



He lives!
He lives!

Christ Jesus lives today!

Agnes Easter Message



Dear Friends,

Easter is a very significant time of the year for us as Christians, a season when we are invited to pause, to reflect, and to enter once again into the most powerful story of salvation. It is a time when we remember the depth of God's love, shown so clearly in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

This year, the Methodist Lent resources have challenged us to let go, to release the things that weigh us down or hold us back, and to embrace the practices that help us flourish as followers of Christ. Letting go is not always easy, but it opens space for God to work in us in new and life-giving ways.

It reminds me of the song "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" by Stuart Townend, a hymn that speaks so simply and powerfully of the love that held Jesus on the cross and the grace that continues to shape our lives today. Its words invite us to stand in awe of a love so deep, so patient and so transforming.

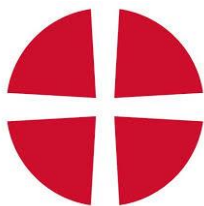
As we journey through Holy Week, we are reminded that Jesus himself let go, letting go of status, letting go of comfort, letting go of his own life, all so that we might know freedom, forgiveness, and hope.

Easter invites us to step into that same pattern, to trust God with our burdens, to open our hearts to renewal, and to discover again the joy of resurrection life.

May this season draw us closer to Christ, deepen our faith, and strengthen our hope.

Thank you

Rev. Agnes Sam



The Annual Church Meeting 2026

There were 19 of us present with Agnes in the Chair. The first part of the meeting moved forward quite swiftly. The reports were taken as read because they had been published in advance of the meeting.

Anne, Gill and Muriel were re-elected as Stewards. Anne indicated that this might be her last year and that she is now stepping down from her role leading safeguarding. Peter Bennett has offered to take this on. The appointment will be ratified at the next Church Council. Muriel explained that the co-ordinating Steward's role was becoming increasingly an administrative one and help on a Sunday would be appreciated.

Sandra and June were re-elected on to the Church Council as representatives of the congregation. Patrick was also re-elected as Church Treasurer.

We then had a coffee break and reconvened for discussions.

There was a recap of the impact of us deciding to class ourselves as a Small Church and the need for a wider range of viewpoints and ideas when the Church Council meets. Under Small Church governance every member can be on the Church Council (anybody can attend at present but only Council members can vote) but each member doing so needs to also take on the responsibility of being a trustee.

The response to this was one of general acceptance although no-one new agreed to become a member of the Church Council. Others were happy to give their input but the timing of the meeting would have to change to allow those working, or with daytime responsibilities, to attend. The input of non-members is important and possibly changing the date and time of the traditional Church Council to an evening with an option of joining on Zoom was suggested to enable a wider group to attend.

Meeting agendas should be clearer and the set-up of the meeting should be more formal like the AGM and be led from the front to ensure firmer direction of the meeting and give everyone an opportunity to put their points forward. There was discussion about getting more Church members and how to utilise the building for the community and seek more volunteers.

Agnes challenged us all to invite and bring one friend to Church during the next year!

Worship and Bible Study

This discussion included what people like about worship or what new ideas of worship they'd like to see. All Age Worship was welcome, making it fun for children but still making the whole congregation happy. It also covered Bible study. Today, this needs to be relevant to help with connecting with others and to develop spirituality. Lent Bible study has received positive feedback, indicating that different themed studies at various points in the year could be considered.

Future Ministry Ideas

A family worker is essential. Shared worship with other churches, just Methodist and ecumenical, are acceptable but there was a preference for our own worship at Hockley. It was recognised that there was a need to encourage Brightstars families to attend worship and Church parade was discussed. It was suggested that a questionnaire to ask them what works for them might help in encouraging them to attend. It was also suggested that the premises becoming a hub e.g. for children not currently in education who have nowhere to go with their tutor, and this could enable the use the Church building for related organisations.

Combined All-Age Worship and Parade service at one of Agnes' three Churches was suggested so the Church is fuller, which may encourage more people to attend.

Muriel

The Experian Project

Below is a report to the last Circuit Meeting about **The Experience Project**.

The Southend and Leigh Circuit launched The Experience Project in the old Whittingham Avenue Church on the Whittingham Avenue Estate, Southend in 2020.

The long-term aim is that the Whittingham Mission will become a technological creative hub that presents an opportunity for the development of young people's aspirations. It's had funding from the National Lottery and help with food distribution from to Ocado.

You can find out more about the project on its [website](#) and the Christmas Light show in particular is worth seeing



The Experience Project Report – March 2026

We held our annual Christmas Projection Mapping Spectacular on Wed 17th December. With upgraded production and more intricate projection mapping, we turned the architecture into a festive masterpiece. It was a night of magic, music, and holiday spirit, that drew hundreds of people from the local community and beyond! The show wouldn't have been possible without the incredible support of our local partners and helpers:

- Alex & Local Businesses for sponsoring the show and making this high-level production a reality.
- The Staff & Volunteers who gave their time behind the scenes - thank you for your hard work and dedication.

