



The **HIGHLANDER**



December 2021

The monthly newsletter of Highlands Methodist Church, Leigh on Sea

11:00 am Sun 5 th	Morning Worship Café Church	Kathy McCullough
11:00 am Sun 12 th	Morning Worship Toy & Gift Sunday	Pastor Steve Mayo
11:00 am Sun 19 th	Morning Worship	Worship Leaders
4:00 pm	Carol Service	Pastor Steve Mayo
5:00 pm Fri 24 th	Crib Service	Worship Leaders
11:15 pm	Midnight Mass US at Wesley	Pastor Steve Mayo
10:30 am Sat 25 th	Morning Worship Christmas Day	Kathy McCullough

All of these services are scheduled to be held live in Highlands Church, but details may be altered. There is no service on Boxing Day (26th)

 Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church

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

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From Your Minister



As we come together at this time of year, a time for family and friends, it's good for us to also spend some time reflecting on the real 'reason for the season' – Jesus.

It's important that we welcome Him into our homes and into our celebrations, remembering that, as Christians, we celebrate Christmas not as a secular holiday, but as a celebration of the birth of our Saviour. As Scripture says:

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.
John 3:16 NLT

and that:

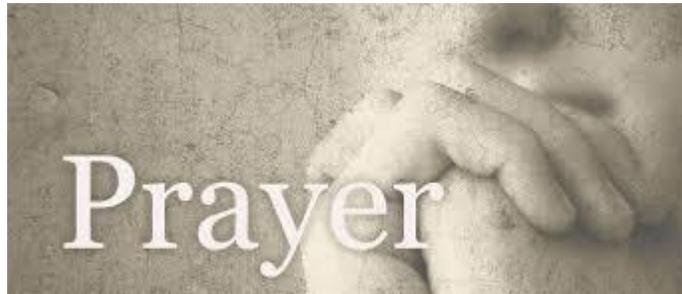
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
John 1:14 NLT

In a world that wants to make Christmas only about presents and food, Father Christmas and self-indulgence, it can be all too easy for the Christian celebration to be 'drowned' out.

Do take time for family, friends and parties, but also take time for Jesus.

May you and all your families be richly blessed as you celebrate the birth of Christ this year.

Pastor Steve
pastorstevemayo@gmail.com
01702 483827



We pray for our friends who are ill, housebound, or bereaved and for those in residential care: particularly *Doll Edwards in The Cedars*. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

We are very sorry to hear of the death of Joyce Farrow who died in the early hours of Tuesday morning 23 November. Joyce was a popular member of the Knit and Natter group and shared good friendships. We send our sympathy to her family and friends and hold them in our prayers.

Congratulations Dorothy Allen on her recent birthday. I cannot of course reveal her age, but this birthday has a zero on the end, and the next milestone in 10 years will have two zeroes.

Humour Corner

Airline passenger, seated and awaiting take-off:
Excuse me, but am I the only passenger?

Flight attendant:
Yes, it appears so. We had a large block booking of clairvoyants heading for a Psychic Conference, but they all cancelled for some reason.



From the Editor

So here is a question for you. You may find it tough or easy – everyone is different. Here goes:

What is the best bit of Christmas?

Happily for us all, a major supermarket has definitively answered the question. According to their Christmas advertising, it's the food which many of us enjoy. Some of us too much. To be fair, the advertisement is intended to be (pardon the expression) tongue-in-cheek. So, I'll allow them to explain:



Our Christmas advert, featuring Ashley Jensen and Heston Blumenthal, is part of our wider Christmas campaign which celebrates the joy and excitement of delicious Christmas food that our customers can enjoy with loved ones over the festive period.

OK. I get that. I'm not trying to be Mr Scrooge, and you only have to look at me to decide that I enjoy good food as much as anyone. But is our festive grub – however tasty - really 'the best bit'? Or should we look elsewhere? Perhaps in fact the best of Christmas is the start of what Hollywood called:

The Greatest Story Ever Told!



I refer of course to the story of the birth of Jesus, the Messiah and Saviour. Possibly less toothsome than a luxury mince pie, but never liable to give you indigestion or to add a single ounce to your weight. Here is an extract, taken from the Gospel of St Matthew:

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child [Jesus] and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.' So, he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt.
Matthew 2:13-14

This is pretty dramatic stuff to say the least. A small family, threatened with violent death at the hands of a corrupt government, fleeing across an international border. I'm sure that the family were cold, tired, hungry and terrified. They were probably penniless, aware not only of the deadly peril behind them but also of the uncertainty ahead. And yet they pressed on, somehow aware that they held the key to the future of mankind...

