

The Centenary of



Leigh Elim Church

Glendale Gardens
Leigh-on-Sea

1921 - 2021

The Elim Pentecostal Church is a growing Movement of Christian congregations in the UK and Ireland.

In a world that can feel like a desert, our 21st-century churches seek to be a place of spiritual resource within their communities.

The founders wanted the name of their new Movement to express their vision and values, and so chose 'Elim', the name of an oasis in the Bible that the people of Israel discovered as they wandered through the desert. It provided shade and refreshment to all who encountered it.

Leigh Elim Church are delighted to be celebrating 100 years of service to their community in Leigh-on-Sea and continue to be a place where neighbours feel welcome to join together to celebrate, support and encourage each other, joined in the knowledge that they are loved and cherished by Christ.

This publication aims to highlight the people and events over the last 100 years that have made Leigh Elim Church the place it is today. We hope you enjoy reminiscing with us as we celebrate our centenary.

NEW GOSPEL HALL

Glendale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea

Opening Services

WILL BE HELD (D.V.)

On SUNDAY, MAY 22nd, 1921

Morning, 11.0 Afternoon, 3.0 Evening, 6.30

AND CONTINUE FOR EIGHT DAYS

Each Afternoon at 3 o'clock Each Evening at 7.30

Services conducted by

PASTOR G. JEFFREYS

THE GREAT WELSH REVIVALIST

From Elim Tabernacle, Belfast

THE HALL IS OPENED TO TEACH

1. A Full and a Free Salvation through the atoning work of The Lord Jesus Christ. *John i, 29.*
 2. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost for all Believers as on the day of Pentecost. *Acts ii, 38-39.*
 3. Divine Healing. *Matt. viii, 17.*
 4. The Second Coming of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Acts i, 11.*
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ALL SEATS FREE

SPECIAL HYMNS

J. G. FILMER, Printer, Woodfield Road, Leigh

The Elim Pentecostal Churches started in 1915 in Northern Ireland where a young man, George Jeffreys, who had been greatly influenced by the Great Welsh Revival, started preaching.



George Jeffreys

Thousands flocked to hear his message of hope. Miracles and healings began to happen on a regular basis and the Elim movement was formed. Today there are over 600 Elim churches in the UK with many more worldwide.

Founded in 1921, Leigh Elim Pentecostal Church was the first Elim church in England. It became the centre for a work that stretched mostly across East Anglia, playing host to such notable Christian leaders as George Jeffreys and Smith Wigglesworth.

1921

George Kingston, a successful business man, was the first to prevail upon George Jeffreys to begin an Elim work in England. He and his wife Mabel had been holding meetings in their home 'Furzefield', now the HQ of Belfairs Golf Course.



George and Mabel Kingston

The Southend Standard reported

"At those meetings remarkable things happened. People were healed miraculously and many were filled with the Holy Spirit as were the disciples on the Day of Pentecost speaking supernaturally with other tongues. So great was the interest aroused that the room became crowded meeting after meeting".

Consequently, a 'Commodious' former Ammunition Shed from WW1 was erected on the present site in Glendale Gardens, it quickly becoming known as the 'Tin Church', and on May 22nd 1921, George Jeffreys conducted the first service and ordained George Kingston as pastor of the first Elim Pentecostal church in England.

At the time of George's death in 1948 the Kingston's had established 22 churches mostly in Essex.

Testimony from The Elim Evangel January 1922

"At the age of 15 I had rheumatic fever which left me with a weak heart... inflammation of the heart... valvular disease... also strangulation, haemorrhage, anaemia and other complications.

... I was anointed with oil and prayed for and arose healed of all my diseases". (The lady went on to have three children and lived a normal life free from disease. Ed)

And another from 1925

A most remarkable healing occurred during a recent baptismal service... A converted gypsy, who had been suffering from serious internal trouble, was being baptised when The Lord instantly healed him. He came out of the water rejoicing in this miraculous touch of the Great Physician.

1941

At the time of it's 20th Anniversary the then church building, a large ex. War dept WW1 corrugated iron ammunition shed, was wrecked by a Land mine that was dropped from an enemy bomber onto Westleigh Avenue. Ruth Hockley described the scene

"Westleigh Avenue was like a ploughed field, at the end of the road houses were a pile of bricks. We could see through to where the church was, but all we saw was a huge pile of rafters and timber everywhere, there was nothing left of the church at all".

