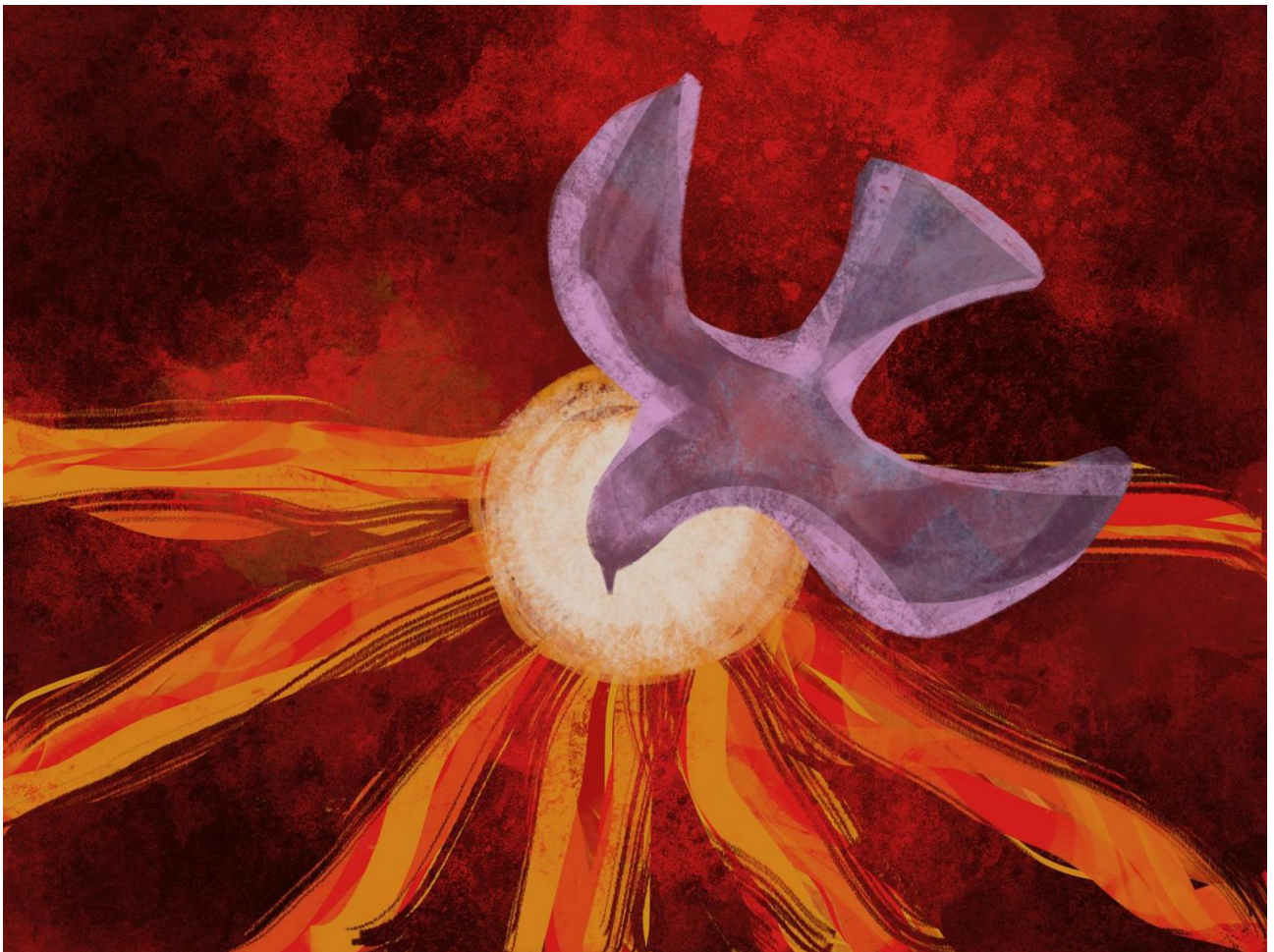


# Con+ac+

## **The Magazine of South Essex Circuit Methodist Churches**

### **Pentecost Edition 2025**



## **Come Holy Spirit, Come**

The South Essex Circuit is committed to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action.



