
THE LINK

Methodist Link Churches Magazine

March 2010 Volume 45. No. 2.



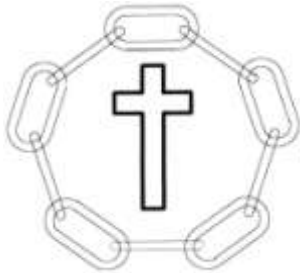
BREAN



BRENT KNOLL



WEST HUNTSPILL



EAST BRENT



BURNHAM ON SEA

Minister's Letter

The day the snow came to the Link is now a fading memory yet it is still cold, the sky is grey and rain is falling as I write. I am reminded that when I was teaching in Bristol I used to leave the house at around 7.00am each morning to set out for school. I would walk down our back garden to the garage where I parked my car and as I approached the side door of the garage the light above it would come on as I activated the PIR. Inside I would press the switch and wait for the lights to flicker on so that I could see to open the main door. This would become a daily ritual throughout the winter months with me almost sleepwalking through it each morning.

Then, eventually, would come the morning when the light failed to come on as I approached the garage. Usually round about this time of year would come the morning when the sun had risen high enough to provide enough light so that the PIR no longer needed to activate. Each year it was a significant moment because it meant that the days were slowly but surely beginning to lengthen again and spring was definitely on the way. As I look out today I see green shoots beginning to appear and the occasional bird flying past with a twig in its mouth.

As we begin to recognise these signs of new life stirring in God's created world, we enter the time of Lent. Lent is a time for us to prepare ourselves for the coming of new life in the resurrected Christ. The seasons are an annual reminder that death must come before resurrection can take place.

On Shrove Tuesday we used up the foods forbidden during the fast of Lent by making pancakes. Shrove comes from the old word "shrive" which means to confess. We confess our sins and receive forgiveness before we enter the Lent time of fast. Today few of us spend the 40 days of Lent fasting but we should still use the time to examine our relationship with God and to make ourselves fully prepared to meet again with the risen Christ.

One way to do this might be to engage in studying one important aspect of our relationship with God: Prayer. This is the subject of our 5 session Lent course "Life Source" organised by Burnham and District Churches Together. The dates and times will be found in this Link *. Each session is to be held twice – at 2.30pm in the afternoon and at 7.30pm in the evening so there is no excuse for anyone missing one! The course explores prayer as the source of Life, Joy, Light, Wholeness and Love. Prayer can seem difficult at times but it can also lead to an encounter with the Living God which can deepen our faith and commitment to Him. I urge you to consider taking part in this course for Lent.

Best Wishes

Andrew

* Be aware that the purple leaflets have an error – the sessions on the 10th and 17th have been swapped.

CALENDAR

Sat. 27th	10.00 - 12.00.	Shoppers Coffee Morning Burnham All Welcome
MARCH		
Wed. 3rd	2.30 & 7.30pm.	LENT Course at West Huntspill Methodist Church
Wed. 3rd	8.00pm.	Wednesday Group - Join the Lent Group
Thur. 4th	2.30pm.	Thursday Fellowship - Cedric May – Video – “The Rockies”
Fri. 5th	2.30pm.	Women's World Day of Prayer at Burnham Catholic Church
Sat. 6th	10.00 - 12.00.	Coffee Morning in aid of the RD Fund - Thursday Fellowship
Tue. 9th		Action for Children Collection at Sanders Garden World
Tue. 9th	2.30pm.	LINK Villages Fellowship - Pearl Hunt.
Wed. 10th	2.30 & 7.30pm.	LENT Course at St Mary's Church East Brent – Please note change of venue this week and next
Sat. 13th	10.00 - 12.00.	Shoppers Coffee Morning Burnham All Welcome
Wed. 17th	2.30 & 7.30pm.	LENT Course at Burnham Baptist Church - Please note change of venue this week.
Thur. 18th	2.30pm.	Thursday Fellowship - Easter Quiz.
Sat. 20th	10.00 - 12.00.	Coffee Morning in aid of Singing Children of Africa - All Welcome
Sun. 21st		LAST Day for items for the April LINK
Tue. 23rd	2.30pm.	LINK Villages Fellowship - Jean Ticknell.
Wed. 24th	2.30 & 7.30pm.	LENT Course at 'Our Lady' Roman Catholic Church Burnham
Sat. 27th	10.00 - 12.00.	Shoppers Coffee Morning Burnham All Welcome
Sat. 27th	7.30pm.	Burnham and Highbridge Choral Society concert at St John's Church H/B
Sun 28th	10.30 & 6.30.	Palm Sunday & Crosses on Brent Knoll.
APRIL		
Thur. 1st	2.30pm.	Thursday Fellowship - “Call my Bluff”.
Thur. 1st	7.00pm.	Maundy Thursday Service at Burnham
Fri 2nd	10.30am.	Good Friday Service - Burnham
Sat. 3rd	10.00 - 12.00.	Coffee Morning in aid of the RD Fund - Choir
Sun 4th	8.00am.	Easter Communion - Burnham
Sun 4th	10.30 & 6.30.	Easter Day Services.
Wed. 7th	8.00pm.	Wednesday Group - An evening with Rev. Andrew Biggs.



