

LINK PLUS +++

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

OCTOBER 2025

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends

Our Harvest services are well underway. In them we give thanks for God's provision and God's faithfulness seen in creation. We hear about the gift of stewardship in creation that we have been given, and then we turn on our newsfeeds to hear about eco matters, and the evidence of the impact of humans on the planet. I was listening to a program on Radio 4 the other day where they were trying to find any place on the planet where the bearing of humankind had not had an effect. They had searched in the most likely of places, even this week in the volcanic hot air vents on the bottom of the deepest oceans. Unfortunately, even there, there was evidence of climate change and pollution.

The Methodist Church asks us to be at the forefront of the Christian response to climate change, and whilst we might not always want to consider the way in which our churches respond to this, perhaps because these things are costly, it is something our stewardship demands. Now all new property projects now have to have an environmental assessment to quantify the impact of what we want to do. I know some churches are already thinking carefully about their response to eco issues.

What about us as individuals? Where can we do more to use less, to recycle, to change our lifestyles to be good stewards of God's creation? I am not saying that we should not travel, that we should not eat meat, that we should not put the heating on when we are cold, but the smallest response of individuals will always have a greater benefit than anything we might do in our church building.

Fred Pratt Green wrote 'God in his love for us lent us his planet', the final verse of this hymn says 'earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it, ours, as God's stewards to farm and defend'.

Help us O Lord to look after your wonderful world!

Steve

BREAN

(www.breanmethodistchurch.org.uk)

It was a Tuesday evening in September. It wasn't an especially cold evening but suddenly you knew that autumn had arrived. It had nothing to do with leaves dropping off the trees or any of the other visible signs. It was simply you felt a clean waft of cool air. Just enough to let you know. I can even put a time on it – about 8.00 o'clock.

September wasn't the best of months for weather; the rains came with some force, as did the winds. And then seemingly to appease us for our discomfort, we had a few days of sun. The first week of October heralds the Country and Western music and paraphernalia in Brean, so many are hoping that the sun continues for a while.

Our visitor numbers have stayed up well through the summer, which has been a blessing, and by the end of the September we had even had an employee from Hinckley Point, a Polish carpenter now living in Edinburgh, but staying at Hinckley's accommodation on Pontins for the duration of his work.

The day that he came we had arranged a service for ourselves, on the day when our appointed preacher was unable to come, for health reasons. Well, said Joyce, we are dealing with John's gospel, so why don't we contribute our favourite readings from John. add a comment and then select a hymn to go with it. We had a splendid response. Eight people made choices, Anne produced illustrations to project onto the wall to depict the scenes, and of course Rose gave us the musical accompaniment. So much involvement by others that I was simply left to announce the cast.

As I listened, though, it all made me appreciate the depth and variety in people's spirituality, and commitment to this faith of ours. Including visitors, 18 people attended and I don't think any of them mentioned or even minded, that the service ran over by 10 minutes. A very happy occasion

It was also a very happy occasion, on the previous Sunday when we went over to Brent Knoll and gave thanks for the long ministry of the Methodist Church to the village and to our circuit. A full church (about 70 I counted) with people in the gallery above. It was also very good to see Andrew Biggs (Steve's predecessor as minister in the Link) and Julie his wife, present with us. They had come down all the way from Oxfordshire where Andrew is now Superintendent minister. Julie who started her preaching journey while with us) is now chaplain at a children's facility up there.

So now the two churches of Brent are fully as one. So, from us all at Brean we wish you well in all your endeavours.

But a sadder development is to report that our ecumenical partners are without a priest again. Since the departure of Jonathan Philpott a couple of years ago, a retired vicar, Marion Hance had looked after our friends at St Bridget's. She died unexpectedly a week or so back. It is a big blow to both the Brean and Berrow congregations for they, together with the three Anglican congregations of Lympham, East Brent and Brent Knoll have been seeking a full time priest but as yet without success. We send our best thoughts to them all, and to Marion's husband, John, and their family; and wish them well as they seek a replacement for Jonathan.

So, October is here. I think that means Church Council (whatever shall we do next?), Harvest Festival (all are welcome on 12th; a joint service with our Anglican friends), and the first of our Link winter services, this time at East Brent.

Happy Days

Harvey Allen

THE BRENT CHURCHES

(www.brentknollmethodistchurch.com)

BRENT KNOLL

This will be the final article from us as the congregation of Brent Knoll. It goes without saying that we have been through the whole gamut of emotions during the months and weeks leading up to the closure of our building

I had the privilege of leading worship at our final Sunday morning service at the Chapel, with Rev Margaret Trapp, who presided over Communion. It was a privilege to do so and also a poignant time for us all. But it was also a time where we gave thanks for the life of a building in which so many faithful people congregated to serve God, the community of Brent Knoll, and the Methodist Circuit of Weston-Super-Mare & Burnham on Sea for so, so many years. Service well given and for which we are all truly thankful.

This was followed by our closing service and Harvest Festival the following week. And we were simply overwhelmed by the attendance. The Church was packed with friends from around the whole Circuit and from the Village. Members shared in the Service and we were all uplifted, sustained and encouraged by Rev Steve's sermon which hit the perfect note of thanksgiving for the life and members of our Chapel.

And it was so good to catch up with friends after the service over excellent homemade refreshments (a big "Thank you!" to all who helped with this). We even had visitors from another Methodist District, as it was wonderful to catch-up with our former Minister, Rev Andrew Biggs and his wife Julie (who are currently serving in Chipping Norton and the surrounding area). I caught up with them afterwards, and during a time of reminiscing, Andrew said he always remembered Brent Knoll with great fondness.