Not every story has a happy ending, but in this case (verses 19-23) Joseph later relocated from Egypt to Nazareth, where Jesus grew to manhood and his destiny. When they left Bethlehem, things hadn't looked good, so this is an outcome that we rightly greet with joy and acclaim.

Now, please consider a similar story, told by Mobin, a teacher of English aged 22 from Iran:

There was an anti-government protest at the school I worked in. They shot me. Seven small bullets. I could have been killed. Some of my friends were killed in that protest. My family told me

it was better to run away than be killed or sit in jail for many years. They arranged a smuggler to take me across the border. My father sold everything so I could get away.

The Independent¹

Mobin's journey took him across international borders and a dangerous sea-crossing. He too was cold, tired, hungry and penniless. The journey has brought him now to



the East End of London. He knew England as a fair and peaceful country whose language was familiar, so he chose to seek a new life here.

Do we greet Mobin's outcome with the same joy and acclaim as we did for the Holy Family? Some journalists, some politicians and perhaps some friends all urge us not to do so. Yet the message - beyond any doubt the 'best bit' - of Christmas, is in the simple message:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

AKJV Luke 2:14

Let's take that to heart this Christmas, and include all men and women. A very happy Christmas to all. Oh - and *bon appetit!*

Andrew

¹ See also [Mobin: A story of hope, from Iran to the East End — Roman Road LDN \(romanroadlondon.com\)](http://romanroadlondon.com)

Puzzle of the Month²

I must firstly apologise for how easy this month's puzzle is. On the other hand – it's Christmas and I must try to be kind. Below are the names of 10 popular Christmas movies – some old, and some not so old. I've left out alternative letters. To help you even more, below the list is a list of the 68 letters and one number that you'll need – so that you can cross them off as you use them.

1. A _ U _ P _ T _ C _ R _ S _ M _ S _ A _ O _
2. T _ E _ P _ L _ R _ X _ R _ S _
3. T _ E _ O _ I _ A _
4. E _ F _
5. H _ W _ H _ G _ I _ C _ S _ O _ E _ H _ I _ T _ A _
6. L _ V _ A _ T _ A _ L _
7. T _ E _ N _ W _ A _
8. H _ M _ A _ O _ E _
9. M _ R _ C _ E _ N _ 4 _ H _ S _ R _ E _
10. I _ ' _ S _ W _ N _ E _ F _ L _ I _ E _

A	A	A	A							N	N	N							
C	C	C								O	O	O	O	O	O	O			
D	D									P	P								
E	E	E	E	E	E	E				R	R	R	R						
F										S	S	S	S	S					
H	H	H	H	H	H					T	T	T	T	T	T	T			
I	I									U	U								
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L			Y	Y								
M	M	M								3									

² Solution page 16

Snippets



Mencap Showstoppers

Julie P writes:

A group of us from Highlands were very lucky to borrow the Mencap minibus on Friday to come along to MODS Fallen Angel Show. Thank you to our fabulous driver Peter. What a night!

If you missed out on this trip - please let me know and I'll remind you next year.

Kathy Goddard

Our cleaner Kathy will be leaving us at the end of December. A recent bout of COVID meant she was unfit for work for a while, and she now feels that it is the time to go. She says she 'has enjoyed her time at Highlands and ... met some really lovely

people [who have] treated me so well and made me feel welcome and valued.'

Typically, we don't notice the work that our people 'behind the scenes' carry out - until the time it doesn't happen. In the case of Highlands, Kathy kept the church so spick and span that we seldom noticed it. On behalf of everyone at Highlands – thank you Kathy.

This of course creates a vacancy which is for 10 hours a week at £9.50 per hour. The hours are 7:00 – 9:00 am weekdays. If you or someone you know would be interested contact Anne Lane (01268 755291 or annelane8@btinternet.com) for more information and application pack before 6 December 2021.

The Circuit Office

You may have noticed a new face around the building. This is Jess, whom I'll leave to introduce herself:

Hello! I'm Jess Ellis and I've recently joined the Southend and Leigh Circuit as the admin assistant. I've lived locally for nearly 16 years having moved from Colchester when I married. I first came to Highlands in 2010 when I attended the toddler group with my son. I then helped run the group for a couple of years. One child became four and as they've grown, I've volunteered with their preschool, schools and scout group. When the family aren't keeping me busy, I enjoy running, singing with Waterside Choirs and helping at One Love Soup Kitchen.