The Church members continued to meet in what is now the Constitutional Club and then for 9½ years what is now the Moose Hall in Cranleigh Drive.



Pastor George and Ruth Stormont
1941 to 1963

The then Pastor, George Stormont wrote,

"What precious days those were. Perhaps the outstanding memory was of the Forces Rallies held on Sunday nights. (At which Smith Wigglesworth that great man of Faith and The Word visited and preached on a number of occasions. Ed.)

The ladies of the church (most of the men had been called up. Ed) went out after the gospel services, and invited soldiers in. In crowds they came in, and after a lively programme they heard the gospel preached. What a thrill it was to see men come right to the front of the hall before their mates, to show their choice for The Lord Jesus. One night 23 men came thus. In all over 300 made their decision".

He continued

"As soon as conditions permitted, we set about the task of rebuilding, and in October 1950 we were able to open our new church. War Damage Allowance covered the cost of replacing the old building, but we felt it wise to improve on the original premises".

The extra cost was £3500 which was repaid within 7 years. The kitchen and Upper Room were added later at a cost of £1300.

Note: Sunday 19th January 1941

The Heavy Attack

Five-hundred incendiaries dropped on Southend, Westcliff, Chalkwell, & Leigh after German bombers were forced to turn back from an attack on London by heavy Ack-Ack fire & increased patrols by night fighters, the town was hit after the Nazi bombers failed to locate the airfield (now London Southend Airport). The estuary area and town were hit by delayed action bombs & landmines.

Southend was a 'closed' town during much of the war with many soldiers billeted in the town, many living in lorries waiting to be shipped out. Soldiers were invited into member's homes where hospitality and comfort were provided.



Stone Laying

◆ 1950 ◆

The new building was opened on October 7th 1950 by George Kingston's widow Mabel. Over 400 people attended.



The opening of the new building

◆ Sunday School ◆

Sunday School was not possible during the 9 years in the borrowed hall although a small class was held in a member's home.

As soon as the new building opened members canvassed the local housing estates and soon as many as 200 children regularly attended every Sunday afternoon, collected on two double decker buses.



Sunday School





Sunday School 'on parade'. Led by Ron Stripp and Graham Turnidge



Sunday School outing to Canvey Island



Young people's group early 60s

To compliment the Sunday School a mid-week after school meeting for children was held.

It was called Elim Sunshine Corner. The hour or so was a fun time filled with Quizzes, songs, and a Bible story.

The popular Leigh meetings were led by Violet Creasy and Miss Rosina Hart



Violet Creasy and Rosina Hart



*Sunshine Corner outing
(adults L/R Miss Hart, Grace Spurling, Violet Creasy, Grace Turnidge)*

◆ 1963 ◆

George and Ruth Stormont moved on after 23 years and 1963 saw the induction of Philip Stormont together with his wife Mary.



*Pastor Philip Stormont with wife Mary and daughters
Heather, Pauline and Isobel*

During their tenure the Church became quite missionary orientated. A Land Rover was provided for work in S. Africa and funds were raised for missionary projects through the Leigh branch of the Elim Women's Missionary Auxiliary (EWMA) that Mary started.

Philip spent 3 months sharing ministry in S. Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Upon his return he was able to encourage the work with recordings and coloured slides. Their ministry knew wonderful blessing and great answers to prayer both personally and for the church as a whole, *"many testifying to being renewed spiritually and restored physically"*.

In a recent letter Mary, now 98, wrote;

*"How great is the God we adore
Our faithful unchangeable friend
Whose love is as great as His power
And knows neither measure nor end"*

Testimony from the 60s.

Mrs Walker, a member of the Women's Fellowship wanted to be baptised but was concerned because she suffered from bad eczema on her hands. She decided to wear white cotton gloves. Afterwards whilst helping her dry and dress Mary removed the wet gloves.

"Her hands were completely healed with lovely clear skin"

1970s

The Seventies were marked by something of a Revival. A young Anglican Minister called Trevor Dearing was holding **Power Praise and Healing** meetings in Hainault. Such was the power of these meetings with healings, and spiritual deliverance a regular occurrence, coach loads of people were attending.