## **Circuit Policy**

The Circuit's role is to ensure the effective use of its resources to further the four dimensions of 'Our Calling' as Methodists.

### **Worship**

to increase awareness of God's presence  
and to celebrate God's love;

### **Service**

to be good neighbours to people in need and  
to challenge injustice;

### **Evangelism**

to make more followers of Jesus;

### **Learning and Caring**

to help people to learn and grow in faith  
through mutual support and care.

*Where will you get on board?*

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Living God,  
eternal Holy Spirit,  
let your bright intoxicating energy  
which fired those first disciples  
fall on us  
to turn the world again.  
Hear this prayer  
for your love's sake.  
Amen.

*E te Atua ora,  
e te Wairua Tapu ora tonu,  
kia maringi iho mai  
tōu ngao kanapa taunanawe  
i whakakā ai i aua ākonga tuatahi  
kia tahuri anō ai te ao.  
Whakarongo ki tēnei inoi  
i runga i tōu aroha.  
Āmine.*

*Adapted from A New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa,*

## Circuit Event: The Israel and Palestine Situation



**Please take note of a special event on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August from 4-6 pm. A talk delivered by Rev'd David Hardman, Methodist Ecumenical Partner in Jerusalem. Rev'd David will share with us insights in the ongoing desperate situation in Israel and Palestine. This event is organized by the Circuit and will be held at Trinity Methodist Church.**

**It is free but donations to support the causes of the Ecumenical Partnership Office will be very much appreciated. Please spread the word.**





## From the Superintendent

Hello Everyone,

*'On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' (John 20: 19)*

In this season of Easter I have found myself being drawn to these words and to the setting of Jesus first appearance to his disciples. I try to imagine the emotional, psychological and physical state these disciples were in, reeling from the shockingly unjust accusations and trial of their Master and Teacher, followed by his brutal execution on the cross. I imagine the depth of fear they must have felt and how each sought a hiding place as far away from Jesus as possible, and the burning sense of shame and remorse they must have known each time they thought about how they had abandoned Jesus.

And now, as they gradually emerge from those hiding places they come together, still seeking from each other a sense of shared identity, of meaning and solidarity. Here in this dank and dim room with the doors firmly locked, together, yet still traumatized. Then suddenly in this gloom stands Jesus, radiant, full of life and light. 'Peace be with you', his first words to them. The words he spoke, 'Peace be with you', might not have sounded anything out of the ordinary. 'Peace be with you'; '*Shalom Aleichem*' was the standard greeting of that language and culture; much greater impact was to see him who was dead, now alive, in the flesh and speaking to them. How awesome was that?

But as Jesus repeats this ordinary greeting sufficiently enough times the deeper relevance of the message begins to register. **Peace be with you.** In the midst of all their trauma, guilt and amazement Jesus offers peace. Our world seems to be in such turbulence currently, many are the changes happening, often concurrently. Long-standing ideologies, practices, beliefs and standards which have served society for several decades, however imperfectly, are rapidly being dismantled. At the personal level, many are feeling the pinch from the rising cost of living, from illnesses of themselves or loved ones, relationships are becoming increasingly brittle and tense – all of which might leave us feeling unsettled, disquieted and somewhat low-spirited. It is against this backdrop that Jesus word of greeting drops to the modern-day disciple: **Peace be with you.**



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I believe our critical mission is to seek out how to make this peace work for us in each of our contexts – in our personal lives, in our busy jobs, within our church fellowship, in our local community – anywhere and everywhere. To carry peace within us, like the veritable treasure in clay-pots and through the cracks left by former traumas, allow peace to filter through to others we meet. In John 14: 27, Jesus clarifies the peace he gives, **“My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”**

May that Peace be yours and may it be mine today, tomorrow and forever.  
The Peace of the Lord be with you!

With much affection,  
**Rev'd Felicity**

## **A Prayer for Peace:**

Risen Lord Jesus,

Today and all days embrace us in a love that knows no end.

Today and all days fill us with a power that overcomes.

