

LINK PLUS +++

(The Newsletter for the Methodist Church in Burnham-on-Sea and its surrounding area)

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends

This month we celebrate the birthday of the church – Pentecost.

When I look at the account of the early church found in the book of Acts it seems to me to be a welcoming, lively, caring and sharing community. More than that it is empowered by the Holy Spirit and its people demonstrate the fruits of the spirit* as they live and worship together. They have their disagreements but these are not kept a secret. Led by the Apostles, their problems and issues are discussed and the community comes to a consensus about the way forward. It is an exciting group to belong to!

Whether it is our first Pentecost, or one of many, as we celebrate this year, as we say ‘Come, Holy Spirit, come’, we need to be open to the movement of the Spirit in our midst and long to be filled with the enthusiasm and excitement of the early church. The Holy Spirit's role is to empower us to live out our faith, engage in ministry, and witness to the world. It is the power of God that dwells within us, it is the driving force of the church.

May God’s peace be with you.

May Jesus’ saving grace transform you.

May the Holy Spirit’s power descend upon you.

Steve

*Fruits of the Spirit - Galatians chapter 5 tells us these are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

FROM THE HOME PAGE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH WEBSITE

Methodists believe God is for all. Different people experience God in different ways – that’s how God works! We love real conversations about life with diverse people, in unexpected places.

God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it, was very good. Genesis 1.31

BREAN

(www.breanmethodistchurch.org.uk)

How good it is to see the poppies again. Those of us who can remember so far back will recall the road more than 40 years ago before it was widened. In those days and at this time of year, it was festooned with poppies on the high grass banks all the way from the Garage to the Village Hall. A riot of colour. The road could hardly carry two cars within its width. Lorries and buses stood no chance. There wasn't a path and on Wednesday, market day, it was absolute chaos. It became a single line of slow moving traffic trying its best to get past the crowd of pedestrians making their way to and from the market in Weston Road.

When the road was widened, a path was installed on the western (sea) side, and the bank on the eastern edge was pushed back to leave the verge you see now.

The poppies all disappeared, even though their seeds were still present within the soil. People said it would take time for the plants to re-emerge and gradually, over the years, clumps of straggly blooms have indeed reappeared. So it is good to see even those few we see now. Perhaps one day they will prosper into something like what we saw before.....

Nothing spectacularly different in our cheerful church this month, but our Anglican friends got themselves a concert where excellent performers ran a VE day memorial show very well supported and raising over £1300 for their church. They are still doing their best to find a new rector but with five churches and four schools on their patch they are finding it hard to fill the position.

We continue to appreciate the regular trickle of our holiday regulars and the occasional new visitor to our worship these summer Sundays. Long may it continue.

It is sad to know that Brent Church is having to close the Brent Knoll Church building and concentrate their worship and other features at East Brent. We wish both communities well as this period of transition continues in the months to come.

And now we are into June. The longest day. But before that it will be Pentecost. A day of celebration and of renewal. Our prayers and best wishes for you all.

Harvey Allen

TONGUE IN CHEEK – from the days of yore

Sing a song of sixpence
Here's ninepence for the plate.
Sixpence would be stingy,
I haven't been of late.

I only earn one thousand,
But vicar knows his job,
So if my Treble chance comes up
I'll raise it to a bob!

BRENT KNOLL

(www.brentknollmethodistchurch.com)

Thank you to everybody who supported our Spring coffee morning. We were absolutely delighted with the turnout as friends around the Village and our Methodist Circuit came together for such a lovely morning. Thanks to your generosity, we raised £130

The VE Day celebrations held at the Church were thoroughly enjoyed by all in very patriotic surroundings. Again, thank you to all who supported this event.

A few dates for your diaries, as we will be holding our annual fundraisers for local and national charities on the first four Saturdays in August, between 10.30am-12.00pm. More details to follow in next month's Link.

This will be a particularly poignant time for all of us at Brent Knoll, as will the coming months. It is now common knowledge around our Circuit that we have made the difficult, but heartfelt and prayerful decision to close our building. It was not a decision made lightly, far from it. We prayed, we discussed and we felt this was the right decision to make.

This doesn't mean we will no longer be a Church. Far from it. Our building has provided a Christian presence in the Village of Brent Knoll since 1837, but all our members (and remember, we are part of Brent Methodist Church, with our sister chapel at East Brent) will continue to be members of our Circuit and witnesses of Christ.

Regardless of the history of our building, being the longest standing church in our Circuit, we will bless, give thanks and be joyful for the witness Brent Knoll has provided for nearly 200 years. It is something to celebrate and give thanks for.