Such was the demand for more local meetings that the then Pastor, Derek Edmonds began similar **Power Praise and Healing** meetings in Glendale Gardens. Sunday night meetings were packed to capacity.

*"If you don't go early,
you won't get a seat"*



Pastor Derek and Maureen Edmonds

◆◆ Leigh Elim Choir and Musical Endeavours ◆◆

The seventies also saw the formation of a choir led by Maureen Edmonds and Mavis Boxall. There had been several choirs over the years, the first being the Leigh Crusader Choir from the 1920s and 30s



Leigh on Sea Crusader Choir (Circa 1930)



Leigh Elim Choir at Kingstanding Elim Church (early 1970s)

The latest version of the choir was a 'Scratch' Community Choir formed and led by Pastor Ann Wilks. It comprised members of the local community and Church members who enjoyed singing. Programmes of Christian and secular songs have been produced and performed in various schools, old peoples care homes as well as the Church building.



'Scratch' Community Choir Rehearsal (June 2017)

A notable success was 'Nativity Rocks' a nativity story using West End stage show music, co-written by our own Maria Purkiss.



Nativity Rocks Christmas Production (2019)

Before they all went to Uni, 'Freedom Band', a group of gifted young people, regularly played Gospel inspired music and shared testimonies at local clubs and pubs.



Freedom Band (2014)

We currently have a fine group of gifted musicians and singers led by Irène Young, who has also had great success running music workshops, to help develop the skills and passion for worship in the young people of our church family, many of whom are now regularly a part of our Sunday Morning worship team.



Music Workshop playing in our Christmas service (2017)

Campaigners

Pastor Tom Stevens and his wife Erica formed the local company of Campaigners, a uniformed organisation with large groups of boys and girls meeting for fun activities throughout the week.

The organisation held yearly camps and a number of the children attended these week-long events.

There was also an international camp held near San Francisco that Daniel Webb was fortunate to attend.



Leigh Elim Campaigners inaugural parade

Our more recent Pastors



Pastor Phil and Diane Streeter

Pastor Phil and Diane Streeter joined us for a short while. Phil, a poet and wordsmith, brought a new understanding of Love and Self Worth to the fellowship. (Phil's sermons were always crafted and polished. I still remember a sermon illustrated with a brown paper bag. Ed)

Marked by Humility, Care and Service, Pastor Bill Dunn, a former Accountant and HR manager together with his wife Pauline worked hard to fulfil his declared intention to 'Equip the Saints for works of Service' (Eph.4.12)



Pastor Bill and Pauline Dunn

Grapevine, a Christian Festival held in Lincoln, became an annual fixture for a number of years. Led by Bill and Pauline, the Leigh Elim enclave became bigger every year. Camping in caravans and tents with some 'camping out' at the local Agricultural College. A great time of fun, fellowship and spiritual uplift was enjoyed by all.

Pastor Bill's pastoral care overflowed to Southend Hospital where he became a Chaplain bringing care, compassion and sympathy to many.

Testimony from the 90s.

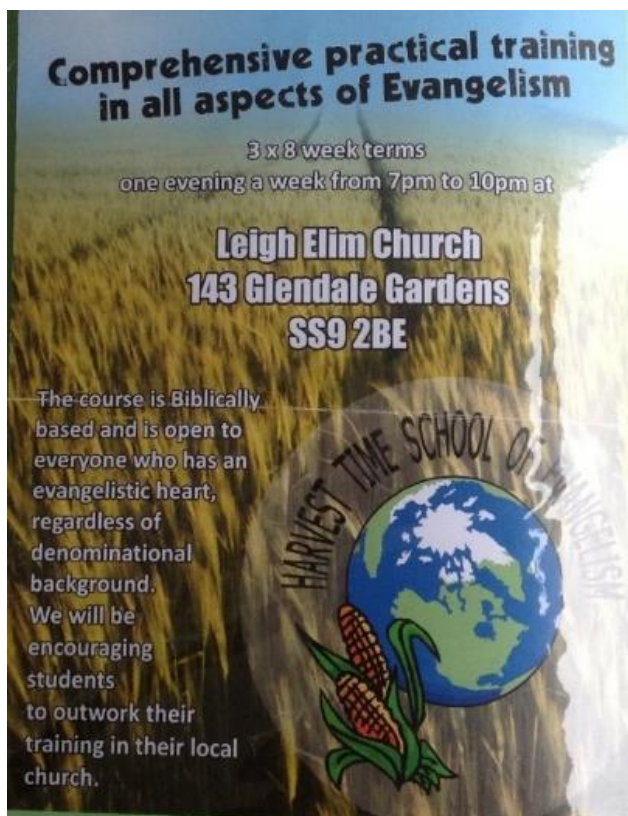
Having suffered with Plantar fasciitis, a condition causing pain in the heels, for nearly a year and having endured eye watering injections in both heels, I was at the end of my tether. At the end of a Sunday morning service Pastor Bill prayed and laid hands on me. Immediately both heels became very hot. The pain went with the heat, never to return.