- Thank you to McDonald's of Southend and all the other local businesses and charities who donated presents and children's toys for the community
- A special thank you to Chris of Captain Stonefish Productions who made all the visuals and projection mapping possible.
- Special thanks to Lee Clark (Kursaal Confelicity) - for co-hosting the event. His dedication and enthusiasm to help at every stage played a massive part in making the night run so smoothly.

You can watch the full Light Show here: [The Experience Project Christmas Light Show](#)

We are partnering with The Craftsman on Hamlet Court Road, The Moonraker Club and The Lion & The Lamb on Station Road, to provide free meals and essential food parcels to local people who are struggling. Every other week, for a full year, the partnership will supply 200 fresh, healthy meals, alongside dry goods and everyday essentials. This support will reach families, older adults, and individuals facing hardship, helping to ease food insecurity while offering dignity and care. The pubs will act as friendly, accessible community hubs where people can collect support without stigma, in a welcoming and familiar environment. This project will strengthen community connection, reduce isolation, and improve wellbeing for some of the most vulnerable people in Westcliff.

We have received some Toy Donations which we have been able to pass on to local Primary Schools / Family Centres:

- Thorpedean School - Lego build books and solar robots encouraging focus, creativity, problem-solving and a real sense of achievement.
- St Nicholas School - Books and toys creating excitement, shared learning and lots of proud moments.
- Trinity Family Centre - Group play, connection and joy - bringing children together to relax, engage and have fun.
- Temple Sutton School - Solar robots and Lego supporting confidence, independence and positive engagement with learning.

The Southend and Leigh Circuit and The Experience Project at the Whittingham Mission Centre would like to acknowledge and offer sincere thanks to the Essex Community Foundation for their support in

awarding us a grant for the work we do in Southend. The fund provided will enable us to continue the vital work amongst our communities.

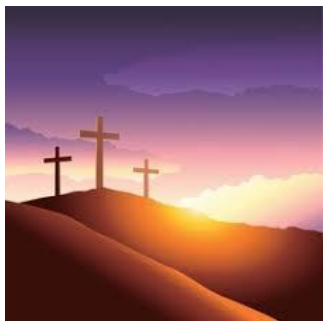
For live updates on our daily and weekly activities please see our Facebook Page and Website:

www.thewhittinghamexperienceproject.co.uk/

www.facebook.com/people/The-Whittingham-Experience-Project/100090528071592/

The Experience Project Team
Southend and Leigh Methodist Circuit (34/10)

Thought for the Week



The story of your life will still have kinks, twists and corners you gave it. The consequences of your actions, for you and other people, will roll inexorably on. God can't take these away, or your life would not be your life. He can only take from us – take over for us – the guilt and fear, so that we can start again free, in hope ... Grace is forgiveness we can't earn. Grace is tragedy accepted with open arms and somehow turned to good. Grace is what the wasteful death on Skull Hill did. (*Francis Spufford*)

From the Southwell Minster Magazine

Di Jacobs



BEETLE DRIVE and KARAOKE



with Tombola and Raffle

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY and bring
your friends.

Saturday 13 June 3.30 pm

Adults - £5

Aged 5-16 - £3

Group of up to 5 - £15

Under 5's free

Includes tea coffee or squash and cake
bring your own snacks or drinks - **but no
alcohol.**

For tickets phone Gill 07518027291 or email
hockleymeths@live.co.uk

Easter truly is the great hope.

I feel this winter has lasted forever with storm after storm and more rain than Noah had to deal with. Some of them were so bad they had a name! Still waiting for storm "Billy".

My latest painting was from a photo some one took and posted on Face Book.

It's the entrance to Portavogie Harbour with lights just about shining out through the high waves. It reminded me of how lucky I was to not having gone to sea. Most of my cousins ended up on the boats as we come from a family of fishermen. It would have killed me and tossed my hair.

How welcoming this sight must have been on their return home for "those in peril on the sea."



Billy



EASTER

2026



OCKLEY &
AUKWELL

METHODIST CHURCH



Palm Sunday Eggstravaganza 29th March



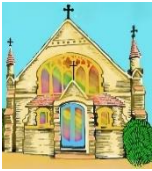
All Age Worship and Parade, followed by an Easter Egg hunt. There'll be palm crosses, and Hornby railway carriages!!?? Come and find out what that is all about. The service begins at 11:15am with refreshments in the coffee room from 10:30am.