A Pastoral Letter to the Methodist People from the President and Vice-President of the Conference and the General Secretary

(Following the address of the President and Vice-President to the General Synod of the Church of England on 11th February 2010)

And are we yet alive? Our answer, despite some recent press speculation to the contrary, is a resounding “Yes!”. We have seen the evidence in various ways through our complementary roles. As President and Vice-President we have represented the care, oversight, authority and support of the Conference as we have visited local churches and situations in different parts of the connexion. We have seen the Methodist people being faithful and the Spirit at work in them and through them. We mentioned some examples in our address to the General Synod. As General Secretary, Martyn is responsible for leading the development of the mission of the Methodist Church. He too has seen evidence of energy being released amongst us.

We are all convinced that God is not finished with the people called Methodist yet. We began as a discipleship movement within the wider church, a society of people seeking holiness and engaging in worship and mission. In Wesley’s time and through succeeding generations we have continually adapted to circumstances to fulfil that calling as effectively as possible. It is still Our Calling today. And mission has never been more needed than it is now. We live in a world ravaged by war and poverty, and torn apart by questions of how we care for the natural environment and the morality of financial systems. We live in a world where people need to hear the word of God in a language they can understand, where they need to see the love of God through people like us and experience it as good news for them selves. We live in a world where not enough people are being attracted and formed into disciples of Jesus Christ, responding to the promptings of the Spirit.

Responding to situations like this, allowing God to transform us so that we can be most effective in doing so, supporting each other in that through our interconnections, is what Methodism has always been about. We best honour those who have gone before us by doing the equivalent in our time and our circumstances of what they did in theirs. It is our DNA as a people to be a group of disciples who are committed to glorifying God in worship, to holiness and to being obedient and active in mission. We are

therefore delighted to see an increasing interest in and commitment to discipleship amongst us.

We believe that God has a role for us in this mission, and we are increasingly embracing it. We have about 265,000 ‘card-carrying’ members, and that number has been decreasing because of the age-profile of our members. But more churches are making more members each year; a quarter of our churches are growing; the numbers worshipping with us on Sundays and, increasingly, mid-week is rising; fresh expressions are starting to flourish; we have regular contact with over 800,000 people; and we are part of a growing world-wide Methodist communion of over 70 million. There is a growing self-confidence amongst us accompanied by an appropriate humility about ourselves, and a releasing of energy for mission.

But we are not the whole of the church, and we cannot do it all by ourselves. So we have voted consistently over the years for unity schemes that are designed to increase the whole church’s effectiveness in mission. This is not a death wish, but a desire to be obedient and a willingness to be transformed. We can countenance ceasing to exist as a separate Church because we know that we will still be the Methodist people within a wider Church.

