0FzbYqmdrKdWd.1>

Meeting ID: 993 4284 3111

Passcode: 979807



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
A service for everyone!
Friday 6 March
I will give you rest, come

Nigeria 2026

Hadleigh
United Reformed Church
Church Road

2pm
Light Refreshments
Afterwards



INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION
24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led
wwdp.org.uk
Registered Charity Number 233242



Singing Songs Above Leigh on Sea
THE HIGHLANDS
May Our Hope Echo Far & Wide



The 3rd Sunday of March - Community Celebration

SUNDAY 15TH OF MARCH

4pm - 4.40pm

All age Service with Songs of Hope.
 Prayers & Reflections.

followed by Mother's Day Afternoon Tea
 5pm - 6pm
 Tickets.£5

THE GIFT OF WOMEN OF VIRTUE

"LEAVE HER ALONE," SAID JESUS. "WHY ARE YOU BOTHERING HER? SHE HAS DONE
 A BEAUTIFUL THING TO ME."

Mark 14: 6

A good woman is hard to find, and worth far more than diamonds.



Give her everything she deserves! Adorn her life with praises!

100th Birthday Celebrations

Two enormously successful events took place in Highlands during February. To everyone who helped make these events happen, an enormous vote of thanks.

Any Questions? is a BBC Radio 4 topical discussion programme that has been running weekly since 1948. For the first time, the BBC recorded the show here at Highlands on 6 February with their Political Correspondent Alex Forsyth hosting a well-balanced panel of four politicians.



An estimated audience of 250⁴ (plus a radio audience of 1¼ million) thoroughly enjoyed the debate which was kicked off, in a trademark forthright style, by our own Sheila Whitelegg. Other questions were asked by Jo Hall and Eileen Simmons, among others including a



number of sixth-formers whose questions about global warming and change in voting age were warmly welcomed by the panellists.

Thanks to everyone who helped in making this event happen. This includes the BBC staff whose efficiency

and diligence in resetting the Sanctuary were exemplary.

⁴ The fire safety limit, in case you are wondering, is 288

Two weeks later **Michael Glaysher as Elvis** attracted an enthusiastic crowd of about 150, firstly entertained by the Fishermens' Chapel Choir then by some Gospel favourites from Michael/Elvis. After the break, a set of rock 'n roll standards had the all-age audience on their feet and boogiing, sustained by a 'dry' bar and ice-creams. Congratulations to all involved.

For each event, a collection was taken and then added to the funds generated by ticket and 'dry' bar sales. This will later be donated to our centenary charity –

Aspirations Southend. You can learn more about Aspirations at www.aspirationsprogram.org.uk

Meanwhile, the photo below gives an idea of the atmosphere of the event.





Church Flowers for March

Sunday 8 th	Sylvia Cornwell	donating in memory of Alan
Sunday 15 th (Mothers' Day)	Ros Bryant	donating in memory of her parents
Sunday 22 nd	Betty Hall	donating in memory of Arthur

Irene Downing

Rosalie Bryant writes: We are very sorry to say goodbye to Irene Downing, who died peacefully on 27th January in 'The Brambles', where she had been living for the past year. She and Tony joined us at Highlands, became church members and friends to many and joined our house group. Irene came to knit 'n natter where she was always willing to help others, even teaching one lady to knit from scratch. She also loved her music.

We send sympathy to her daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Her funeral was held at the crematorium on Wednesday 25th of February.' Goodnight Irene.

Poem of the Month

Alone In The Woods

by **Stevie Smith (1902-1971)**



Born in Hull, Florence Margaret Smith lost her parents early in life. Educated mainly in London, she was at first a secretary to a magazine publisher, but had her first novel published in 1936, and was thereafter a writer. As a poet, her best-known work was *Not Waving But Drowning* which like much of her work reflects her own mental illness. She retained a High Anglican faith throughout her life. Though written before the growth of widespread environmental activism, the poem anticipates later 'green' views of human impact,

Alone In The Woods

Alone in the woods I felt
The bitter hostility of the sky and the trees
Nature has taught her creatures to hate
Man that fusses and fumes
Unquiet man
As the sap rises in the trees
As the sap paints the trees a violent green
So rises the wrath of Nature's creatures
At man
So paints the face of Nature a violent green.
Nature is sick at man
Sick at his fuss and fume
Sick at his agonies
Sick at his gaudy mind
That drives his body
Ever more quickly
More and more
In the wrong direction

Dining In

Leek and Red Leicester Soda Bread

You know that in our household, we love cooking from scratch, but especially using really easy recipes that look and taste much more complicated than they really are.



This recipe for leek and Red Leicester soda bread is one such recipe. Tastes delicious. As there was just the 2 of us, we couldn't eat it all (well, not without being really greedy) so we froze half. It still tasted good when it was defrosted and warmed slightly.