The arrival of Pastors Derrick and Ann Wilks, he a former Policeman, and she a former Music Teacher brought a unique ministry.

Their years of shared work with children and their time with Elim's Evangelistic Crusades brought new expertise to the church mission.



Pastors Derrick and Ann Wilks



Evangelism Course Poster

Derrick and Ann ran a training course in Evangelism for a number of years, training many whom have gone on to lead ministries of their own.

They also mentored a group of young people, the Young Lions, all of whom have moved on into Christian work either locally or further afield.



The Young Lions

Evangelism with food

The Church became evangelism orientated with food always part of the programme. So, whether it was Pastor Ann's musical evening, one of Pastor Derrick's Crock Pot demonstrations, or a catered event for a special occasion, everyone was well fed both spiritually and 'tummy'.



*Pastor Derrick's
Cookery Demonstrations*



*Pastor Ann.
My Life My Music*



*Scratch Choir performing at
the Queen's Birthday tea*



VE Day Cream Tea (We'll Meet Again)

Referb'

The first real refurb happened in the early 60s when Pastor Phillip Stormont, a very practical man, installed a new kitchen and Oil Fired Central Heating.

By the time Pastors Derrick and Ann joined us the building had grown tired and was in need of a major refurbishment. Whilst in a meeting with John Young at the Elim Conference, a complete stranger (The pastor from Wigan Elim) leant over to Derrick and said that The Lord had told him to give him a £1000 toward a refurb'. The subsequent refurb', managed by Lee Purkiss and financed by a Cory Environmental Trust grant and a loan arranged by HQ included a new roof and windows, boilers, a new floor, toilets and kitchen. The loan was cleared by a generous bequest from Vesta Pledger, a church member and former Sunday School teacher.

A very recent new ceiling became necessary when the original collapsed in part and was judged unsafe. New lighting, insulation, sound system and fire alarm were also installed.



Community Café

With brand new facilities a community café was soon opened. The café offered free meals. It was soon discovered that the customers enjoyed the company and a number received pastoral care and friendship.



Community Café advertisement



*Good food still being enjoyed
(February 2016)*

Play Group

Cheap meals were also offered to children and carers attending the twice weekly Mums and Tots group.

The group started by Pastor Ann was very popular locally and always included singing and prayers. A number of the Mums, Dads, Grandparents & Carers were helped through difficult times by the loving staff.



*Fun at Mums & Toddlers with
Pastor Ann Wilks*

◆ South Korean Prayer Mission ◆

Since 2014, Leigh Elim has played host to groups of South Koreans who at their own expense wish to spend time praying for the UK, as recognition of the history of the Korean church which originated from the work accomplished by a missionary from the UK in the 1860s.

In South Korea they are experiencing revival, and they want to pray passionately for the UK for revival to come in this place.

These times have been a mutual blessing. Although culturally very different the basic gospel message of hope and joy binds us tightly in Christian love and fellowship. Their loud and passionate style of prayer has influenced our own methods of prayer and worship.



The first team (2014)



The 2015 team



The most recent team (2018)

◆ South Korean Internships ◆

Three young women have spent time with us here to pray for our church and local area, as well as getting involved in church life and blessing us with their time and their talents.

Boram Lee joined us in 2016 and stayed for over a year. A gifted pianist, she also had a blessed intercessory prayer ministry and prayed every day in the church for the country and local church.