As our major statement on the nature and mission of the Church *Called to Love and Praise* put it in 1999 “the British Methodist Church may cease to exist as a separate Church entity during the twenty-first century, if continuing progress towards Christian unity is made”. Methodism will still contribute some of the riches of its own distinctive history and mission to any future church. We know from that history that we can be the Methodist people either in our own separate church or in some wider expression of the universal church. Helping to create a wider expression of the universal church and becoming part of it will require not just us but other churches to be prepared to move forward together and to leave some things behind in the process for the sake of the Kingdom. So it is not a question of Methodists being submerged or absorbed in the Church of England or any of our other partners. It is not a matter of Methodists returning to the Anglican fold, but of seeing whether together we are prepared to become a ‘new fold’.

This is not just true of our relationship with the Church of England. We have also signed a Covenant with other churches in Wales, and recently a partnership with other churches in Scotland. We have many local partnerships with other churches, the United Reformed Church in particular. And we are all part of wider denominational groupings. For example, the world-wide Methodist communion is over 70 million strong and the world wide Anglican communion about 78 million. Both are faced with questions of how they cohere in the 21st century, and how they deal with situations where there are competing and even contradictory convictions within them. In addressing these we have a lot to share with each other.

When we addressed the General Synod it was only the second time that the President of the Conference had done so; the first since the Covenant between the Methodist Church and the Church of England was signed in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen in 2003; and, importantly, the first time the Vice-President and the president had been invited to address the Synod together. What we were saying to the General Synod was that Methodists have always been committed to unity in order to create greater effectiveness in worship and mission. We said that thinking like this comes naturally from our spirituality. We approach our Covenant with the Church of England in the light of the Covenant Service in our Worship Book which we pray each year. We were gently but urgently asking the General Synod whether the Church of England was prepared to make the same commitment and allow itself to be transformed for the sake of the gospel. And what we say to the Church of England we say to our other partners.

So what happens if other churches are not prepared to be changed in order to become more effective in mission with us? Rather than being groups of Methodist people in a new and wider church, we shall continue as a Methodist people in a separate Methodist Church faithfully trusting in God's continuing leading of us. We could do that, and we currently do. But even as a separate church we shall have to continue with our commitment to co-operate with others in mission wherever possible and to whatever extent it is possible.

Whether co-operating with others or allowing a wider expression of the universal church to come into existence will require a lot of working

together in mission locally. Doing that will throw up some obstacles that will have to be removed and some issues that will have to be resolved if mission is not to be hampered. Some of those include matters of interchangeability of ministries, common decision-making structures, the role of women in the church, and how oversight is embodied. Much work has been done on these and some people will have to be asked to keep working at them on our behalf. When we signed the Covenant we committed ourselves to working to remove any obstacles to visible communion so far as our relationship with the Church of England is concerned. Any solutions will have to be agreed by all of us in due course and by due procedure. But in the interim we must all keep striving to engage as effectively as possible in worship and mission.

We have found the Methodist people in good heart, and an increasing sense of the energy of God's love being released amongst us. We are a people of one book, the Bible. We allow the gospel to both comfort and challenge us. We let the love of God both confirm and transform us in the body of Christ through the Spirit.

We are yet alive. We shall be alive in the future in whatever form God wills. God has not finished with us yet!

The Revd David Gamble
President of the Conference
Dr Richard M Vautrey
Vice-President of the Conference
The Revd Dr Martyn D Atkins
General Secretary

Learn lessons for life in Lent 2010

Life Source

Churches Together in Burnham-on-Sea & District led by Local Church Leaders using materials by Kate Bruce & Robert Warren

Wednesdays at 2.30pm & 7.30pm

24th February

Source of Life - prayer as a relationship

At St. John's Church, Highbridge & co-led with St. Andrew's, St. Peter & All Hallows, All Saints', St. Mary's (Berrow) & St. Bridget's.

3rd March

Source of Joy - prayer as enjoying God

At West Huntspill Methodist Church & co-led with Brean, Brent Knoll & Burnham-on-Sea Methodist Churches.

10th March

Source of Light - prayer as listening

At St. Mary's Church, East Brent & co-led with St. Michael's Church & St. Christopher's Church.