Maundy Thursday 2nd April

A united service at Rayleigh Methodist Church led by Rev Norman Hooks. The service starts at 7:00pm



EASTER



HOCKLEY &
UAWKWELL
METHODIST CHURCH

2026



Good Friday 3rd April

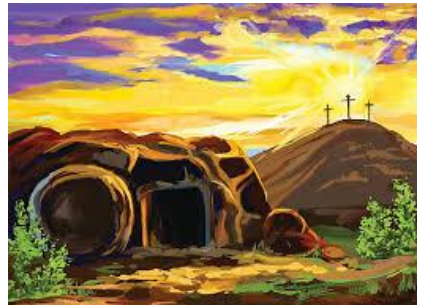


A united service at United Methodist Church, Great Wakering led by Rev Agnes Sam. The service starts at 10:30am.

We are also invited to the 10:30am service at Emmanuel.

Easter Day, Sunday 4th April

Holy Communion Service
led by Rev Brenda Gutberlet
The service begins at
11:15am with refreshments
in the coffee room from
10:30am.



Billy Jean!.

Our girls adopted Aunties - Jean and Kaye.



Billy

Thursday Club

As ever we have kept busy visiting many places of interest and we are so lucky to have many good eating places nearby and we are gradually getting round to checking them all out. We love the theatre and as a group we were entertained recently at the Cliffs Pavilion with the iconic musical "Top Hat."



There was a lot of tap dancing involved and there were a few tired limbs at the end of the show as we did our best to join in (while staying in our seats of course). I did have some advantage as my dad was a plumber and I was used to seeing him dancing with taps.

Our next meeting before Easter is a chance for us to get re-acquainted with The Victory P.H. in Ashingdon for a lunchtime meal.

After Easter we will be deciding upon our programme leading up to our summer break in July.

There are a number of exciting shows to see at the Cliffs Pavilion and the Palace Theatre and these are just a few that we might consider. Little Shop of Horrors, Guys and Dolls, Anything Goes, Barnum and High Society.

We also love our quizzes and this is just a small sample that you might enjoy solving.

QUESTIONS

1. Which Irish actress recently won the award as best actress in the American Oscars for her performance in the film "Hamnet."
2. The actor Cillian Murphy is probably best known for the TV series "Peaky Blinders." What is his character's name.
3. Name the young Arsenal footballer who recently became the youngest ever goal scorer in the Premier League.
4. In horse racing "Gaelic Warrior" recently won this year's Gold Cup. At which racecourse was this held.
5. Cornwall's Eden Project has now been added to the RHS Garden list enabling members to make free visits on certain dates. In which year did it first open to the general public.
6. What is the current charge for cars crossing the QE2 bridge from Essex to Kent.
7. Which former "Neighbours" duo combined to sing the 1988 hit "Especially For You."
8. Which husband and wife duo sang the 1965 hit "I Got You Babe."
9. Who was the father of Queen Elizabeth the First.
10. Which British Prime Minister established the Metropolitan Police, giving rise to the nickname "Bobbies."

ANSWERS (No cheating!)

1. Jessie Buckley
2. Tommy Shelby
3. Max Dowman
4. Cheltenham
5. 2001
6. £3.50
7. Kylie Minogue & Jason Donovan
8. Sonny & Cher
9. Henry VIII
10. Sir Robert Peel

Ray

Events at other Churches

Benfleet Methodist Church
Maunday Thursday Meal and
Tenebrae Service
Thursday 2nd APRIL at 6:30pm

Menu
Egg salad and Matzos
Lamb (or white fish)
New potatoes and peas
Apple and sultana crumble
with ice cream
Grape juice

Please sign up on the sheet in the
Welcome area
Contact : BMCShelagh@outlook.com
Or 07593677636

Inclusion in Worship at Rayleigh Methodist Church Saturday, 28th March 10:00am - 1:00pm



We are holding a session, led by Hannah Ashton, who is a member of Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church and a professional specialist working in the NHS.

Last November, Hannah ran an awareness raising session on neurodiversity. She is now going to follow that up with a session on making worship truly inclusive for all. This will involve a presentation and sharing of good practice with many practical ideas that we can then implement in our churches. Refreshments will be served and all will be made very welcome. Past experience confirms that Hannah will be both informative and very interesting.



**CIRCUIT EASTER
"PRAYER & PRAISE"
CELEBRATION.**

**EASTER SUNDAY
EVENING**

**5th April 2026.
@ 6.30 P.M.**

BELFAIRS METHODIST CHURCH
(Eastwood Road North,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 4NG)

**Led by the 'Worship Band'
and others from the circuit.**

**Come and share with us in the joy
of Christ's Resurrection.**

We look forward to seeing you there.



THE EASTER LINK 2026

Thank you, Billy for designing the eye-catching cover to this edition of The Link. We felt that the image is so striking that it speaks for itself and we shouldn't clutter it up with another title, so for this edition the title is on the back – not too confusing, we hope!

Thanks to everybody who has contributed to this issue and we hope you all have a peaceful and reflective Easter.

Muriel & Mike

29th March 2026 **No. 115 Edition 252**
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