Today and all days encourage us with a word that nourishes.

Today and all days inspire us with a hope that sustains.

Today and all days comfort us with a peace that endures.

Today and all days bring wholeness of body, mind and spirit.

Today and all days.

We lift to you our world and the leaders of the world – breathe your peace on all situations.

We lift to you those struggling to put food on the table and pay bills – breathe your peace into all situations.

We lift to you the sick: those known and loved by us – and those known only to you; breathe your peace into every situation.

We lift to you the lonely, the isolated, the lost. The stranger and the alienated – breathe your peace into every situation.

We give you thanks that in your Risen presence you lift us; and to us you give your gift of peace. Fill our whole bodies, mind and spirit with your peace and help us to be those who inspire, encourage, and comfort with words and actions of peace, hope and love.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Risen Saviour.

**Amen.**

A photograph of a rustic wooden cross made of two weathered beams, resting on a coarse, light-colored burlap fabric. The cross is positioned diagonally across the frame.

The Ordination Service  
for

The Rev'd  
Fiona  
Smith

We're delighted to share the details of Revd Fiona's ordination service at the Methodist Conference at Telford in June.

The ordination service will take place on the afternoon of **Sunday, 29 June, 4:00 pm at St Chads Church, Shrewsbury**, following Reception into Full Connexion in the morning.

The service will be live-streamed at the Conference website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/structure-and-governance/the-methodist-conference/conference-2025/watch-conference-live/>.

We encourage you to watch it if you can!

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## Easter Biscuit for Pentecost and Beyond



Easter biscuits are a delightful tradition, especially in the UK, with their origins steeped in history and symbolism. These sweet, spiced treats, often flavoured with cinnamon, nutmeg, and sometimes currants, are thought to have ties to religious practices and seasonal celebrations. The round shape of the biscuits is sometimes said to represent the stone that was rolled away from Jesus' tomb.

Historically, Easter biscuits were also associated with hospitality and celebration, often baked and

shared with family and friends during the festive season. In some regions, they were even given as a gift to people attending Easter church services.

Here's a classic recipe for traditional Easter biscuits, a delightful treat with warm spices and a subtle citrus twist:

### Ingredients:

- 125g unsalted butter, softened
- 125g caster sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 200g plain flour
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- A pinch of salt
- 50g currants or raisins (optional)
- Granulated sugar (for topping)

### Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan)/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, cream the butter and caster sugar together until light and fluffy.
3. Beat in the egg yolk and lemon zest until well combined.
4. Sift the flour, mixed spice, and salt into the bowl. Mix together to form a dough. If you're adding currants, fold them in now.
5. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to about 5mm thickness. Use a biscuit cutter to shape the biscuits.
6. Place the biscuits onto the prepared tray and sprinkle granulated sugar generously on top.
7. Bake for 10–12 minutes, or until the biscuits are golden. Let them cool on a wire rack.

**M McPherson**



# Contact



## The Commissioning of a Worship Leader.....

In the September/October Contact magazine, Cathy Beckwith wrote about her journey to become a Worship Leader. Cathy is based at Linford Methodist Church, and she wrote about how the course had changed and developed her as a Worship Leader.

On Easter Sunday, after much studying, challenges with technology, tutorials with her “study buddies” and passing the assignments, the end of Cathy’s formal training was marked by her “Commissioning Service”. This service, which continues her journey as a Worship Leader, was led by the Rev. Fiona Smith. Cathy gave her testimony and affirmed her belief that she is called by God to be a Worship Leader. She promised to be “diligent in preparation and continue to equip herself for this ministry”. Also, to “promote the glory of God” in her daily life and in leading worship. Member of the congregation promised to encourage Cathy and support with their prayers.

It was a joyous occasion with opportunities to meet Cathy’s friends and share fellowship and food with others across the circuit.

Cathy’s referred to the hymn is “I Do Not Know What Lies Ahead”, in her testimony. Words from this hymn are –

“I know who holds the future, and he’ll guide me with His hand. With God things don’t just happen; everything by Him is planned. So, as I face tomorrow, with its problems large and small, I’ll trust the God of miracles, give to him my all.”