17th March

Source of Wholeness - prayer as honesty

At Burnham Baptist Church & co-led with Hope Baptist Church

24th March

Source of Love - Prayer as care

At 'Our Lady' RCC, Burnham-on-Sea & co-led with Burnham Community Church & The Gospel Tabernacle Church

Women's World Day of Prayer

'Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God'

On Friday 5th March over 3 million people worldwide will be praying and worshipping together during an annual day of prayer, using a service prepared by Christian women in Cameroon. Emma Wilcock, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer Movement, said:

This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in the Queen Salote Girls' School in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5,000 services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.'

The Republic of Cameroon is said to be 'Africa in miniature'. It is a country of great cultural diversity with more than 240 ethnic groups and languages. The constitution promotes equality between men and women but traditional rights and attitudes discriminate against women in many areas of life. However giant steps have been taken towards assuring women's rights and women are involved in the struggle for peace, justice and integrity.

Cameroon faces many challenges as its people seek to move forward into a modern age without losing their distinctive characteristics. But at all times, in all circumstances, Cameroonians are able to praise God with joy and exuberance and the service reflects this.

Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody as we demonstrate our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend.

The Burnham service this year will be held in the Catholic Church at 2.30 pm and the speaker will be Sister Darryll Candy.



Craft and produce show

Saturday April 24th

Lots of classes to enter from
baking to cards and flowers to crafts,
Entry forms available from the end of March.

Lunches served as well.

More information in the April Link.

Watch this space.



An important date for your diary.

Saturday May 15th **Cheddar Male Choir** will be singing at Victoria Methodist Church Weston s Mare at 7.30pm. The Soloist will be Beverley Gregory of Milton Methodist Church.

All profits will be for Burnham Methodist Church Redevelopment Fund.

More details later. Please book the date.

Dorothy May.



SPRING IS IN THE AIR AND ON SONG

Once again, come Springtime, the Burnham and Highbridge Choral Society will be delighting an audience when performing extracts from Merrie England along with Hiawatha's Wedding Feast, Songs Of The Fleet and Puccini's Messa De Gloria. The Society is directed by Francis Webb and is joined by two outstanding guest male soloists and an orchestra.

The concert is in St John's Church Highbridge at 7-30 p.m. on Saturday 27th. March and tickets, at £7-50, will be available from members, G.C. Music B.O. S and at the door.

The Society is supported by Highbridge Caravan and Camping Centre, which is celebrating its 45th Anniversary.

A Yorkshire man wanted an inscription on his wife's gravestone to read:-

"She was Thine"

The engraver mistakenly put:-

"She was Thin"

The man wrote back saying they had missed out the "E".

The next effort read:

“‘E’ She was Thin"

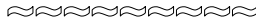
Harry Kempson



Just a thought

The good Lord didn't
create anything without a purpose
(But mosquitoes come close }

Dennis Dixon



Some misprints

Belcoo police seized 20 cattle and 30 small pigs on suspicion of
having been smuggled, assisted by Miss K. Dermont (violin) and Mrs P.
O'Rourke (percussion and effects)
(Fermanagh Herald)

The Vicar, the Rev. C. O. Marston, reported an increased number
of communicants during the year. He also stated that the death watch
beetle had been confirmed in the church.

(Banbury Guardian)

Winners in the home-made claret section were Mrs Davis {fruity,
well rounded}, Mrs Rayner (fine colour and full bodied), and Miss Ogle-
Smith (slightly acid, but should improve if laid down }
(Leicestershire Parish Magazine)

Dennis Dixon

BEHIND THE PARTED CURTAIN

READ:

Luke 23:39-43

Jesus said to him,
"Assuredly, I say to you,
today you will be with
Me in Paradise."

-Luke 23:43

Pastor and author Erwin Lutzer wrote:
"One minute after you slip behind the
parted curtain, you will either be enjoying
a personal welcome from Christ or
catching your first glimpse of gloom as
you have never known it. Either way,
your future will be irrevocably fixed and
eternally unchangeable."