I've felt very welcomed into circuit life by Andreas & Pamela and to Highlands, by the many friendly faces who have popped their heads round the door. I look forward to making a positive contribution to the circuit.

Cubs & Scouts

You may know that due to retirements and ill-health, there has been a shortage of leaders; a particular shame because we have no shortage of young people from 8 to 14 wishing to join us.



Here again there is good news. Carl Mason, who has been a cub and scout assistant at 1st/2nd Eastwood Scout Group for some years, is taking over responsibility for the Scouts, assisted by Anna Kirkers. Lesley Bacon will still be in charge of the Cubs with Jordan Rutherford, and Andrew Hyde will remain as a warranted leader for whenever required.

Finally we say thanks to Andy Steward who has been a constant support over more than 15 years and countless camps. Memory of his vigorous method of forcing trapped air from a folded tent still makes me chuckle.

Heating

Work is still progressing on securing the finance for this project. Donations are still arriving, and it's not too late for you to help with this essential expenditure.

Church Flowers for November

- † 19 November: Frank & Jean have donated flowers in memory of Family and Friends.
- † 21 November: Jennie Courtenay has donated flowers in memory of her parents.

If you would like to donate flowers for any reason (or indeed no reason other than to enjoy them being displayed in the church) contact Jean ☎525250.

Highlands Hobbies

We are delighted to say that our Christmas coffee morning raised £303.86. Thank you to our industrious ladies for producing lovely cards gifts and tree decorations, to all who helped in any other way and to those who took part in a lovely friendly morning. It was good to see some new and old faces.



Our last Hobbies morning of the year will be our Christmas party from 10:30 until 12:00 noon on Thursday 2 December. We look forward to fun and games and Christmas refreshments.

Christmas blessings to all our Highlands friends. Why not come and join us in the New Year? Jean 525250 Julie 479804

Highlands Toddlers

We have been very pleased to welcome familiar and new faces at Highlands Toddlers since re-opening post-Covid in September. (We meet 9:30 to 11:30 am every Monday in school term-time) We should like to thank all those who contributed to the Children in Need appeal which raised £27.58.

Happy Christmas to you all!

Ros and Margaret



Serving the Homeless

Thank you!

This year, despite not being able to run our normal fundraising events, with your generous help and support we have:

- ♥ Given £6,500 to HARP for food and general support. HARP now houses over 200 clients and provides almost 6,000 hot meals a year as well as helping clients overcome trauma, learn skills, and find work.
- ♥ Provided an additional £350 worth of turkeys for Christmas dinners at HARP properties.
- ♥ Given £6,500 to Southend YMCA towards their new housing project which will be giving support to very young vulnerable youngsters in a family style environment.
- ♥ Provided 40 Christmas bags of 'goodies' to the young people who live at, and are looked after by, Southend YMCA.
- ♥ Given £500 to support the work of the St. Vincent Centre in Southend.



In all, with your help, we have spent approximately £14,000 this year on programmes to support the homeless.

For those of you who missed out in our Summer Raffle there is a further chance to win a prize in our Grand

Christmas Raffle. Tickets at £1 each can be bought now from Frank Edmonds. Prizes include Christmas Hampers, Gift Boxes of Wine, Wines and Spirits, Toiletries and many more. The draw will take place on Friday 17 December. Good Luck

Our Christmas Concert on 17 December will be filmed, as last year, and shown at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Centre, following a

shortened Carol Service in the Church at 7.00 pm. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served.
A YouTube version will be available later.

Please note the date in your diary for the popular Sunday Lunch at the Chalkwell Park Rooms. Tickets will be available soon.

We also have a tentative date of 12 March 2022 for an evening of jazz with David Barlow and friends. Pencil it in!

Now that we are back in church, we are ready to receive any additional gifts at the back of the church for distribution to the various services.

Thank you all for your prayers and support during these difficult times.

Pantomime

Wouldn't be Christmas without panto, would it? (Maybe it would, but why take the risk?). Details of the Wesley panto on 3-4 December are on page 22. Bring the children as well, if you really must...

Carols

Nor would it be Christmas without carols. Here is a note from Jane Fulford:

Carol singing will be on Friday 17 December. We meet in the Concourse at Wesley ready to leave at 6:00 pm. Please wrap up warm, bring a torch so you can read the carols and [children] bring an adult. All monies raised will go to Action for Children. We



won't do a house-to-house collection, but I will leaflet the roads we normally sing in.

