



The Link ++

The newsletter for the Methodist Church in
Burnham-on-Sea and the surrounding area



April 2026



A Message from our Minister

Dear Friends

This month starts with the Holy Week journey that leads to the Cross, and the celebration of resurrection on Easter Sunday.

As I looked at my diary, I realised that this year Easter Sunday falls on 5th April, the end of the financial tax year in this country. For the individual, Easter Monday will be a new start for their tax business, a new beginning. The sum of what has happened in the previous year will be accounted for and people will either find themselves in surplus or deficit with the tax man! People throughout the UK will face this reality.

The same can be said about spiritual lives. The truth of Easter Sunday means that everyone can start again on Easter Monday, can have a new beginning. And on the cross Jesus has settled the bill once and for all the calculation of surplus and deficit, love and sin. Whilst I know the concept of the 'price being paid for us' can be difficult for some, the phrase with all its complication gives a simplicity to what is happening here. We once were lost, we once were in deficit, but through the death and resurrection of Jesus we have been offered the wonder of being saved from the burden of our bad decisions and improper use of our resources. But this does not mean that everyone will benefit. This year, as every year, not everyone will accept this offer, not everyone will be saved from their burdens, their sins.

Whether you find expressing the wonder of Easter in this way acceptable or not, comfortable or not, I pray that you will all have your own way of knowing the glory of the cross and empty tomb for yourself, the church, and the world.

Steve

Dates

2nd April 7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service at West Huntspill

3rd April 10.00am Good Friday Service at Burnham (followed by the Walk of Witness at 11.00am)

4th April 3.30pm Messy Church at Burnham

5th April 6.30am Sunrise Service on Brean Down (meet in car park at 6.15am)

18th April 6.00pm Fish and Chip supper at Burnham with a talk by Tim and Janet Widdess about Cathedrals

16th May 6.00pm Indian evening at Burnham

Brean

The season of Lent is nearly over, and I guess we have all been pleased to see the differences from the winter months in the life around us. But it seems out of kilter somehow to say that for us, here in Lent, it started with a Sausage Fest (and Beetle Drive). But none of the 32 present seemed too concerned about this anomaly. We welcomed a large number of visitors including some of our returning summer visitors such as our Cheltenham friends, keen to start the summer in the right way. For them, it seemed especially odd that our minister from September, Rev John McNeill, will have come from their circuit.

The event went particularly well and justified us having it a month later than in other years, so many thanks to all who came and all who helped in any way to make it so successful.

Steve, who took our Communion Service in March was confronted by an unusual situation at the end of the Service when a young man, visiting for the first time, asked him for a baptism. Steve of course assured him that was possible and asked him when that might be. 'Can you do it now?' asked the man. So, Steve did it there and then. Most of us had had our post-service coffee by then and were on our way home, so it was left to just a couple of witnesses to observe the ritual. A stunning occasion, the immediacy of which Steve couldn't remember happening in all the years of his previous ministry.

We have another baptism due at the beginning of May (Rosemary's grandson) so more joy awaits.

And on the matter of celebration, we cheered Joyce on Palm Sunday as she reached a Significant Birthday. Hoorah.

It is good to worship with others and, on different weeks this month we have had both St Bridget's and East Brent sharing with us. Happy days, and it means that the coffee table after service is a jolly affair. We were a bit sad though that Andrew Gilling is not well and was missing from East Brent's number; our thoughts go with you, Andrew.

But now it is Easter and this year we shall enjoy a Pipet duet as Stanley and Joyce will share the 10.30 am Easter service. Earlier that morning Steve will have led a dawn march to the top of Brean Down for an early celebration. From there (on the eastern end of the promontory) he can observe some element of each of his congregations in our Circuit. If you have the resolve he will be pleased to have your company at the car park at 6.15 am from where you will walk to the top up the asphalted driveway.

Our ecumenical partners at St Bridgets will have special reason to celebrate Easter this year as on Monday March 30th their new priest, Rev Robyn Golden-Hann, will be inducted to the combined parishes of Lymphsham, East Brent, Brent Knoll, Berrow and Brean that evening. Our prayers for them at this challenging time.

Our prayers for you all too. As we are called to proclaim: The Lord is risen. Happy Easter and our best wishes for the Easter season

Harvey Allen

Brent

www.eastbrentmethodistchurch.org.uk

We look forward to Easter and hopefully the warmer weather will now continue to stay, enabling us to turn the Church heating off. We do miss having an organist and that another job is created in setting the Sunday hymns onto the Hymnal music box!!!