Luke recorded a short yet powerful
narrative that pictures two men about to
go behind that curtain of death.

When Jesus was being crucified, two
thieves hung alongside Him. According
to Mark, both men hurled insults at Jesus
(15:32).

One of the thieves, however, had a
change of heart as he realised Jesus'

innocence, his own sin, and his destiny. He rebuked the other thief and
asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. These
words were a sign of repentance and simple faith. Jesus responded, "I say
to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Salvation for the man was immediate. He knew that day where he would
spend eternity.

Realising that we are sinners and placing our trust in Jesus' death and
resurrection assures us that we can immediately know where we will
spend our eternal tomorrows when we slip behind the parted curtain.

-Marvin Williams

Oh, why not turn while yet you may;
Too late, it soon will be-
A glorious life you may possess
Throughout eternity. - Anon.

To prepare for tomorrow, trust Jesus today.



'Life to the full'

'...I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE...TO THE FULL..' JOHN 10:10 NIV

At a street meeting, a young Salvation Army drummer was testifying
about his past. 'Before I became a Christian I used to drink and

gamble, but I don't do that any more. I used to swear and womanise, but I don't do that any more either. Come to think of it.. -all I do now is stand on the same old street corner and beat the same old drum!' Ever felt like that? You get up, go to work, come home, eat dinner, watch TV, drop into bed, get up next day and do it all again? Like Solomon, sometimes you can feel like 'Everything is meaningless...' (Ecclesiastes 12:8 NLT). But it doesn't have to be that way.

Francis Schaeffer said, 'Man has a purpose; to be in a relationship with God.. .when he forgets his purpose he forgets who he is and what life means.' There's more to life than beating the same old drum day after day. Jesus said'.. .I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'(John 10:10 NIV) The first step is acknowledging that He died to show you the way back to God. Step two is recognising you need a personal relationship with Him. Step three is using the Bible as a blueprint for purpose and fulfilment. The story book that answers the important questions, 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?' 'You're not a mistake' as one woman said after discovering her mother had tried to abort her. In God's eyes you have great value, and today He offers you 'life to the full.'

Sent in by Harry Kempson

Are you passionate about mission?



Encouraging Discipleship

The Somerset Mendip Circuit of the Methodist Church wishes to appoint a Mission Enabler to work alongside the congregations in Somerton and Keinton Mandeville. Key aspects of the role will include:

- working with the congregations and the minister in developing mission strategies
- identifying new areas for mission
- encouraging, resourcing and enabling that mission

The two-year appointment will comprise a 16 hour week. If you would like to know more about this position, please apply for further details and a job description from:-

Steve Derby, at Dunroamin, Smiths Lane, Ditcheat, BA4 6PR

e-mail : enquiries@steverderby.co.uk

The closing date for applications is 5th March 2010

Harvey's Wanderings

TRABZON – AN INDEPENDENT EMPIRE

We only just made it out of Istanbul. Another hour and the storm would have stopped us. Within twelve hours, much of the city was under water and its waste systems just could not cope.

We were heading east, for Trabzon (or Trebisond if you prefer). The storm did not reach that far and all we could see in the early evening were twinkling lights away to our right and a black sea (!) on our left.

Trabzon became the centre of an important enclave in the history of Orthodox Christianity. In 1054 after centuries of disagreement (much centred on who held the ultimate power), the Western Church of Rome and the Eastern Church of Byzantium suffered schism. Desultory attempts were made to patch up the differences, but unfortunately in 1204, the Doge of Venice used the Fourth Crusade to besiege and eventually to capture Byzantium (as Istanbul was called) in the name of the Roman Church, though more importantly to seize power himself. Much of the Eastern Church fell with it. But an area on the south east shores of the Black Sea around Trabzon held out and declared itself an independent empire.