Boram Lee



Joy and Hanna

Joy and Hanna also served our church in 2019. They got fully involved in church life, and attended a number of Elim events across the country, giving them insight into the impact faith is having across the UK.

Note

A young Welsh missionary, Robert Jermain Thomas, gave his life trying to take the gospel to Korea. His sacrifice opened the door and the Christian community in South Korea continue to thank God for those early British missionaries.



◆ 'Impact' Youth ◆

There has always been youth work at Leigh Elim catering for children and young adults. The current programme began when Ruth and Paul Halls took over the redundant Hadleigh Elim Church as a sort of Youth Centre and led a very successful programme that was commended by the local police. When eventually the property was sold the work moved back to Leigh. Phil and Maria Purkiss now lead the fun-filled evenings with games, laughter and a strong spiritual bias.



Hadleigh Elim Church set up for Impact



Impact games at Leigh Elim Church

For many years our youth have attended many festivals and events, including Revolution, Soul Survivor, Momentum, The Big Church Day Out, and most recently Limitless Festival, where they can meet together with thousands of other young people to worship Jesus, and develop their faith.



Limitless Festival (2018)



Adopt a block (2013)

We have also, for many years, encouraged our young people to be involved in work to help and encourage our local community, including litter-picking, car washes and help with household work, the latest work being at a church sleepover in this centenary year in conjunction with this years Limitless Festival teaching which was broadcast online.

Children's Activities

We love that our church is full of families, and that means that we have run lots of programmes and activities for our children, as well as still running a Sunday School on a Sunday morning.

Derrick and Ann frequently ran holiday clubs where not only the children of our own church families but those of other local churches and children from our neighbourhood could come together and enjoy fun and games, lots of silliness (including Derrick's song 'Sausages are really nice') as well as quality spiritual teaching.



Forbidden Land Kid's Club (2016)

As our families grew, we had enough children to add on another activity on a Friday night for those not yet old enough to attend Impact – 'Impact Kids'.



Impact Kids

A great time to play with some of the games equipment that the older youth enjoyed, but with games and teaching suited to a younger age range.

Great fun was had by all in the sessions planned and run by Rebekah Purkiss.

Community Events

Leigh Elim has always had community at its heart, and as such we often run events to help encourage and support those in our neighbourhood and our church family and friends.

From fun days to community meals, as well as Christmas carolling and parties to celebrate New Year's Eve and Light Parties as an alternative to Halloween, we have events to suit everyone, and we have been blessed by the response and engagement following from each of these events, year on year.



Family Fun Day (2018)



New Year's Eve Party (2018)



Passover Meal (2017)



Choir Carolling at Christmas (2015)

A Warm Welcome

Leigh Elim Church is a vibrant, lively group of people whose love and faith in The Lord Jesus is reflected in their desire to serve the community.

We are more than just a church. We are a family, supporting each other in prayer, encouragement and sharing God's truths.

From babies and young people, through to families and those who are retired, we all enjoy meeting together, learning from each other and worshiping God together.



Worship on a Sunday morning (2017)

We believe in the healing power of the Holy Spirit, and often see the spirit move in amazing ways amongst our church family, whether through testimonies shared in the week or as we meet together on a Sunday morning.

You are sure to find a really warm welcome at Elim.

◆ Where we are now – 2021 ◆

As a church, we are currently in a time of transition since the retirement of Pastors Derrick and Ann in November 2020.

We are incredibly blessed to have our Elder in Charge, John Young stepping up to oversee the day to day running and pastoral life of church life. His commitment to this church, alongside his existing work schedule and family life is astonishing, so we give special thanks to him and his wife Irène for their support and hard work at this time.



During the lockdowns of Covid-19, we still connected with our church family via live and/or pre-recorded broadcasts from our homes, the church building, and the upper room while we awaited the building work to be completed on the ceiling. We have such a talented and dedicated team of musicians, worship leaders and preachers who have all stepped up to help lead our services each week and we are very thankful for their time and dedication to serving our church.

We also thank all of our fellowship who have continued to support the church and its members in prayer, and also with their financial giving. We would not be able to continue doing what we do without this support, and our church would not be the same without the contributions of each of its members.

If you want to join us or connect with us online, you can contact us in a number of ways:



elimleigh.co.uk



facebook.com/LeighElim



instagram.com/ElimLeigh

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