The cooker has gone to the scrap man, and we have an unwanted motor bike abandoned in the car park, the grass is now growing, and we no longer have a lawn mower. There is a growing list of maintenance jobs and items that require replacement, next year's assessment has nearly doubled and total income last year barely covers it. In more than 55 years as East Brent's treasurer I have never experienced a more difficult year ahead for managing our finances. We have a Musical & Christmas Sale on December 5th with the Allsorts Choir and East Brent desperately needs Circuit support, so please bear this in mind as the 2026/2027 Methodist year will be critical to our survival.

We welcome the appointment of Revd. John McNeill as Superintendent Minister and at the same time thank Steve for his support and time here in the circuit, wishing him and Liz well in retirement.

We continue to pray for Andrew's recovery and miss his presence and contribution at East Brent.

We all send Birthday Greetings to Revd. Margaret Trapp for her 95th Birthday Celebrations.

We joined with our friends at Brean on Sunday 16th March for a Link Communion service led by Steve and enjoyed coffee and chat after. May there be many more!!!

Gordon Legg (East Brent Methodist Church)

Burnham

<http://www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk/>

Well, here we are galloping through March and spring seems to have made a very welcome appearance. There is no doubt that we all feel better when there is sunshine. Last Saturday (21st) we had our family fun day at Burnham. The event was well attended with a good mixture of ages, some from the church and some from the community. All the craft activities went down well but the most popular was our knit and natter group teaching simple knitting. It was lovely to see young and old, both sexes keen to have a go! We also had singing and drama then a shared tea to end the afternoon.

Now we are preparing for messy church on Easter Saturday and on that note, I wish you all a blessed and peaceful Easter.

Regards Jackie Clark

West Huntspill

www.wsbos.org/westhuntspill.htm

Easter greetings from all of us at West Huntspill Methodist Church.

On the first Friday in March, we were involved with the World Day of Prayer (Formerly the Women's World Day of Prayer.) This year the service, which had been prepared by the women of Nigeria, was held at St. Peter and All Hallows – the Anglican Church in West Huntspill. The morning began with the offer of refreshments from 10.30 with the service commencing at 11a.m. Thirty-two people attended, representing four Anglican churches, four Methodist and two Baptist. People from these denominations assisted in presenting the worship. John Lamb from West Huntspill Methodist Church was the organist.

I have spent this Wednesday morning with the Babies, Tots, and Carers group where the children have been occupied for most of the morning doing things with balls. The craft activity today involved coating small balls with different colours of paint then rolling them around a tray lined with a piece of paper. The results were varied and interesting. Another activity was with the football-sized foam ball which was rolled, kicked and thrown around with varying degrees of accuracy.

That made me think. There are so many ways to use a ball. Football, rounders, tennis, croquet, basketball, golf, snooker, marbles, rugby, netball, bowls, table tennis, tenpin bowling, skittles, juggling, squash, baseball, boules, solitaire, and catch. Or can you add any more? The best toy ever invented!!

All this made me think of our planet, which of course is a globe. How do we treat it?

Christine Thomas

The Link Fellowship

This month the Link Fellowship enjoyed a time of nostalgic singing when John Lamb came with his book of Folk songs.

He had typed out the words to quite few of these, some very familiar from The Last Night of the Proms while others brought back memories of songs we used to sing at school - such as "Dashing away with the smoothing iron" - though as someone commented after singing that - "What a lot of time spent only to have the clothes JUST ready to wear on the Sunday - having spent all week, washing, drying, ironing etc.!"

To give our voices a rest, I read a few poems that I hoped would provoke memories of those learnt at school.

We meet next on Tuesday April 14th at 2.30 p.m. when we shall have a members' afternoon with readings and poems linked up to Spring and/ or Easter. All are welcome to come to share with us as we meet in the hall at East Brent.

Joyce Pipet

From the Circuit Invitation Committee

A huge "Thank you" to everyone who made such an effort for Rev John McNeill's visit. It was good to see such a great turnout by all of the churches around our Circuit.

I will write more fully in next month's Link, but in the meantime, please continue to hold our Circuit in your prayers.

God bless

Rosemary Krull (on behalf of the Circuit Invitation Committee)

OUR INDIA VISIT

Would you like to go to India asks Reverend Steve, and with an enthusiastic 'yes', (and a little bit of trepidation), we travelled to Mumbai (previously known as Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), West Bengal, Dehli, Agra and Goa.