In early morning sunlight we headed for the Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) Church built in those early years of uncertain independence. At the fall of Byzantium, Trabzon now considered itself the remnant of the Eastern Church and the floor plan of the new sanctuary was modelled on the church of the same name in the old capital, though very much smaller and without the fantastic half and quarter domes. Trabzon lasted as a Christian kingdom until 1461 and when Ottoman forces captured the city, the church was turned into a mosque. It is now a museum.

In spite of its Islamic past, its Christian pedigree is still clear, especially in the ceilings and in the floor mosaics; and many of the murals (of Adam and Eve for example) have meaning both to Christianity and to Islam.

The church/mosque/museum enjoys an imposing setting, in its own grounds, on a hill rising over the roof tops of the city and with a superb panorama of the bay; to the right the coast bends round and up to Georgia,

somewhere beyond the horizon to the north is Crimea, while to the left was from where we had come the previous day.

An hour's journey then took us inland, along mountain roads and eventually up a winding valley where the bus could go no more and we walked, just as they had centuries before, to the Sumela monastery hanging miraculously and seeming perilously off the sheer side of the mountain. Legend puts its foundation to the 4th Century AD when two Athenian hermits stumbled upon an icon of the Virgin Mary. In time it became part of that 'Empire of Trabzon' which paid for much rebuilding in the 13th Century. When the Ottomans took over in the 15th Century they held the monastery with great respect giving it special privileges and gifts. But it was a Greek monastery and when Ataturk came to power in the 1920s and all Greeks in Turkey were expelled, the monastery was abandoned and the remaining monks moved to Greece.

It is in a most spectacular setting perched 1000 feet above a pretty, narrow, tree lined river valley. Cut into the rock and built up on narrow ledges, are rooms sufficient to hold a substantial monastic community, the walls of many of the caves covered from top to bottom and across the ceiling with murals of biblical scenes and characters.

In less than a day we had seen two very different examples of people's vision of faith, one set up within a vibrant community and the other so remote and difficult to reach that only the most dedicated would even make the attempt let alone build. Two communities that had no guarantee of the earthly future except in that they were witnesses in tenacity and through hardship to the power and love of God.

Harvey and Judy Allen



Somerset Library Service

“Buy none, get 20 free” – not the kind of offer to turn down in these belt-tightening days. In this case, the 20 free items refers to the number of books a library member can borrow from any of Somerset’s 34 libraries and 6 mobile libraries.

Your local library will have plenty to choose from to suit all tastes in their collections of books, talking books and DVDs, as well as access to newspapers, periodicals, maps and much more.

Did you know that libraries offer:

- free membership to all
- free access to online information resources and “office” programmes, with some charges applied for longer use of open Internet searching. For family history fans, free access to the online “Ancestry” package is available in libraries
- access to about two million books and other items in the South West and many more nationally
- an enquiry service which will attempt to answer any information question you care to ask – just phone 01823 336370; for 24 hour access to the “Enquire” service go to www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries
- information about clubs and voluntary services at www.somerset.gov.uk/gateway
- extra activities to help children develop a love of reading, such as story times and the Summer Reading Challenge – and free requests for children’s books
- specialist collections of local history, sheet music and play scripts
- support for reading groups
- courses on using computers and access to other learning opportunities
- services to people who are housebound and unable to get to the library - we can arrange for a volunteer or a Mobile Library Driver to bring you books – just ask at your local library or phone 0845 3459177
- mobile library visits to over 1,100 stops across Somerset. Full details of these visits are on the website at www.somerset.gov.uk/mobilelibrarytimetables. Most vehicles visit every three weeks and some communities schedule an informal coffee morning / afternoon tea session to have a chat about books and a ‘catchup’ before the mobile library arrives. Each vehicle has wheelchair access and is equipped to carry about 2,000 books, with access to many more

Nearly 100,000 Somerset residents borrowed from libraries last year. Whether you were one of those or not, we’d love to see you this year. Also, if you join before 30th April, your name can be entered into a prize draw.

BREAN

www.brean-methodist-church.home.dhs.org

It's behind you! Well probably, though I wasn't able to see the pantomime myself as I had been in London for much of the week. But it was good to know that Vicky and Becky Baker were prominent in the village pantomime this last month and that Vicky took the part of the leading boy. Weeks even months of rehearsal came to fruition in what all reports say was a very successful production. Congratulations to you both.