© 1958 New Spring / Imagem / Small Stone Media / Adm.  
by Song Solutions Daybreak Alfred B Smith and Eugene Clarke

## Photos of the Day

Cathy with Rev. Fiona Smith who led the Commissioning service at Linford Methodist Church on Easter Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2025



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Cathy with her tutor Jane Fulford, her mentor Clare Nice and the "Study buddies" Colleen Weedon, Matilda Kawadza and Anna Williams

Cathy was congratulated at a meeting in February by the Rev. Dr David Chapman, Chair of the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District.



## FLAGS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS



**There is a special St. Paul's Church Anniversary weekend celebration starting with a Coffee Morning on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> of June 10-12pm, raising funds for MASL (Epilepsy medications in Sierra Leone). Homemade cakes, pastries and some cultural light bites to buy. Charity stall, so please bring change! Some activities are available to participate for all ages. The next day, Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 10:00 will be a special Church service, followed by a bring and share cultural lunch for all to enjoy.**

# Contact

I just wanted to share with you a poem and a prayer I came across. I wrote these back in the early 2000's. I've been writing poems and prayers since my childhood. I love writing poems and prayers. They are a wonderful way of expression and another lifeline to God. I have had some of my work published to raise funds for various charities and as a way of giving hope to others with the clear message that God never leaves us during or after moments of trials and tribulations, and there is life after trauma. God can take life experiences both the good and not so good and turn them into something beautiful. So, as I share these with you: may God bless you always and keep you in His peace: Amen.

## I Pray to Thee With Love.

I ask Thee Lord to calm my mind and help me put today behind,  
I ask Thee Lord to hold my hand and guide me through what life demands.  
I ask Thee Lord to fill my cup and help me rise as I stand up,  
And get me through another day and ask Thee Lord to help I pray.  
I ask Thee Lord for tenderness, upon my knees as I confess,  
What is mine is also yours, I end this prayer with much applause.

## Sweet Jesus, I thank you.

Sweet loving Jesus: Lord, I pray with a thankful heart. I kneel before you with much humbleness. You know the many trials that lay before and behind me. Some of these trials are like heavy blankets that lay out in front of me for miles on end. Still sweet Lord, I know you walk with me throughout my life, as you always have done. There have been many times in my life where I have felt helpless and desperate, Yet, still my Lord, I know that you were always there for me. No matter how high the mountains are, none of these are impossible to climb with you climbing next to me. You have shown me impossible solutions and often miracles. Through the traumatic times of my life, you have surrounded me with love and grace, I owe my life to you. I thank you Jesus for saving me. I thank you. In your precious name I pray: Amen.

*'Do not fear for I have redeemed you: I have summoned you by name: you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you: and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned: the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the holy one of Israel, your Saviour.'*

Isaiah 43: 1-3. NIV Translation.

**Colleen Weedon.**





## Linford Church Celebrates 125 Years

Last year, when Linford Church celebrated its 124th 'birthday', we focused on our past. Former members from around the country were invited for a grand reunion.

This year, our focus was the present. We decided to thank God for the wonderful situation of our church. We decided to have our service outside. Unfortunately, May 18th proved to be the worst Sunday in an otherwise beautiful Spring! The tent which we thought would shield us from the heat of the sun instead gave us shelter from the cold wind and a spot or two of rain.



Reverend Fiona led our worship and focused upon our church as a hub for the local community. During the week our church premises are used for Toddlers and their carers; sewing groups; a local choir; a karate group; an Irish Dancing group and 2 Slimming World Classes.

Some of our wider church family joined us for a barbecue lunch after the service - cooked indoors due to the weather!

One of our favourite hymns, which we had to include on such an occasion, is 'All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small'. We had a very small creature who decided to join us for Holy Communion, and later for lunch!



**Cathy Beckwith**  
**Worship Leader at**  
**Linford Methodist Church**

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## HORNDON-ON-THE-HILL METHODIST CHURCH

All are welcome to our services and other activities.