Part of the trip was planned with Steve's good friend Bishop Probal Kanto Dutta, who had visited us the year before at Burnham Methodist Church, and who had invited Steve and Liz to see his new work in Balughat, West Bengal.

And so, on Tuesday 6th January, we started our trip with lots of suitcases, our own and 3 extra filled with pre-loved glasses (to be given to the eye clinic in West Bengal).

We left Heathrow Airport in the evening, for our 9-hour flight, and landed in Mumbai the following morning.

As soon as we arrived, we were met by our guide, who took us around the city. Our first impression was the amount of people, the traffic, and the noise (so loud, much of it from the tooting of horns). The city seemed divided by a mix of very rich and very poor people living in various accommodation.

The following day, we took a boat trip from the Gateway of India to Elephanta Island, a destination renowned for its extraordinary UNESCO World Heritage/listed caves dating back to the 6th century, originally a Hindu temple. Today was our first encounter with the monkeys, everywhere you went there were monkeys ("don't look them in the eye"), we were told! That evening, we visited the market and had our first curry (one of many).

The next day we flew to Kolkata, where we met, and had a meal with Bishop Probal and his family.

Our visit to West Bengal was next, we took a train to Malda (a 5-hour journey) followed by a 2-hour car journey to Balughat, close to the Bangladesh border. We made our way, via a very rickety footbridge (although Steve decided he would go by car!) to St. Michael's Safe House, St. John's School, St. Michael's eye clinic and the Infant Jesus Chapel.

We were welcomed by all the children in the safe house and their support workers. The 25 girls who live there introduced themselves, sang and danced for us. We spent time getting to know them before returning to the only hotel in Balughat for the evening. Next morning we went to church, where Steve had been invited to preach. Interestingly, the Minister at the church could speak much better English, than Steve could speak Bengali.

Before we left in the afternoon to catch the train back to Kolkata, we spent time meeting the people involved in the Bishop's new work, had a tour of the school and safe house,

visited the eye clinic, had lunch, and then some of the girls took us on a walk around the local community.

In Kolkata, we visited Mother's House, the place where Mother Theresa spent most of her life while in Kolkata. Here there is her tomb, and whilst most of the sisterhoods work is now in other places around the city the sense of care and serenity remained.

From Kolkata we flew to Dehli, and then caught the train to Agra, the home of the Taj Mahal, before travelling back to Dehli.

Our first visit in New Dehli was to Gandhi Smriti, the national memorial dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. Once his residence, this historic house is where Gandhi spent his final 144 days of his life, prior to his assassination. Slightly commercialised now, it was still extremely interesting and a place we could have spent more time in. We also visited a Sikh temple, a place of worship which serves the community with a kitchen offering of free meals to all.

In Agra, we visited the Taj Mahal, one of the most historic places people wish to visit. First impressions from us all, 'a real wow factor', how was this amazing structure ever built, a beautiful vision of intricate carvings and delicate inlay work. The Taj Mahal was crafted by Emperor Shah Jahan, a tribute to his wife Mumtaz Mahal,

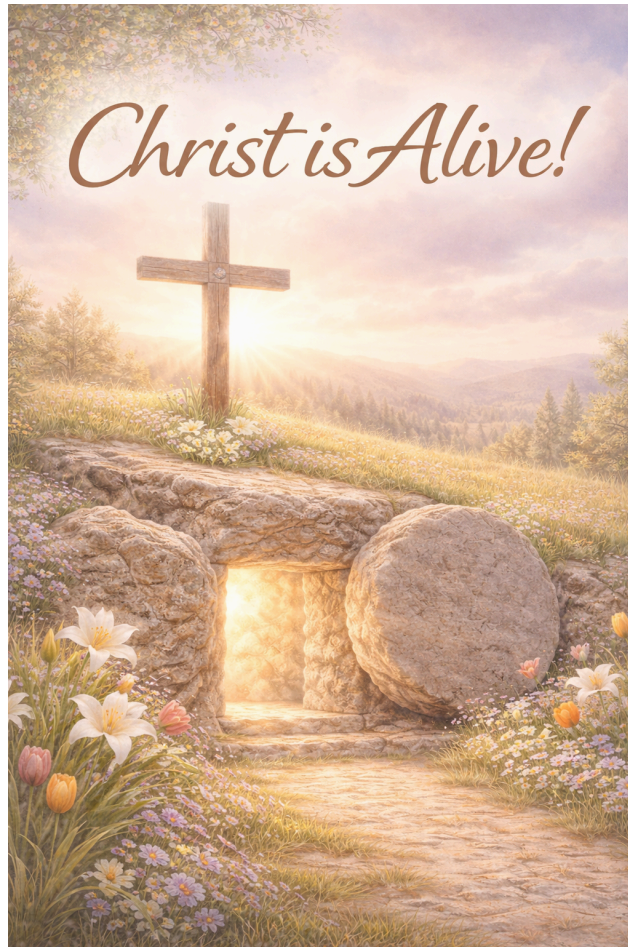
Returning to Dehli, we took a walking tour and rickshaw ride around the old part of the city, a busy robust marketplace with many temples. Our guide was very inspiring having spent his time as a street child and then being supported by an English charity which provided him with work.

