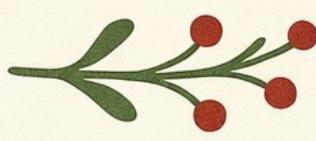
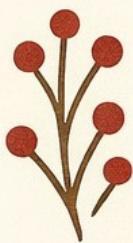


The Link ++

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



February 2026



A Message from our Minister

Dear Friends

This month I went with three members of Burnham Methodist Church to visit St Thomas' Church in Balurghat, a town in India close to the border with Bangladesh. Here I had been invited to preach at the morning service (which they had moved to 8.30am in order to meet our hectic Indian schedule).

I am not sure of whether the person who was interpreting for me, was accurately conveying the sermon; after all the difference between our languages and vocabulary is huge, but it seemed to go down ok!

What really impresses me when I go to Christian churches in India is the joy that is expressed in worship, and the way in which the gifts and skills of individuals in the congregation are included. Yes, of course, as a church, there were vestments and the order of service was much as we would see in many Anglican churches in the UK. But think on this. The young people danced into church (as a processional), the singing group was accompanied by drums played by people who would play the drum in their ordinary lives, and all the colour and wonder of God's creation was brought into the building. For them, it seemed, worship was not something separate from ordinary life, but an integral part of the life they lead.

I am not suggesting that we are in India, that many of us would like to, or even be able to, dance into church each week. Nor might the sound of tribal drums be our ideal of worship. But it did make me ponder...

What is worship to us? And how can we authentically express our worship to God as people of the Somerset coast in 2026.

Steve

BREAN

www.breanmethodistchurch.org.uk

As I write this it is still January and it is astonishing to think that Christmas was only last month. So much has happened. Our Covenant Service was right at the beginning of January and it seemed very appropriate somehow to indicate the end of one period and start of another. We were joined by our friends from Brent and the service was taken by Tim Widdess a late replacement for Karen Murphy whose mother had recently died. As Tim told us, the day before the service he was sitting at home lamenting the fact that, having led the beloved Covenant service every year for many years, it was very different to be part of the congregation instead. An hour later that deficiency was to be firmly addressed and he was now standing before a group of expectant co-worshippers from both our churches. We were indeed, off to a new start.

A week later we were 'over the road' at St Bridget's for the first joint service of the year with our Anglican friends. They were in good spirits since they now have a new priest being assigned to them and to the other churches of their living (Berrow of course, and to the new friends at Brent Knoll, East Brent and Lympsham).

As in other years, our Christmas season was a very rewarding time. Somehow, Advent seems to have been more of a Season of worship this year rather than just a series of separate services; and our united worship on the second Sunday, a communion service taken by Steve emphasised this. Not only were we joined by our Anglican friends but it was followed by our traditional Christmas lunch.

As the pace to Christmas quickened we sang lustily over coffee and mince pies on the Saturday before Christmas, as in previous years ,ably led by Rosemary with Anne at her side.

Our informal Carol Service on Christmas Eve was as popular as ever. John T is now in charge of coordinating the event alongside Anne who does much of the graphics that are projected onto our screen. The service is put together by a small group and changes each year. Traditionally we concentrate on the crib and scenes that are associated but this year we decided that the wise men should at least get a look in; Rosemary wrote a great sketch that left out references to Herod and the events after the wise men had laid their gifts. Linda and Joyce led us into the worship, Tim and Janet took the prayers and John closed up proceedings; and we sang with gusto.

Thank you to you all who have contributed so much to the enjoyment of Christmas here.

Now, into 2026 we reflect first in sadness on those who have died. In our own church, Margaret Hicks died at Tudor Lodge. Methodist History shows that many families in our

village churches still reflect those who were foundation members. Those families have been the core and strength of the church down the years. Here, at Brean, the Hicks family has been such a family now for more than 250 years. Margaret, following her father as a fully qualified doctor, travelled down to Brean in the early 1960s from her home in Airdrie, Scotland, to represent her family at the wedding of her brother David to Eileen Hicks. During the visit she met Stuart and they were married a year later. As a farmer's wife, and mother of four, she has been at the heart of the church and community life. She was a great loss to us all when she felt it necessary to move into Tudor Lodge for care about eight years ago.

Evelyn Tucker was not a member at Brean but she was well known and loved by many here. I first met her 50 years ago, soon after we came to live in Brean, and I was preaching at Heath House. When that church closed she worshipped at East Brent and played the organ there too.. She was a very active member of the Link Fellowship and fully supported events across our churches.