Personally, I have only been a member of Brent Knoll Methodist Church for 15 years since moving into the area, but I am truly grateful, thankful and blessed by the witness, support and fellowship I have received from those with whom I've shared that fellowship with.

Our last service is planned to be held on Sunday 14th September at 3pm. A Harvest Festival to celebrate God's gifts and a celebration of the gift of Christian witness which Brent Knoll Methodist Church has provided over many, many years. All are invited, encouraged and warmly welcome to celebrate this time with us.

Finally, please note that we will be joining our friends at East Brent Methodist Church on Sunday 29th June, so there will be no service here at Brent Knoll that Sunday.

From all of us here at Brent Knoll Methodist Church, we continue to hold the Village and our Circuit in our prayers.

God bless you all, on behalf of us all.

Rosemary Kroll

EAST BRENT

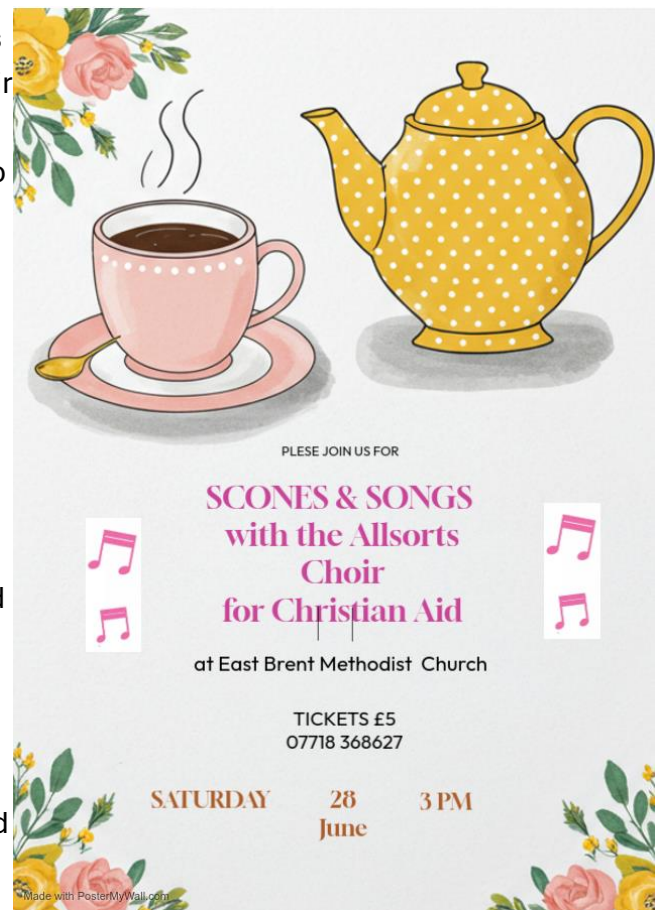
(www.eastbrentmethodistchurch.org.uk)

I don't know where the last month has gone! We have, as usual, been very grateful to all those who have made their way to East Brent to lead our worship. The week before last we celebrated our 154th Anniversary – always good to have something extra to celebrate. Last Sunday we joined our friends at Brent Knoll and shared worship led by Humphrey. One of the questions he posed – “When you ask God for forgiveness do you actually specify what it is that you need forgiveness for?” He likened it to a child asking a parent to forgive them when the parent didn't know what they had done. OK, God knows all but we have to take responsibility. Food for thought?

Some of us were inspired by a speaker from Christian Aid who gave an illustrated talk at the beginning of the last circuit meeting. We decided to do something as a Church. We didn't have time to organise the event which we had in mind for Christian Aid Week but, as noted in last month's magazine, you are all invited to “Scones and Songs” Saturday 28th June. Songs will be provided by “Allsorts”, a local singing group (you might recognise a few faces) and tea and scones will be served in the hall afterwards. Please see the poster, with full details, alongside.

Best wishes from all at East Brent

Margaret



BURNHAM

In recent weeks we have been delighted to welcome new people joining us for worship.

We now have 2 home groups which meet mid-week. Together they provide an opportunity to think about our faith and develop friendships. One is an afternoon group, while the other meets in the evening.

Currently, there is also an Alpha Course.

A prayer group has begun to meet each Friday morning, focusing on the present mission of the church.

For more details about any of these groups, please ask a church steward or Rev Steve.

Looking ahead: our Summer Fair will be on 28th June, 10am – 2pm. It is held in partnership with the 'Friends of Burnham Hospital'.