### **Services June 2024** **Sunday 10:30am Worship**

1 <sup>st</sup> June	Mrs Suzanne Stubbs	
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Local Arrangement	
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Revd Fiona Smith	Holy Communion
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Steve Burton	Church Anniversary
29 <sup>th</sup> June	Local Arrangement	

### **VE 80 Commemoration and Celebration**

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, exactly 80 years since the cessation of the Second World War in Europe, we held a special Community Cuppa and Chat morning with a wide range of drinks, savouries and cakes.

We were pleased to have two entertainment sessions: listening to and singing along to a selection of songs popular in the two World Wars and yesteryear. In addition we were entertained with a quiz themed on the Second World War and heard the recollections of many who came forward to give their poignant memories of the War years and time immediately after the War.



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## Christian Aid Week

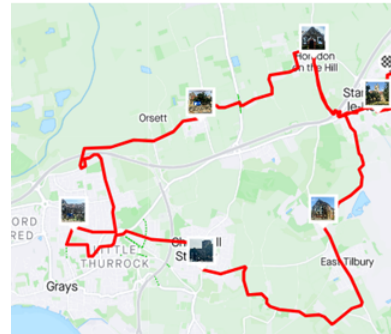
On May 15<sup>th</sup> we were pleased to special Community Cuppa and Chat morning in support of the charity Christian Aid. This also marked our first anniversary of these community mornings.

## Cycle of Faith

Last year members of the Horndon on the Hill Methodist Church completed a cycling circuit around the Methodist Churches in Thurrock.

We will be riding the same circuit on **21<sup>st</sup> June** which also encompasses Horndon and Orsett parish churches. It would be good to share this ride through our locality with others from the Parish and the wider area.

The leisurely ride is led by a qualified British Cycling ride leader and first aider and takes around three hours with a number of brief stops. Under 18's are welcome but must be accompanied by parent/guardian or responsible adult. If you are interested please contact Jeff Bell at [jeff3bell@gmail.com](mailto:jeff3bell@gmail.com) for further details.



## Horndon – on – the – Hill Feast and Fayre

We look forward to the annual Feast and Fayre on **28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June**. The Chapel will be open and decorated with a beautiful display of flowers and presentation on the history of the Christian Church and the history of the Methodist Church in Horndon. Everyone is warmly welcome to step aside from the busyness of the day for a time of quiet and reflection. The Methodist Hall will also be open as usual for tea, coffee, sandwiches, rolls, crisps, ice creams and a variety of desserts. Come in for a chat and refreshments and on the way browse our stalls in the car park for bric-a-brac bargains.

## Coffee mornings and lunch

All are welcome to our weekly Community Cuppa and Chat in the Methodist Church Hall. We meet on Thursdays between 10:00 – 12:00 noon for the coffee morning with drinks, savouries and biscuits and a soup and a roll between 12:00 noon - 13:00.

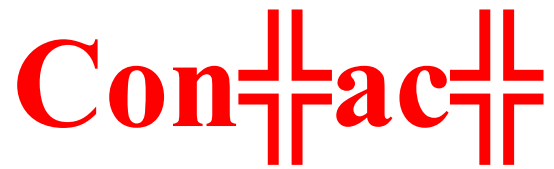


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HOTH took part in the Thurrock Foodbank exercise called the Adlent calendar. We did it as a Church, everyone was invited to choose a day and collect the item(s) for that day, be it pot noodles squash, crisps marmalade or many others.

This was well supported and a photo of all the items is attached.



## **Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray**

Now to the Holy Spirit let us pray  
for true faith, most needed on our way:  
guide us and defend us when life is ending  
and our journey homeward is tending.  
Lord, have mercy!

O sweetest Love, your grace on us bestow;  
set our hearts with sacred fire aglow,  
that with hearts united we love each other,  
ev'ry stranger, sister, and brother.  
Lord, have mercy!

Shine in our hearts, O Spirit, precious light,  
that we Jesus Christ may know aright,  
clinging to our Savior, whose love has claimed us,  
who to our true homeland has brought us.  
Lord, have mercy!

—*Medieval German hymn, adpt. Martin Luther (1483–1546)*