Keeping our fingers crossed but by the time this edition of the Link hits the street, the scaffolding will be up and work replacing the roof of the church will have begun. It should be finished by Easter. Pray for fine weather!

But that's not the end of the excitement for the review team arrive at the beginning of March. Every seven years Local Ecumenical Partnerships are supposed to have a review by knowledgeable people from outside of the Partnership. We have been an LEP since 1988 so this will be the third such Review. We fear that this time they will not find a lot to inspire them for we are not exactly setting the pace in ecumenical relations these days. Still they might come up with ideas and most of all words of encouragement.

Our seasonal visitors are also due to start coming this month. It is too easy to forget that small churches such as ours get considerable uplift when the Sunday congregation is increased even by the ones and twos that pop through our doors on a summer's morning.

Meanwhile we are pleased to see that our regular congregation is fairly steady at about a dozen each week and that the Monday coffee morning continues as a useful contribution to the life of the village.

Harvey Allen



WEST HUNTSPILL

Here in West Huntspill we continue our ecumenical co-operation with friends from The Parish Church. In January we held a joint Covenant Service with them led by Robert our Superintendant Minister who was assisted by Rev. Kath Allen from St. Andrews Church in Burnham.

Our joint prayer Group which prays weekly for those in need during Lent and use the time to prepare ourselves for Good Friday and Easter Day. Some of us will be attending the Churches Together Lent Course on Wednesdays. Other will be meeting each Tuesday for Communion and lunch.

We began our preparation with special prayers on Shrove Tuesday, including the following which I share with you here:-

CHRIST THE CALLER (by David Allen)

You are the caller, You are the poor - You are the stranger at my door.

You are the wanderer, the unfed - You are the homeless with no bed,

You are the man driven insane - You are the child crying in pain

You are the other who comes to me - If I open to another you're born in me.

Margaret Waterhouse



BRENT KNOLL

The season of Lent is with us again and, as we look towards Good Friday and Easter, there are opportunities to prepare by taking part in one of the Lent courses. As you know Churches Together offer Wednesday afternoons or evenings on “Prayer” and here at Brent Knoll we shall also follow a course on Thursday afternoons. It is called “When I survey... Christ’s Cross and ours”. We also hope that once again symbolic crosses will be placed on the top of the Knoll on Palm Sunday.

The word “Lent” itself is, of course a secular one, coming from the Old English word for “springtime” and after the very cold spells we have had, it is good to see some signs of spring. The days are longer and Snowdrops, which really had to push through the snow this year are now here to delight us.

A number of our members have not been at all well and battle with ongoing health problems but it is good to see most of them back in Church, Geoff Tullett has had a spell in Weston Hospital, Keith Cox is recovering from a hip replacement and we were so glad that Bill and Barbara Drew were well enough to celebrate Barbara’s 90th Birthday with members of the family.

Bill feels that he must now give up some of his duties as Senior Steward but we are most grateful that he will continue as treasurer and guide those who volunteer to share some of the stewarding duties. We thank everyone who has been willing to help out so far, especially Ronnie Pycroft, who does so much as our Property Steward, prepares the notices, and any other job which he sees need doing.

Congratulations also to our friends in the village who organised such a successful Coffee Morning and raised over £500 for the Haiti Appeal.

We look forward to two special occasions this month as we shall welcome three children into the Church. On mothering Sunday Charlie Knott will be baptised and on Palm Sunday Kieron & Jamie Clark. It has been a delight to see them in Church when they have been able to come. Charlie is Ruth’s great grandson and Kieron & Jamie are members of our Toddlers’ Group.

Please remember these families in your prayers.

Love to all.

Margaret Trapp.