We send our thoughts and best wishes to our friends at (east) Brent both at the loss of Evelyn (at age 94) and also of that of Shirley Pyecroft who moved there after the closure of Brent Knoll church last summer.

Harvey

BRENT

www.eastbrentmethodistchurch.org.uk

Our Christmas Carols by Candlelight service was well attended and enjoyed. The Church looked lovely as usual, we were very grateful to the Revd. Steve for playing the organ at the last moment. Our organist Evelyn had rung that morning to say that she had a bad cough and wouldn't be coming. Five days later she sadly passed away. It's so strange not seeing her anymore, she was always the first in the car park and sat in the front at the organ every Sunday.

We now have to rely on the music centre, but it is not the same, Evelyn never had a Sunday off except for illness which was very rare. Evelyn and her father attended East Brent after the closure of Heath House in 1991. Her funeral was standing room only and Evelyn's second cousin played the organ so beautifully.

Over the Christmas period we have had two of our members die and many others that we know. We give thanks for their friendship over the years.

It was good to share the annual Covenant Service with Brean and enjoyed the fellowship that we share with them.

We don't know what this year will bring but we continue to have faith in our future with our Lord.

Jill Legg (East Brent Methodist Church)

MANY YEARS TO LIVE DEAR LORD

60 people or more attended the Thanksgiving Service held to remember Evelyn. Beautifully conducted by Steve it contained many reminiscences of Evelyn's life. And some lines of humour, including this poem. Originally published in the Link in 1999, the poem has been extended by Kathy Hurrell to reflect the years from 91 to 94:

Today dear Lord I'm 80	And sometimes will be late
And there's much I haven't done	But it would be so nice to be
I hope dear Lord you'll	Around at 88.
Let me live until I'm 81	I will have seen so many things
But then if I haven't finished all I want to do	And had a lovely time
Would you let me stay a while till I'm 82	So I am sure that I'll be willing
So many places still go	to leave at 89 (maybe)
So very much to see	But p'raps it won't be time to go
Do you think that you could manage	Until I reach the big Nine 0
To make it 83	I'll play a tune and feel the sun
The world is changing very fast	And gladly get to 91
There is so much in store	But Lord I've still got lots to do
I'd like it very much to live	I'd love to stay till 92
Until I'm 84	I'm not quite like I used to be
And if by then I'm still alive,	But round the corner's 93
I'd like to stay till 85	I think I'll knock on heaven's door
More planes will be up in the air	But not until I'm 94
So I'd really like to stick	With thanks for all the years before
And see what happens to the world	My toes are touching heaven's shore
When I am 86	My faith has always held me fast
I know dear Lord its much to ask, it must be nice in heaven.	And now dear Lord I'm home at last.
But I would really like to stay	
Until I'm 87.	
I know by then I won't be fast	

BURNHAM

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

We had a wonderful Christmas with all our services being well attended. We were able to share the blessings of that season with regulars from our congregation and also many from the local community. We were delighted to welcome folk from the Link to the Christmas Eve Midnight Communion which is always a special time. Christmas is a busy time for all concerned and we are grateful to those who decorated the church (and took down the decorations after Christmas), and all who worked so hard over the festive period.

Now in the New Year we have had our Covenant Service and reminded ourselves of God's goodness and grace. We are having a small group of children attending worship from time to time, which is wonderful, and wonderfully noisy at times too.

Last week we hosted the Churches Together Service for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a service shared with Christians of all denominations in the area. It was a wonderful time of worship and praise around the theme of 'Jesus is Lord' – a 'creed' we all share.

We look forward to our Burn's night meal this Saturday. This event will go towards the fund for refurbishing the hall floor, which we hope will start in June. On the 28th February we will be holding an Ethiopian evening when Brian Foakes will be telling us about his travels in that country. It would be great to see you there.

On behalf of the Stewards

WEST HUNTPILL

www.wsmbos.org/westhuntpill.htm

Thank you to those of our Circuit who were able to come to our Carol Service, which was led by Rev. Steve. it was so good singing all the well-known Carols along with you all.

We also had an enjoyable time Christmas morning, sharing breakfast together then having a Service led by Rev. Steve. We have been sharing breakfast together for a number of years now. It is always a great way to begin the Day.

Coffee and Chat is on Friday the 27th of February. 10.30am till 12 noon. Our sales table has Puzzles, books various items of Bric a Brac. Sometimes plants or items of food. This year Donations received will be for the "Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance" We do hope that you can come along sometimes.