The following day, Steve and Liz flew home, and Alison and Marian flew to Goa.

There is so much more we would like to tell you. We have an Indian Evening planned on Saturday 16th May at 6pm, Burnham Methodist Church with food and a presentation from our amazing visit. Please come and join us.

Reverend Steve /Liz Bennett

Marian Kingsbury/Alison Conrad



Christ is alive, let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive and comes to bring
Good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring,
with joy, and justice, love, and praise.

(Brian Wren b1936)

THE LINK

- a story of people

I guess it was inevitable really. There they were, a whole stack of Link magazines, going back many years, looking for a new home. Steve had taken them in hand 'for the time being'. But he is off come July, so what then? They have no statutory place in our annals, but it seems a shame to simply discard them without a place to go. In the end I took them over, first of all to make a computer record of the main records over the years and of the chief personages during that time. This record could then be held on the computer files and the original paper versions could be disposed of (unless anyone else wants them). This first article sets the scene both from items in Link and from my own observations and conversations over the years. If you have corrections and comments, please let me have them.

Cedric May held the magazines until Covid effectively prevented us from producing the magazine at a time when our coming together was banned. The earliest one in his possession is dated July/August 1981. Significantly it is numbered Volume 17 1981. This means the Link goes back to about January 1965. In those days the minister was John Tucker, a lovely man, well-liked by one and all; he was one of those men (they were all men in those days) who made no demands on stationing but simply said, 'I go wherever God and Conference decide'. I used to meet up with him towards the end of his full-time ministry when he was minister at Cirencester. We were both on the Conference Rural Life Committee, and for our two day Spring meeting held at Luton each year I used to pick him up at the M4 Chippenham junction where his wife dropped him off. The ease of companionship was such that within "five minutes" of his joining me in my car, we were already up there in Luton. A great tragedy was that he and his wife both looked forward to their retirement together overlooking the valley of the River Severn in Gloucestershire, but that within 6 months he had passed away.

In 1981 the churches of this end of the Circuit comprised Burnham, Mark, Heath House, Brent Knoll, East Brent, Lympsham and Brean. The minister was Rev Terry Isherwood. He had spent his early years in ministry serving in Rhodesia. When he came back he elected to take a course in what was called AVEC, a system of encouraging the ministry of all the people to work together and he too went 'Wherever Conference decides' My short experience of Methodism had been entirely in London and so he taught me a lot about

Rural Ministry that I hadn't appreciated. Eventually he decided to try his hand at an Open University course and persuaded me to join him. After a while though, the demands of both activities were found to be too much, and he gave up the course because his ministry was too important to him. From this area he moved to the Isle of Man for his next Station where he became Chairman.

The earliest Link in my hands is dated July/August 1981. Amongst the first records is the noting of the death of Alice Le Sueur, the wife of Fred Le Sueur who had been a Chair of District (of Lincoln I think) and had held other notable offices in the church. A member at Burnham, Alice, was described as 'a tower of strength, her quiet yet positive approach contributed much wherever she went.' Their son was John, well known to many of us, and who spent many years of ministry (about 17 I think) in the ecumenical Church of North India. Jean followed him out to India and they were married there. They came back to Britain to serve out the last half of his ministry in Britain. They retired to Burnham, taking on the bungalow in Berrow that had been John's parents. During a time when we were without a minister, John also cared for the congregation at Brean and was much appreciated. He died in 2010 at the age of 91 and Jean followed soon after.

