



# The Link ++

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



# March 2026



# A Message from our Minister

Dear Friends

We are already in Lent and some of us are joining with others throughout the Methodist Church in undertaking the Methodist Church Lent Study Course called 'Let go and be Open'. This course, which follows the main readings from the lectionary, encourages us to let go of those things that hold us back in our discipleship so we can open ourselves to God and the way God wants to renew our lives.

I am finding it interesting to share bible study with others using the readings which I will use in my preaching on a Sunday. My habit has always been to look at the readings for the next Sunday on a Monday and then, depending on how much time I have that day, to either start my thoughts about the passages or get some ideas down on paper. It has been both useful and challenging to then have a bible study on the same reading and learn through the insights of others. To those involved in this, thank you.

Whether you are using the study, or another one, or indeed no study at all, the desire to give more time to listen to God so we might develop in our discipleship, fits well with any Lenten practice. The course itself says its aim is to help people to have a place where 'new insights can take root and grow'. May this be your experience of Lent 2026.

Finally, having heard the news of Rev John McNeill accepting the position of Superintendent Minister, and Minister of the Link churches, I am grateful for all the prayerful support that I and the Leadership Team have received over the last few months. I am sure that you, like me, are looking forward to meeting John shortly.

Steve

## Brean

So we are going to have a replacement minister when Steve 'sits down' in the summer, after all. Rev John McNeill will be leaving his current Circuit in Gloucestershire to become our Superintendent Minister from September. We express our thanks to the persuasive powers of District Chair, Rev Dr Marcus Torchon, and to Rosemary Krull and her colleagues on the Circuit Invitation Committee for all their very hard work in reaching this conclusion.

A word of condolence to his current circuit though, for they now have to take a year without one of their complement of ministers in order that we can be served. They, and many others across the Connexion will have to work hard to find ways to fill any gaps in their ministry for the next year.

Rosemary gives more details of Dr McNeill's appointment elsewhere in this issue. We say welcome to our new minister and trust that he will find a happy and worthwhile home amongst us

It is not all joy though. However pleased we may be at the outcome, we still have to pay for the privilege. At our Church Council, Anne our treasurer, outlined the circuit budget and our financial commitment to it. Increasing demands on us means that our assessment will need to go up substantially. Our Church Council, accepted the exceptional situation for this next year.

Other items from February's Church Council (and the previous one) included the mundane such as Health and Safety policies, Safeguarding, and EDI (Equality, Safeguarding and Diversity) issues. We have no great Pastoral problems, though new members would be welcome, as would new people to take on responsibilities when needed. On property, recent roof leakage problems appear to have been resolved at last. Otherwise we are in pretty good order though we note for the future that gutters and soffits will soon need attention, the front doors will need painting, the notice board replacing, and the brickwork on the low outside walls is beginning to crumble. And, oh yes, we have agreed already to order a Christmas tree for the front of the church, as in previous years.

Ecological factors continue to be on our mind and it would be good to upgrade our bronze award to silver. Solar panels were discussed and may be examined during the year. The efficiency of the dishwasher purchased recently was specifically chosen with economy in mind; and blinds to the side windows in the church were installed to aid our insulation.

**Time for Beetle again.** And a bit late this year. Sausages (from Pyne's of course), beans and mash to start with and then Anne will lead us through our Beetle Drive while we, as usual, get involved in losing our way around the tables between Beetles. All good fun. So come and enjoy the process. Saturday 7th March from 7pm:

**PLEASE COME: Email numbers to: [harveyjallen@gmail.com](mailto:harveyjallen@gmail.com)**

And in news for later in the year, on August Bank Holiday Sunday (30th) we shall be holding our Annual Open Air Songs of Praise again, and this year it will be taken by Rev Jim McNight.

We hope that the Lenten season is bringing its own rewards for you. Next month of course we shall be looking forward to Easter, and by then Spring and our first summer visitors will be on their way. So be of good cheer and be blessed by it all.

Harvey Allen

# Brent

[www.eastbrentmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.eastbrentmethodistchurch.org.uk)

I looked up my notes for last year when I wrote this article and one of the things I referred to was having a Facebook page. We do now have a FB page (Brent Methodist Church) so do have a look (and follow) and let me know if there are events you would like advertised or items added.