Finally, we express our thanks to Joan, David and Barbara. A wonderful time was enjoyed at a recent garden party, with donations given to Christian Aid.

Linda Patient

[on behalf of the Burnham stewards].

WEST HUNTSPILL

(www.wsbos.org./westhuntspill.htm)

Our Coffee Morning will be Friday 27th June from 10.30am till 12 noon, Coffee, tea and cakes are free. we would love to see you here in West Huntspill. We have a Sales table with various items of interest plus some handmade items. This year we welcome any Donations for the R.N.L.I.

It is good to meet up with our friends of the Link. We are happy that we also have a number of Local folk who come.

The Happy Life

All men seek the happy life; down many roads they fare,
Searching for a pleasant path away from strife and care,
Looking for some hidden turning where the sunlight gleams,
Following their star of fortune down the track of dreams.

Restless, never satisfied, life's winding ways they wend,
Always thinking there'll be something better round the bend –
Pressing on towards some distant castle in the blue,
Never pausing where they stand, the present scene to view.

Learn to live each passing day as if it were the last:
Do not dwell in thought upon the future or the past.

It is good to dream a dream; it helps you on your way –
But remember you can live the happy life . . . Today.

(from: Through the year with Patience Strong)

Janet J.

THE LINK FELLOWSHIP

The date of our May Link Fellowship was just a few days after VE day which was on May 8th. For Stanley and me May 9th has perhaps yet greater significance for as many of you know, Stanley and I were both born in Guernsey which, along with the other Channel Islands were the only part of the United Kingdom that was occupied by German troops. (As I write there is to be the first of two programmes on TV recounting this event) Stanley was born in Guernsey during the occupation, and shared some of his memories of that time, in particular Liberation Day itself. My brother Derek had been born just two months before the invasion, so my family decided to take the opportunity to be evacuated to England, where they were sent to Manchester. I was able to share something of the problems of communicating through Red Cross letters, using a maximum of 25 words, and messages taking up to six months to arrive.

Next time, on Tuesday June 10th at 2.30pm, Evelyn Tucker is going to share some of her favourite hymns, so we shall enjoy a good sing!

We invite anyone who would like to join us to do so. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2.30pm at the East Brent Methodist Church Hall

Joyce Pipet

THE BRISTOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

The Bristol District of our Church (our District), issues a periodic newsletter to keep us all informed about what is going on in our area. Here are some extracts from its latest edition:

We hope this newsletter finds you well. This month Synod as a group discussed what it means to be present. Firstly, how we can be present with or without a sacred space in terms of buildings - and what we might consider sacred spaces. Then secondly, how Synod can be present across local churches and the circuits. This is part of ongoing conversations - the Trustees also explored this on a retreat earlier this year - so if you have any thoughts or feedback please do get in touch.

We pray that whatever June and July bring you, you feel God's presence in your life and that God will guide you and keep you. May God push us to challenge injustices, stand up for love and celebrate that we are all made in God's image.

The newsletter then gives us Good News in the District. At Stonehouse in the Gloucestershire Circuit for example:

A wonderful service was recently held at Stonehouse Methodist Church (Gloucestershire Circuit) to celebrate their Gold Eco-Church Award on Saturday 10th May. Around 40 people joined together, friends from far and near as they looked back over 6 years of things they've have all done to care for God's Creation and how we must continue to do so - including saving the sparrows...

..and as for diversity within the church:

The Methodist Church is committed to Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, and as part of that, did you know there are now 4 solidarity circles people can join.

Solidarity circles are a way of the Methodist Church supporting people in different diversities of the Church's life through offering regular online opportunities to meet, to support one another, and to raise with relevant Church leaders the concerns that need to be addressed.

The first Solidarity Circles established are:

- *Solidarity Circle for Disability*
- *Solidarity Circle for LGBT+*
- *Solidarity Circle for Racial Justice*
- *Solidarity Circle for Women*

That is just the start. There are also features in the newsletter on an upcoming conversation on EDI (Equality, Diversity Inclusion) in the Church (July 17th on Zoom), on a Workshop for Neuro-Divergent people seeking to use their talents to the best, on June being the month of Prayer for Toddler Groups, items for those working with children, for local preachers and worship leaders, for pastoral visitors, one recognising that 40% of UK adults are single people, another on the environment. And more...