For any more details, contact fulford.family@btinternet.com

Lockdown Reflections

Rev Teresa Rutterford and Jane Fulford write:

Each of us has experienced 'lockdown'. It is, we hope, something unique, whose memory shouldn't be forgotten. We need to speak of this experience through any means possible – a poem, a prayer, a piece of scripture, a piece of writing, even a sketch, picture, photo or one word – to express the sorrows that need to be heard and the joys we found that helped us through.



For those of you who would like some help in writing down your accounts and reflections of this time, please contact Rev Teresa and she will help to write it down with you. Perhaps some thoughts and experiences about using "new technology" for meetings, services and so on?

We hope to receive some thoughts and reflections from our Ministers, Local Preachers, Worship Leaders, and others who have had to learn how to

keep in fellowship and worship when we were in isolation, unable to meet or leave our homes.

Revd Teresa is willing to collate all the memories, experiences and reflections that we have had, and share how they have affected your lives and your faith - So please, please write, draw, look back on your phones for pictures or in your memories and thoughts and maybe, just maybe - see God in the midst of it all.

For more information, please contact Revd Teresa via email teresa@rutterford.net – her home address and telephone details are on the Circuit plan.

We need to hear from you by 31st Dec 2021. Thank you, in anticipation.

Puzzle of the Month Solution

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. A Muppets Christmas Carol | 6. Love Actually |
| 2. The Polar Express | 7. The Snowman |
| 3. The Holiday | 8. Home Alone |
| 4. Elf | 9. Miracle on 34th Street |
| 5. How the Grinch Stole Christmas | 10. It's a Wonderful Life |

A Note from Your Treasurer

We need your help. This won't cost you anything but can save the Church money and make life a little easier for the ageing Treasurer. The nearest HSBC bank that we can use to pay in church funds is in Rayleigh. Since the start of November, we have been charged to pay in cash and cheques,

- 40p per cheque and
- 40p for every £100 cash.

Dealing with coins takes a significant amount of time.

So here is how you can help.

- 1. Please try to avoid giving us coins.**
2. If you can avoid cash altogether, that would be even better.

This is for your weekly giving and the money that you collect from your groups. If you have been in the habit of putting coins in the weekly collection or envelope, could you put in less frequently but put in a note? Better still set up a Standing Order. Many have done this. It incurs no charge.

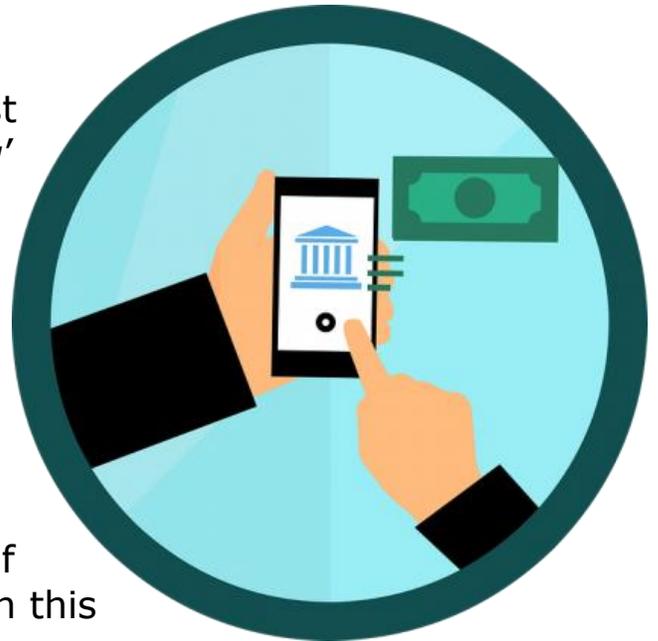


Those of you that collect money from groups, please try to avoid giving me bags of coins. Try to change the coins up for notes. It would be even better if you could pass the money over by Bank Transfer. This also incurs no charge.

- Bank HSBC
- Sort code 40 28 11
- Account 01514725

And you must give a reference (just write, for example, '*Coffee Morning*' in the space provided) so that I know where the money is coming from.

All the better if you have online banking. You can easily make one-off transfers or set up a standing order. Meanwhile the Church is looking into other ways of painless electronic giving – more on this later.



Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

David Watson

Poem of the Month

This month's poem is by Frank Topping (1937 -), who was not only a TV and radio performer, but also a Methodist minister. He was ordained in 1970 but continued writing, broadcasting and acting. In an episode of *Coronation St* he became the first ever 'real' minister to perform a fictional wedding when he 'married' Ken and Deirdre Barlow³.