20g butter	small amount of thyme -
1 tbsp olive oil	sprigs or dried
1 large leek, finely sliced	100g red Leicester, coarsely
300g plain flour	grated
1 tsp bicarb	250 ml buttermilk

- 1 Heat butter and oil and fry leeks gently over medium heat for 15-20 mins until lightly browned. Set aside to cool.
2. Heat oven to 200 C; 180 C fan; Gas 6.
3. Tip flour and bicarb into bowl, add leeks, thyme, grated cheese and 1½ tsp of salt. Add buttermilk and stir to bring everything together. It will be quite a loose mix.
5. Tip onto a lightly floured work surface and knead the dough briefly to bring it together into a ball.
6. Tip onto a baking sheet, dusted with flour, slash a cross on top of the dough and then pop in the oven for 30-35 mins. When it's done, the soda bread will sound hollow when you tap it on the bottom. That's it - leave to cool slightly and then enjoy with salted butter or soup. Or just on its own!

$$A + B = 76$$

$$A - B = 38$$

$$A \div B = ?$$

Puzzle of the Month Solution

Firstly to solve this you might add the two given equations together, thus: $(A + A) + (B - B) = (76 + 38)$

$(B - B)$ is clearly zero, so disregarding it and adding up the two A's will give you $(A + A) = 114$.

Half of this figure gives you $A = \mathbf{57}$. Now that we know A, it's easy to work out $B = (76 - 57)$, or **19**.

The answer to $A \div B$ is 3. (There will be other ways to work this out, none of them wrong if you end up with $B = 3$)

Alzheimer's

Just a quick message to let you know that Andrew and Lesley have decided to fundraise for the **Alzheimer's** Society, and would really appreciate your support. Andrew's brother died during lockdown suffering from dementia, and his sister is now in residential care with a similar diagnosis.

We're hoping to raise some of our sponsorship at a coffee morning on Saturday 2 May. Mark the day now, please. We wondered if those further away would like to make a small donation on our

'JustGiving' page

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to Alzheimer's Society, so it's the most efficient way to give - saving time and cutting costs for the charity.

You can donate to my JustGiving page by clicking here

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Trek26London202613miles-LesleyHyde?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=EM&utm_campaign=020

'Yes!' (I hear you say), 'but what are you two doing other than quaffing coffee and nibbling biscuits?' I'm glad you asked...

On Saturday 9 May we are joining **Trek26 London Challenge** from Fulham to London Bridge and back.



You can of course learn more about the Alzheimer's Society by going to www.alzheimers.org.uk. Most of you know, have known or will be a sufferer. Some will know more than one. Or it could be you that suffers...

As things stand, 1 in 3 people born in the UK today will go on to develop dementia in their lifetime. Choose life, and help to stop that happening. If you cannot give money at the moment, then please remember that prayer is an acceptable currency everywhere

City Breaks



Most of us love a city break, exploring places for the ways they are different and meeting people for the things we have in common. I'm no exception. Here are a couple of options you may not have considered.

Lille

This is the first stop in France after the tunnel (with occasional off-peak offers). A very quick journey, to a city bulging with art galleries and Flemish architecture. The Old Town has as many bars and bistros as you could wish, and often street markets to browse. Or climb the 104m ↵Town Hall Belfry for an epic view.

Wrocław

Crammed with beautiful buildings, many rebuilt since WW2, Wrocław (pronounced *Vrots-wuff*) is a jewel of SW Poland. It is filled with surprises ranging from a huge model railway to a 24-hour flower market. An easily walked city, but trams are excellent. Cuisine is 'hearty' but great value. This is the signature double-steeped Cathedral. Flights available from Stansted.



SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week

Children and Young People

Group	Time	Contact
Scouts	Thu 7:30 to 9:00 pm	Jack Reeve 07847 355859
Cubs	Thu 5:45 to 7:15 pm	Jordan Rutherford 07804 065933
Rainbows	Wed 4:00 to 5:00 pm	Julie Griffiths 07834 321724
Brownies	Wed 5:30 to 7:00 pm	Teresa Thompson 07809 219729
Guides	Fri 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Rangers	Thu ⁵ 7:00 to 9:00 pm	Jacqui Hendle 07961 545037
Toddlers	Mon 9:30 am to 11:30	Ros: 478631 Margaret: 557512

Fellowship Groups

Group	Time	Contact
Prayer	Tue 9:00 to 10:00 am	Andrew Hyde 473111
Chatter	Tue 10:00 am to 12:00 noon	Rosalie 478631

Services to the Community

Group	Time	Contact
Lunch Club	2 nd Tuesday 12:00	07951 963730 Registration essential

Social and Recreational

Group	Time	Contact
Hobbies	1 st /3 rd Thu 10:00 am to noon	Jean 801517

Any material for the April edition of *The Highlander* needs to be emailed to andrewghyde@aol.com (or put a hard copy in the pigeonholes) by 22 March 2026.

⁵ Every fortnight