There is no room for them all on here., but all churches should have email copies of the newsletter. Speak to your stewards to get a copy or contact the District Office on email at: office.admin@bristolmethodist.org.uk

Harvey

THE METHODIST CONFERENCE

The annual Methodist Conference, the continuing and ultimate authority of our church, will be held at Telford (Shropshire) Conference Centre later this month. The full Representative Session Opens on the afternoon of Saturday 28th June and closes on Wednesday 2nd July. (For our ministers it is preceded by a Presbyteral session on the Thursday and Friday beforehand, specifically to deal with business that affects ministers only.) Conference goes back to the days of John Wesley. It opens, as it always has done, with a hymn Charles Wesley wrote for the occasion. In their day Methodist ministers were open to abuse, both orally and physically, so Charles created the hymn to reflect the situation. After their long journeys to the venue on horseback therefore, how reassuring, even triumphant, for an all-male Conference to open proceedings with 'And are we yet alive, to see each other's face'. (Hymn number 456 in Singing the Faith). Even today, it can be a spine chilling experience to be part of the Conference' opening ceremony as everyone joins in unaccompanied, with singing of these words.

These days the Conference is transmitted into our homes live, via Utube. Key 'Methodist Conference 2025' into Utube on your computer just before 2pm on 28th June to see the representatives assembling in the Hall and then for proceedings to start. Stay on line for the inductions of the new President and Vice-President and the rest of the inaugural ceremonies. Following days include the ordination of new presbyteral ministers (Sunday) and then the business of the workings of the church. Drop in from time to time to get a flavour of it all. This is our Church, we are part of it in some way, and occasionally there will be a topic that is of particular interest to us.

This year there will be 225 representatives at the Representative Session. The number has come down over the years, as the numeric strength of the Church has been reduced. Some representatives are appointed because of their specific role in the Church but a considerable majority are elected, mostly from District Synods and great care is taken that there is a balance between ordained and lay membership. As representatives they are also free to express their own views and vote in ways that they feel accordingly.

Google 'Methodist Conference 2025' to find out more about how the Conference is run, to access the Reports that are up for discussion, and the details of each day's agenda. And to get a better flavour, highlights of previous years' Conferences are also available on Utube

Go on! Give it a go. You might even be surprised and say you enjoyed it.

Harvey

A PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Methodists traditionally use a fourfold approach to learn about our Christian faith and to apply contemporary issues to our Christian practice:

Scripture

We seek to discover the word of God through reading the Bible. There are different understandings among Methodists about the Bible's authority in our lives. We need to use resources like different Bible translations, commentaries and Bible reading notes.

Tradition

This is the wisdom and creativity of Christians over time and across the world. It includes inspirational material like hymns, songs, prayers, poetry, Christian art and devotional books,. There are also formally agreed teachings like the creeds, the content of the [catechism](#), and statements and reports from the [Methodist Conference](#).

Reason

We are called to love God with our minds as well as with our hearts. To the best of our ability we need to think things through in the light of reason. This means becoming aware of different points of view, and using our own critical thinking to make sense of God's world.

Experience

Methodism particularly stresses the importance of our own experience of God's grace working in our lives. We gain wisdom and maturity from life experience, especially when we pray and reflect about our story with other Christians. (Taken from the website of our Methodist Church)

POETRY PAGE

Here's a poem by Hollie McNish. Her collection, entitled Plum, a Book on the Turbulence of Growing up, is described on Amazon as 'a wise, rude, sharp poetry collection encompassing a life from childhood to attempted adulthood'. A delight to read, it is highly recommended, Hollie McNish has won the Ted Hughes Award for Poetry

When we got to the beach

I screamed
sprinted to the sea
flung off shoes and socks
ran towards imagined heaving waves
and jumped each tiny trickle that I found there
with just the same excitement

you stayed back
took your socks off more timidly
giggled at your stupid mother
eventually took my hand

we jumped together
and we jumped together
and we jumped together

three hours later
collapsing on our backs
we made angels in the sand

the seaside always made me
want to scream
now with you i can

... or what about these anonymous Spirituals. Enslaved Africans saw the Bible as a living text with which they were in relationship. God was ever-present. Slavery is still with us, and in many ways.

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me.

*One of these mornings, bright and fair
Gonna take my wings and cleave the air
When I get to heaven gonna put on my shoes
Gonna run around glory and tell all the news
When I get to heaven gonna sing and shout
Ain't nobody there gonna turn me out.*

CHARLES AND HIS BELLS

Many at Burnham know Charles as a member of the team that plays the organ on Sunday morning. Those at Brean meet him regularly when we share a joint service at St Bridget's, the Anglican church in the village.