EAST BRENT

I can hardly believe that it's March already, I've usually done the digging and picked the first daffodils by now, but only the snowdrops are in flower, because of the cold weather, but it's been lovely and warm in our church. Our new heaters are working well (never mind the cost of running them) and when "somebody" has bought a new cupboard to put all the "stuff" that is in the vestry, we shall be back to normal whatever that is.

The Brownies won't be with us this year for Mothering Sunday, as they are attending an important event in Bristol to celebrate their centenary. They will be sleeping overnight on the SS Great Britain. There will be about 200 of them, what a unique opportunity.

Our Church Council will take place on Sunday afternoon the 21st. February. It is normally quite well attended, possibly because we have a splendid tea afterwards, and hopefully there won't be too much in the way of business that requires our attention.

One or two of our members have been unwell of late, we do miss them and look forward to them returning and boosting our congregation.

We were sad to hear of the death of Eric Gilberthorpe at the age of 99^{1/2} years, many in the circuit may not have heard of him, but he was a well loved and respected Local Preacher, the first one listed on our plan.

I attended a day course on Food and Hygiene in the kitchen at our Burnham-on-Sea Church last month. I shall be watching that everyone washes their hands before getting out the cups and saucers in future!

If you have taken any of our towels (2 dark mauve ones) and any of our tea towels from the kitchen at East Brent to wash, please could they be returned as there are none left at present for other users, even the new replacements with our name on them have walked somewhere.

Jill Legg



BURNHAM.

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STEWARDS COLUMN

Dorothy reminded me this morning that it was my turn to write the Stewards Column for this issue of the link and that brings the total of important events forgotten by me in the last month to three! My first senior moment was forgetting a dental appointment. Although there were mitigating circumstances – I was in Egypt at the time – but that does not excuse my not cancelling it before I went. My second was missing a hospital appointment, which I had put in my diary for the incorrect day. Fortunately many apologies and much grovelling has secured me another appointment – and now this hastily written Stewards Column.

However the start of the Lent period has given me greater focus on what is really important. I usually give up something pleasurable such as eating chocolate, cake etc – but that has a dual purpose so that I can lose a bit of weight as well. But this year I want to give more time in prayer and contemplation. It is so easy to get carried away by the day to day ups and downs of life that we can become distanced from the God we love and worship. Lent must be a time for enhancing that close relationship with our Father.

And now for something completely different - Messy Church! - Two words that have come to have great significance at Burnham. Andrew held a Sunday afternoon session in church to give everyone the opportunity to learn what it is all about and why “messy”. (Apparently it’s not the church that gets in a mess - although with all the activities that take place it probably will – it is because our lives are “messy”!) It was a very interesting session and I know we learned a great deal about the rationale behind it. Many members of the congregation put their names down to be part of this new initiative to widen our mission. There are exciting times ahead.

This talk of “messy” lives brings me back to my opening paragraph. Messy is a good word for my forgetful mind. Hopefully when Messy Church gets going I can leave my messy mind there and find one with more discipline and focus (and one a bit brainier too!)

I wasn't going to mention the weather (and I definitely won't mention the week Barry and I spent in the sun and warmth of the Red Sea) but hasn't it been cold, wet and miserable! However spring is definitely on its way – my neighbour's crocuses are blooming beautifully in the flower bed. To all our friends in the link and especially all those who are unwell and feeling low I wish for a bit of sunshine and warmer weather to cheer the coming days.

Every Blessing to you all - -

Ann Hall



BURNHAM REDEVELOPMENT FUND

The total money in hand at end of January was **£9,584** towards the final payment of **£21,563**

We say a Special “Thank you” for all who have given so generously during the past weeks.

FUTURE EVENTS

May 5th Tea/Coffee and Desert at 14, Priory Gardens.

May 15th Cheddar Male Choir at Victoria Methodist Church, Weston s Mare

May 29th **Spring Fair** 10.00am – 12.30pm

T.B.A. Strawberry Tea at Dorothy & Cedric May's

August 22nd Gardens Open Afternoon– details nearer the time

Please watch Church Notices for other Coffee/Mornings and events



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**The Deadline for the
April 2010 “LINK” is
Sunday 21st March 2010**

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