Arnold Houldin was editor of the Link in the early 1980s, not a name much remembered today but a man much appreciated back then. He and any colleagues he could rustle up then had the job of interpreting the typed or manuscript contributions onto stencils to then be duplicated and assembled to complete the magazine. It was then distributed to churches according to the numbers requested. How much more simple it is, in this day.

In those days and looking forward to the main holiday period the churches had a fuller programme of services than now. Morning service was generally at 11am. A move towards 10.30 gained support from many (more time for coffee afterwards and then to get home to prepare Sunday lunch for example) but was opposed by farmers on the grounds that milking was still in progress that early. Compromises were made eventually and coffee began to creep into the after-service programme. Burnham and East Brent ran an evening service and Brean did so during the peak holiday season. Whether it was a comment on the popularity of the function or not, but Brean's congregation awoke one morning to find that their wooden noticeboard had been lifted out of its sockets overnight for use on a beach bonfire. The church made sure that the replacement was a plastic one. Perhaps just as well because the board had spaces where the names of preachers were inserted. The space for evening service would be left empty if there was to be no service. Unfortunately, the printing beneath that hole simply said 'Thanks be to God.' which brought a chortle to the lips of holidaymakers walking by.

Services at Heath House were always at 3pm and the preacher was always asked to pick up Mr & Mrs Tutton, formerly of Heath House but then living in Mark, on their way.

Heath House chapel also suffered from not having toilet facilities, which could be difficult at times.

Lympsham Methodist church was situated on the fringe of the village along the road to East Brent. I was told that Lympsham was one of those places where a Methodist church would not be allowed to be built anywhere near the centre of the community

Mark chapel, situated along the Causeway, has its own graveyard. The church itself had been huge and dubbed 'The Cathedral in the Country', but by the early 80s the major part had deteriorated and been cleared away, leaving just a smaller chapel which was used for worship, and a side area for meetings and as a vestry. Our younger son, then still only 10 or so, used to come with me when I preached there and played the basic tune of hymns I had chosen. A willing volunteer because Mrs Hurdman always had a bar of chocolate for him after the service, as a thank you

Church Anniversaries were in fashion in those days though they were steadily declining and most churches abandoned them during this period. It seemed a bit embarrassing to try and bring a notable preacher many miles just to preach to a small chapel congregation. Harvest Festivals were very popular however, though Brean always held theirs at the end of August on the pretext that the holiday industry was its harvest and it was more relevant therefore to celebrate at the end of August before this lucrative industry began to decline. These days that date has been taken over by the Open-Air Songs of Praise service on Bank Holiday Sunday afternoon; and Harvest Sunday with lunch afterwards has been installed on the second Sunday of October. Occasional services were also held at local Care Homes such as Frith House.

To be continued.....

Harvey Allen

Calendar

	Time	Location	Event
Regular Days			
Mondays (except Bank Holidays)	10.30 am	Brean	Coffee Morning
Wednesday	10.00 am	Zoom	Weekly Bible Study
Wednesday	2.00 pm	Burnham	Knit 'n' Natter
Thursday	11.00 am	Zoom	Coffee morning
Friday	Morning	Burnham	Mothers and Toddlers
Other Dates			
Thursday 2nd April	7.00 pm	West Huntspill (Anglican)	Maundy Thursday Service
Friday 3rd April	10.00 am	Burnham	Service followed by Walk of Witness at 11am
Saturday 4th April	3.30 pm	Burnham	Messy Church
Sunday 5th April	6.30 am	Brean Down	Sunrise Service (meet in car park at 6.15am)
Saturday 18th April	6.00 pm	Burnham	Fish & Chip Supper: plus Talk by Tim & Janet Widdess about Cathedrals
Saturday 16th May	6.00 pm	Burnham	Indian Evening

LINK MAGAZINE

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. It is much appreciated and I hope that you and others will continue to supply articles for future editions.

Thanks to the efforts of Nigel and Jo May, each edition is held on the Burnham-on-sea Website <http://burnhamonseamethodistchurch.org.uk/>

Contributions are welcome and encouraged. Will stewards please remember that the newsletter not only provides information for our congregations but also keep us in touch with people who are not our members. Maybe, just maybe, something that you have contributed, will encourage a visitor or even a potential resident to sample the warm welcome our churches offer.

The Link is published on or around the 1st of each month except for January and August. Closing date for the receipt of your item is the 25th of the month before publication and to be included on the circulation list send your email address to our minister on:

steve.bennett@methodist.co.uk

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES FOR NEXT MONTH IS 25 APRIL.