We had our Church Council recently and one of the matters discussed was how the two churches are blending. Adjustments have been necessary on both sides but from my point of view it is great to have a larger congregation each week, and it was pleasing to hear that some of our recently transferred members are at least feeling at home.

We ended our meeting by thanking Revd Steve (as this would be his last meeting) for his service, guidance and ministry during the last 11 years. We will miss you Steve but wish you and Liz a very happy and healthy retirement.

Can I remind you that crosses will be erected on the Knoll again this year and we thank Burnham Baptist Church & Churches Together for arranging this. Steve has kindly offered to lead the service at the top which will take place on Sunday 29 March at 3pm.

Rosemary Gilling

# Burnham

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

Hello Everyone. You are all invited to an afternoon of fun, frolics and feasting with us here at Burnham on 21st of March. 2.30-5.30. We are having a Family Funday, or is it a Church Family Funday? That got us thinking about who and what our church family is. I am thankful for my church family. There is love, tolerance and empathy. There is a chance to grow. There is a chance to serve and to allow others to serve you. There is a chance to join in or to simply be quiet in a corner letting it all seep in. No judgement. There is often cake and always biscuits.

There are some of our family who have passed away recently, and they are missed.

We will remember Dorothy, Richard and Joyce.

Then we have been thinking of our wider church family. The rest of our circuit and then our other close relations: Anglican, Catholic and all the other churches in the area. Oh, and The Baptists. Well, they are our next-door neighbours, but they feel like family. We are looking forward to the next big Churches Together event at the end of the month .... putting up the crosses on Brent Knoll on the 28th and a service beneath them on Palm Sunday at 3pm.

Our very own Steve Bennett will be leading it.

Please let us know if you are coming to our Funday. It's the best kind of feasting where we all bring a plate to share.

Alison

# West Huntspill

[www.wsbos.org/westhuntspill.htm](http://www.wsbos.org/westhuntspill.htm)

The sun is shining and I've just counted 17 varieties of flowers out in my garden. Admittedly some of them are wildflowers that I did not plant! So spring is on its way.

We were pleased that someone from the RNLI was able to come to our January coffee morning to receive a cheque for £950 as a result of donations given in memory of Maureen Cavill at 10 coffee mornings in 2025. This year we are giving money raised towards the cost of a second Dorset and Somerset air ambulance.

This year our Church building is 175 years old. This year it is 45 years since we replaced the old vestry, kitchen and toilets; and it is 30 years since we took the pews out; laid a completely new floor, and made the vestibule bigger. Now we can use the floor space for a multitude of activities. We are hoping to have some sort of celebration in the summer.

## **Dates for your diaries.**

Friday 6th March. World day of Prayer. Service at 11a.m. at St. Peter and al Hallows Church, West Huntspill. Coffee from 10.30 a.m. The service this year has been prepared by the women of Nigeria.

Friday 27th March. Coffee morning from 10.30a.m. – noon.

Thursday 2nd April. 7p.m. Maundy Thursday communion service at West Huntspill Methodist Church.

Christine Thomas.

(Thank you Christine and our best wishes to Janet our usual correspondent. Get well soon Janet)

# The Link Fellowship

In February the Link Fellowship had a very interesting and informative afternoon with Revd. Steve Bennett who spoke about the section of his recent visit to India where he renewed acquaintance with the Bishop whom he had first met a number of years back. The Bishop has now retired and moved area but has already set up several projects which enhance both Church and community life. Steve was able to screen photos he had taken so that we could see the difference this work was making in the area.

John Lamb joined us for this session as next month he is going to play for us folk songs that we might remember from younger days, and he brought a book containing such arrangements so that we could select some that we felt we might possibly know well enough to sing along to – and at least get a few phrases coming to mind!

We shall be meeting at East Brent Church hall at 2.30pm on Tuesday 10th March, and we welcome anyone who would like to join us.

Joyce Pipet

# My Calling

In the old days BC (Before Covid) when Cedric used to edit this Newsletter, Preachers began a series in which they outlined their preaching journey. Rev Jim McKnight has agreed to start us off again. Here is his account of taking up his ministry.