But fewer people realise that he is a senior and long standing campanologist, a ringer of bells and has rung bells in churches up and down Somerset and beyond. He even goes on tours with fellow ringers.

At the end of last year he spent a month in New Zealand with colleagues touring bell towers in different parts. Here are some snippets from the diary he kept of his visit (at least those parts where bell-ringing was involved. There are some instances where abbreviations and coses are involved that you will have to decypher yourself I'm afraid:

6th Nov: Buffet Breakfast: I tried the Asian food but have to admit that I stuck with the eggs, sausages and baked beans. Not much fruit available. On to Auckland: got ribbed for going in Economy Premium (needed the legroom).

Auckland: 1288ed St Mathew in the City [R W Willan's famous composition of Grandsire Triples] with help from some of the local ringers. After this I would like to have had a lie down but the Action Woman that I was travelling with insisted on a brisk walk around the docks, which included a considerable uphill return to the hotel. We asked for some milk to go with our tea which a robotic trolley kindly delivered. I wondered how it pressed the buttons in the lift.

On to Hamilton for Grandsire Triples and P.B. Triples at St Peter's Cathedral. They let me pull the tenor up before they told me it was over 20cwt.

9th November: Wellington. Here we rang quarters on a ground floor light five with a rather long draft while members of the public peered over the stable-type door, made comments and took photos. All ¼s successful. I was also allowed a quick play on the v. nice 2 manual organ; kept off the louder stops as there were children and old people present.

Later we rode the famous Wellington Cable Car and read about its 120 year history:- now a funicular railway. Originally it cost 2d to ride up but just 1d to ride down. (1d = 1 penny in very old money) It seemed strange to see Christmas trees and decorations everywhere as we walked in the warm Spring sunshine.

11 Nov: Time to take the ferry across the Cook Strait to Picton on South Island with plenty of island views for those who went on deck or sat by the right windows. 12 & 13 Nov We were kindly invited to ring at two mini-rings. Made very welcome and fed and tea'd/coffee'd ad lib. Several ¼s were achieved.

14 & 15 Nov Christchurch: Breakfast £42 payable in advance but not served before 9.00 a.m. (!) We visited the Transitory 'Cardboard' Cathedral. The 2011 earthquake destroyed the cathedral which hasn't been restored yet owing to various disagreements. We paid \$40 each for an all-day tram ticket. The driver gave us a very interesting historical commentary as we clanked along. We thanked her and got off at the Earthquake Museum. The exhibits included recordings of first-hand experiences of some who had survived the earthquake. This included a lady who had a little workroom in the tower which also had housed the bells.

16th Dunedin: We rang at The First Church of Otago but were delayed as somebody had gone in the wrong door and set off the alarm: It was Gerry! Still, we rang two good ¼s, with help from some of the local ringers. Later, at the Railway Centre, we had a meal which was served to us by another robot: well, if metallically spoken and with well-oiled non-squeaky wheels.

From Dunedin Charles' group (half a dozen or so) continued round the South Island before returning via Tasmania at the end of the month. Thank you Charles and well done

DIARY DATES

<u>Regular days</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
Monday	10.30am	Brean	Coffee morning
Thursday	11.00am	Zoom	Coffee chat (details from Steve)
Monday to Thursday	9.00am – 2.00pm (Wednesday to 4pm)	Burnham	Waffle Hub Community Cafe and Associated Activities
Wednesday	2.00pm	Burnham	Knit 'n Natter
Friday	Morning	Burnham	Mothers and Toddlers
<u>Other Dates</u>			
June 1st		West Huntspill	Church Anniversary
June 4 th	7.00pm	Hope Baptist, Highbridge	Churches Together
June 5 th	7.00pm	Burnham	Meeting about rough sleepers
June 7 th	9.00am	Zoom	Circuit Prayer Group
June 8 th		All Churches	PENTECOST
June 9 th	7.30pm	East Brent	Circuit Meeting

June 10th	2.30pm	East Brent	Link Fellowship
June 27th	10.30am – 12 noon	West Huntspill	Coffee morning + sales table.
June 28 th	10.00am – 2.00pm	Burnham	Summer Fair
June 28 th	3.00pm	East Brent	Scones and Songs
June 28 th to July 2nd		Telford, Shropshire; and on-line (via UTube)	METHODIST CONFERENCE

Link Plus+++ 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, on: steve.bennett@methodist.org.uk

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.

The closing date for items in the next edition of Link Plus is 24th June.

Please remember this will be a double edition covering both July and August