Somebody's Tomorrow

Is anyone happier for meeting you today?

Has anyone been prayed for just because he came your way?

Has anyone been helped because you stopped to lend a hand---
spared a little time to listen, tried to understand?

Has anyone been made to feel that God was somewhere near?
Has someone somewhere been relieved of worry and of fear? . . .
Has someone rediscovered faith in what is good and true ---
Seen another side of life, another point of view?

If the answer's Yes, then you have earned your night's repose.
If No, your day was wasted, spent in vain --- and at its close---
There can be no satisfaction; not unless you say ---
that somebody's tomorrow will be better than today.

From "Through The Year with Patience Strong"

I was made to feel good in the week. I was walking round to my daughter's home, when a young couple came the opposite way, we said good morning to each other and what made me happy was the fact that the man raised his cap to me. This is something that I have not experienced before, as these days not many men wear hats.

Janet Johnson

THE LINK FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship has met twice since the last edition of the Link Magazine.

Our December meeting took the form of a lunchtime bring and share meal ably organised by Christine Thomas. We were delighted that Rev. Steve could join us for the meal, but his other commitments meant he was unable to remain for the time we shared after the carols and readings. We had a delightful time with a variety of readings and poems, some amusing, others more serious interspersed with favourite carols. We finished by about 2.30pm having concluded with mince pies and a cup of tea. Little did we know that that would be the last time quite a number of us would see Evelyn, and we were deeply saddened to hear of her death so soon before Christmas.

Our January meeting began by remembering Evelyn, Dr. Margaret Hicks, and Shirley Pyecroft who had also died during the Christmas period. Margaret and Shirley had been unable to attend Fellowship for quite a number of years, but had been very faithful members in the past.

Ann Bowen had brought one of the poems from Evelyn's collection of stories and poems to share. It was called "Slugs" and caused much amusement – a very fitting tribute to Evelyn who was so fond of her garden.

After further opening devotions we had a quiz, one round of which caused much scratching of heads for the questions were based on well known carols. Given the last line of the first verse of 10 well known carols, what was the first line?

Next month our speaker is Revd Steve Bennett sharing something of his recent visit to India. It is on Tuesday February 10th. We meet at 2.30p.m. at East Brent Methodist Church hall and all are welcome to come and join us.

Joyce Pipet

Winter Oaks and the Quiet Work of God by Jonathan Widness

I've been thinking a lot about an oak tree that stood in the garden of our former vicarage — a tree planted long before we arrived, whose shade we enjoyed without ever having earned it.

That oak taught me something about ministry, about faith, and about the seasons we all move through. Especially winter: the times when everything looks stripped back, when growth is hidden, when hope feels thin. And yet, beneath the bark, life waits.

I've written a reflection (which will hopefully appear in the autumn) and a poem about that oak — about planting what we may never see, trusting God with the growth, and finding hope in the quiet, faithful rhythms of creation.

Winter Oak

The grand old lady of the garden
Has shed her golden leaf at last;
The autumn winds have done their bidding,
The hope of springtime long since past.
The summer sun that baked the furrow,
The fruit and nut that warmth drew out,
Fade into memory as the years turn,
As brighter days are eclipsed by doubt.
Soon frosted snows will lay their blanket,
The earth will sleep in wintry shroud;
Yet as the seasons circle onwards
The secret flowers begin to crowd.
Each year recedes; the journey shortens,
As homeward bound, we near the place
Where Christ prepares a peaceful dwelling,
And we shall see Him face to face.
And on that day, where language falters,
We'll lay our praise before His feet;
In golden halls and blooming gardens,
The long-lost faces we shall meet.
The grand old lady of the garden
Is waking from her winter sleep;
Soon clothed again in golden-green,
The hope we hold, in Him we keep.

REFLECTION by KATHY

(31.5.1986. Written in Blaise Woods Bristol, prior to my divorce)

I wonder Lord why you gave us the capacity to cry – what purpose do tears fulfil? They are an embarrassment, both to the shedder and to the observer. They almost have the stigma of incontinence, and as a balanced person one must have self-control, even in the deepest valleys of life – in the loss of one who has been dear for many years - now removed by the inevitable separation of death or by the chosen separation of divorce.