## My Calling - Jim McKnight

My journey began when, with my parent,s we attended the local Church of Scotland Parish church. I still remember clearly sitting in the pew in the gallery in clear view of the pulpit and eye level with the minister - Revd Brown who had been the minister for many years. During the children's address I occasionally received a warm acknowledgement of my presence from him and always valued the conversations in our home with my parents. I felt even at that early age this is what I wanted to do with my life, even if I didn't fully understand what that would mean or how God would lead me in years to come.

It wasn't until I with a few other young people started attending the Sunday school at the local Salvation Army where Alice's parents were the church leaders that I saw in them what following Jesus would really mean, and at the age of fourteen I gave my heart to Jesus and simultaneously felt the call to ministry.

Roll on a few years, while, and now as a candidate for the ministry in the Salvation Army and having been accepted for entering the training college that my friendship with Alice who was also candidating grew culminating in the most unromantic proposal taking place in a bus shelter when I suggested that we should enter college in London as a married couple. She obviously forgave me for this unromantic stumbling proposal because we entered bible college in 1970 and began ministry within the salvation Army which lasted 30 years. Ministry within the Army was wide and varied, bur the preaching of the word was always my gift.

It was while as a visiting minister in the chaplaincy team of a high security prison in Cambridgeshire that I met with the Rev Les Stoker a retired methodist minister and during our sessions together in the wings we shared many a conversation about ministry and calling and while having these discussions a growing sense of unease was building up within me and felt I was being called to ministry within the Methodist Church which resulted in me visiting church house and finally becoming a probationary minister to my first circuit in 2001 and was ordained in 2003.

My call to preach may be unlike many other ministers' experience, but the overwhelming desire to preach the word of God with integrity clarity and passion has always been in my DNA. It has been a costly decision for us both in many ways, especially for Alice who had to step away from her fulltime ministry to allow me to pursue this calling, she has

supported me in every area of my ministry. Responding to God's call has always been so – but the fulfilment and obedience to God outweighs it all.

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*(Having read this I realised that I was present when Jim was among those Probationer ministers new to the church who were presented as Ordinands at the Annual Conference. This was at Llandudno in that year. It is nice to be able to look back and say, I was there when Jim was presented to the Church and we all rose and approved the Ordination by Standing Vote. H.A.)*

## Poetry Corner

They give us a lovely show around at the moment so this old faithful seems most appropriate (except of course we don't have the glorious scenery of the Lake District to enhance it all)

### Daffodils by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.



## Calendar

|                                       | Time   | Location                  | Event   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Regular Days</b>                   |  |                           |   |
| <b>Mondays (except Bank Holidays)</b> | 10.30 am   | Brean                     | Coffee Morning  |
| <b>Wednesday</b>                      | Times vary (10.30 am/7.30pm to fit in with Steve's availability) | Zoom                      | Weekly Bible Study Group on Lenten theme (details and Zoom link from Steve Bennett) |
| <b>Thursday</b>                       | 11.30 am   | Zoom                      | Coffee chat<br><br>(details and Zoom link from Steve)                               |
| <b>Monday - Thursday</b>              | 9.00am - 2.00 pm, Wednesday to 4.00pm                            | Burnham                   | Waffle Hub Community Cafe and associated activities                                 |
| <b>Wednesday</b>                      | 2.00pm   | Burnham                   | Knit 'n' natter   |
| <b>Friday</b>                         | Morning  | Burnham                   | Mothers and Toddlers  |
| <b>Other Dates</b>                    |  |                           |   |
| <b>Friday 6th March</b>               | 11.00am  | West Huntspill (Anglican) | Womens World Day of Prayer  |
| <b>Saturday 7th March</b>             | 7.00pm   | Brean                     | Sausage and Mash and Beetle Drive   |
| <b>Saturday 21st March</b>            | 2.30pm - 5.30pm  | Burnham                   | Family Fun Day  |
| <b>Friday 27th March</b>              | 10.30am - 12 noon  | West Huntspill            | Coffee Morning  |
| <b>Sunday 29th March</b>              | 3.00pm   | Brent Knoll               | Placing Crosses on top of the Knoll   |
| <b>Thursday 2nd April</b>             | 7.00pm   | West Huntspill            | Maundy Thursday Communion Service   |

**Followed by Good Friday and Easter**

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

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 minster on: [steve.bennett@methodist.co.uk](mailto:steve.bennett@methodist.co.uk)

**CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES FOR NEXT MONTH IS 25 MARCH.**