Janet Watson chose this poem because it chimes with her own feelings about modern busy-ness and the way it obstructs how we want to be. As such it's not specifically about Christmas, but many of us find that we are seldom busier than in the run-up to 25/12. Hence what should be a time to focus on our families can become something else entirely...

Too Busy to Love

Frank Topping

In this morning light
I seem to be hurrying
Into the day
I see about me
Those who share my life
Yet in the hustle
For bathroom, breakfast and bus,
They only merit a glance
Or a brief word.
Eye on the clock
Toast in my hand
It takes too much time
To say, 'I love you.'
Lord, in the morning rush, help me



³ Two leading characters from this interminable soap opera.

Lord of the morning
Moments like these are rare.
Moments when I stop to ask myself
'What am I hurrying for?'
The days are so busy
Working, earning, getting.
That I almost have no time for living,
No time to enjoy the company
Of my wife and children.
I waste precious moments
Moments that could live with me
For the rest of the day.
Moments when we touch or
There's a meeting of eyes
Lord help me to be still with them
At least one moment today.

Lord in this moment of stillness
Help me to remember that I am loved
Even though I don't deserve it
I am loved by family and friends
And amazingly, I am loved by You.

Lord of the morning
Help me to stop rushing
I can't love my family in a hurry
Help me to take time off
To love





Jobs for the garden **From our Special Gardening Correspondent**

Deck the hall with boughs of holly! as the old (originally Welsh) hymn commands, and we venture forth in search not only of holly but also of other festive decorations from our garden and further afield. We may well look for some mistletoe (*viscum album*) in the



branches of trees. It's reasonably easy to spot because it keeps its foliage when all around it are losing theirs.

It's an interesting plant. It attaches to a host tree and gains support and nutrition from it; it also does its own photo-synthesis. It can grow to a ball of about 6 feet across.

The custom of kissing under the mistletoe goes back to Greek, Roman and Norse traditions, even to the Druids. Use of the plant has since merged into Christian tradition, but it's not surprising, given its colourful pagan background, that some churches ban mistletoe. I'm not sure of the Methodist position here...

Many attributes, real or otherwise, have made mistletoe popular. It was widely accepted as an aid to fertility, and a powerful charm

to help young women find suitable husbands. More prosaically, widespread trade in the plant was encouraged by the spread of the railways, and it certainly helped that it remained fresh for a long time after cutting, with no special treatment.

Its propagation is interesting. Thrushes love to eat the berries and in due course drop them undigested, sometimes on tree branches. Blackcaps are even better, because they eat the berries then wipe the sticky juice and seeds off their beaks and onto twigs, where they can germinate.

We mostly associate mistletoe with woodland trees such as oak and beech, but the commonest hosts are cultivated apple trees. If you want to grow your own, keep your mistletoe branches somewhere cool and light until March; then squeeze out the pips and attach them to a young branch with the sticky jelly around them. Most will fail, so try it with as many as you can.

SGC

Humour Corner

999 Caller (panicky):

Hello! I'm calling on behalf of Samantha Jones of Leigh - she's just gone into labour! What should I do?

Call handler:

Is this her first child?

999 Caller (puzzled):

Of course not, you idiot! It's her husband.

WESLEY THEATRE GROUP
PRESENTS



PUSS IN BOOTS

by Ben Crocker

FRI 3RD DEC
7.30PM

SAT 4TH DEC
2PM & 6PM

WESLEY HALL | ELM ROAD
LEIGH-ON-SEA

TICKETS: £7

CHILDREN: £5

FAMILY TICKET
(2A & 2C): £20

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/WESLEY-THEATRE-GROUP



BY KIND PERMISSION OF
BEN CROCKER PANTOMIMES

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

**A very happy Christmas
to all readers of**
The **Highlander**
**your friends, neighbours and relatives,
young, old and somewhere in between**



**As we look forward to a healthy and joyful
2022**

SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week

Children and Young People

Fellowship Groups

Services to the Community

Social and Recreational

Some of these services are suspended at the moment. We now feel confident that they can be restored soon.

For updated news keep following

www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk

or  Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church
also www.methodist.org.uk is an excellent source of information
and inspiration.

Items for the January 2022 issue should be emailed to
andrewghyde@aol.com before the **deadline of Monday 27**
November, and earlier if possible. No email? Don't despair; just
telephone 473111 to arrange an alternative.



The Needles, Isle of Wight.