The tears must be a private indulgence, not to be released in front of others, I wonder why – perhaps the tears wash clean the windows into the depths of the soul, and it's a glimpse that is too painful. And yet I read that Jesus wept – did anyone tell Him “not in public” or “don’t start that again” – or perhaps His tears were a unique outpouring of His compassion for another soul in distress.

Even hidden in the psalms I find that God keeps our tears in a bottle – so He must sanction them, yes even treasure them, for a bottle speaks of preservation for future needs. So if our tears are precious to Him, why are they anathema to us – His people? Surely they should be a cleansing releasing balm, a pressure valve, to put our fears and our agonies into perspective again, and to enable us to amass the perseverance to continue. Lord it comforts me to know that you value my tears – I offer them to you now, un-stemmed by the dams of convention.

CLEAR THE COBWEBS

The cobweb is a thing of great beauty, hanging precariously onto a frozen branch, a shimmering hexagon of finest lace, decorated with tiny pendulous diamonds, glinting in the frosty air. It looks too delicate to withstand a winters' gale, one could imagine it being woven at the request of the fairy queen, to provide her wedding veil, uniquely designed for her alone.

It is deceptive in its vulnerability for its purpose has a deadly side, to capture unwary insects, deceived by its apparent innocence, when in reality it is a trap from which there is no escape. The industrious spider has created its work of art to satisfy its hunger, with little thought for its enticing appearance, planning only to kill its victims.

The cobwebs suspended in the coves and thickets hang undisturbed by human hands, not perceived to be intrusive but an integral part of nature's work of art. How differently we view the cobweb when it dares to decorate a corner of our ceiling, or an obscure bookshelf from where it must be removed at once, suddenly it is seen as unclean, unhygienic within our carefully regulated dwellings where there is no place for dirt.

Clearing the cobwebs is a vital part of spring cleaning, that celebrated annual ritual during which winters dormant neglect is swept away on a tide of rigorous activity, ready to embrace the pure and verdant freshness of spring. It can equally be applied to sweeping away old and derelict thought patterns, which have long outgrown their purpose and replacing them with the vibrant and the new, untried and open to possible failure.

As we increase in years both our physical and emotional spring cleaning takes its toll as we cling tenaciously to the well worn and long proven ways which have served us so faithfully in the past. Our reluctance to embrace change can hold us back from the discovery of glimpses into an unknown but exciting future, so the cobwebs must go, freeing us to venture down new paths of opportunity.

Kathy



Christian Retreat Centre

Uphill Methodist Church

QUIET MORNING

Thursday 5th

February

9.30 coffee - 10.00 - 12.00

Time to come aside

to Reflect - find Peace - to Pray - to Share

THEME

“God of the Night”

DIARY DATES

Regular Days	Time	Location	Event
Mondays (except Bank Holidays)	10.30 am	Brean	Coffee Morning
Thursday	11.00 am	Zoom	Coffee chat (Details from Steve)
Monday to Thursday	9.00 am—2.00 pm Wednesday to 4.00 pm	Burnham	Waffle Hub Community Café and associated activities
Wednesday	2.00 pm	Burnham	Knit 'n' natter
Friday	Morning	Burnham	Mothers and Toddlers
Other Dates			
Thursday 5th February	10.30 am—12 noon	Uphill	A Time for Reflection (see poster on previous page)
Tuesday 10th February	2.30 pm	(East) Brent	Link Fellowship— Revd. Steve Bennet on recent journey to India
Friday 27th February	10.30 am—12 noon	West Huntspill	Coffee and Chat, Sales Table, - proceeds to Air Ambulance
Saturday 28th February	Details from Church Stewards	Burnham	Brian Foakes—Travels in Ethiopia
Saturday 7th March	7.00 pm	Brean	Sausage and Mash followed by Beetle Drive.

LINK MAGAZINE

This Magazine is issued on or around 1st of each month except for January and August. Members of our congregations are encouraged to receive a copy each month.

Register your interest by sending your email to our minister, Steve Bennett,

steve.bennett@methodist.org.uk

You are also encouraged to share topics of interest with us in this publication. Read any good books lately? Or been to the cinema or theatre? Something interesting happen in the last few weeks?

And how about a response to the questions Steve asks in his Minister's Message. Your thoughts shared with us, however meagre they might seem to you, could well get us all talking.

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. I am particularly grateful to Anne Hicks who has been responsible for the final layout and illustrative detail.

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES FOR NEXT MONTH IS 25 FEBRUARY.

Email to harveyjallen@hotmail.com