At the time of writing, I have just come back from our first service with East Brent since our building's closure. Janet Widdess led an excellent Harvest Festival service, which also incorporated a true message of unity as we all go forward into this new chapter of our Church life. Also, a big thank you to the East Brent cake makers who provided an excellent spread of cakes to welcome us. Truly appreciated and for which we thank you all muchly.

From all of us former Brent Knoll Methodists, we give thanks to all who have supported us over the years. We give thanks for the service of those who are no longer with us. And we give thanks for those who will keep journeying in faith in this new chapter of our Christian lives.

God bless you all, from all of us. Rosemary Krull

EAST BRENT

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above was certainly the case at East Brent last Sunday. It related both in gifts and people this year. More produce perhaps than was expected. When all conversations seem to be linked with a bad harvest yield and shortages. We were pleased to have Janet Widdess with us to take out service, slightly different from usual, but who could not but remember the word "Creation", who may "good" words could be made from it. We were pleased and excited to add to our number our Brent Knoll friends – the beginning of a new partnership in worship and togetherness. We welcome them and hope they enjoy the worship and friendship of the East Brent congregation and that we function as one church – a little difficult as I well know when we were forced to close at Heath House, long ago.

Some of the produce was sold and the remainder taken to the group that cooks meals for other for them to make good meals for needy souls.

As I write this the sun is shining brightly not like the afternoon at Brent Knoll's Harvest Festival and the last service on their premises. I remember my last closing down service for a long time but having joined East Brent at that time I have found fellowship there and never regretted it at all.

On a personal note, may I thank the two gentlemen who came to my aid when my car broke down before and after the service, one person being Rev Jim McKnight and the other, unknown to me. I got it back on the following Thursday. The battery had given up the ghost but has been replaced by a brand new source of power. I pray that this may be an omen for forthcoming days as we are now a joint congregation and church family.

Just a notice that our "sale" day at East Brent will be 6th December. Watch out for notices about what is to occur

Evelyn M J Tucker

ASIDES

Why was the robot couple's anniversary in the Fall? They were autumn mated

Why did the apple pie go to the dentist? Because it needed a filling

What do you call a small pepper in the autumn? A little Chilli.

What do farmers wear under their shirts when they are cold? A har-vest

You come from dust and you will return to dust, that's why I don't dust. It could be someone
I know

BURNHAM

Burnham, Highbridge, and Huntspills Methodist Church

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

It was sad to see the closure of Brent Knoll Methodist Church. There is much to remember and to celebrate in the memories of the members of the congregations who have worshipped and witnessed over the years. Some association with those memories will live on as we have gratefully received some items from Brent Knoll which will be used to enhance both the worship area and our worship in Burnham.

The weather forecast for the afternoon of the last day of August was not good. Fortunately, it turned out to be less than accurate and many of us enjoyed an afternoon tea in the house and glorious garden of Barbara Williams. It was a lovely time of meeting together and raising money for the church. In September, there was also an opportunity to combine fun and fund-raising at a concert and afternoon tea at the church premises. Thanks are due to the volunteer organisers, the volunteer caterers and the entertainers: Serendipity Singers and the Burnham Ukelele Group. We were entertained by each musical group and after a tasty tea, we joined in a selection of sing-along songs led by both groups together.

On Sunday 5th October, at 10:30, the church celebrates Harvest. Recognising God's abundant gifts and the needs of the local community, members of the congregation are invited to bring non-perishable items. All that is given will be donated to the Food Bank that operates within the church premises.

David Patient (for the Burnham Stewards)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage trees
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
with a sweet kernel; to set budding more
and still more later flowers for the bees
until they think warm days will never cease;
For summer has o'er brimmed their clammy cells

(Ode to autumn – John Keats)

WEST HUNTSPILL

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

Coffee and Chat will be on Friday the 31st October Do come along and join us, meeting up with friends from the Link Churches. We have a sales table with many different items. All donations gratefully received for The Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

We had an enjoyable morning on our September Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Care with quite a few more items which went very well. The amount raised was £16. Thank you to all our friends who supported us.

From the Friendship Book 2018

After a night out with friends George found himself walking down a dark, secluded lane towards the railway station. Half-jokingly, he started praying for a Guardian Angel. Then he saw a figure approaching him out of the gloom.

The large menacing figure stopped, and said, "Grandad?"

George's grandson had also been on a night out, had spent his fare home and hadn't been able to get his parents on the phone. He'd been walking along the scary path to a friend's house when he also had seen a "menacing figure".

George walked him back to the station, bought his ticket, and saw him safely home.

"I asked God for a Guardian Angel," George said laughing. "And He sent me for my grandson! But, sometimes, that's how it works."

Some of God's promises from "The Bible Promise Book"

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore.

Psalm 121 v7-8

But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Proverbs 1 v 33

I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psalm 4 v 8

Janet J._

THE LINK FELLOWSHIP

News from the Link Fellowship

We gathered after our summer break with 17 people attending. It was a delight to welcome Revd. Steve Bennett to our informal AGM which was followed by communion.

I presented a review of the previous year's programme and gave thanks to Evelyn Tucker who plays for us, and provides flowers for the table, and to Christine Thomas who organises the rota for teas and for when we share a meal as we do at Christmas and for the last session before we break for the summer. Janet Johnson was thanked as she presented the financial situation and it was decided to increase our giving to the church for the use of the hall to £100, and then to donate £80 to All We Can remembering the part they play in the crisis in Gaza.

At the meeting I was unable to confirm the speakers for the next two months, but confirmations of invitations I had extended came back the following day.

So, in October Revd. Peter Davis will come to talk about his work with addictions; and in November Revd. Judith Lincoln will be our speaker, sharing experiences from her recent sabbatical. Then in December we shall meet at noon for a shared lunch followed by carols, readings, and poems.

We meet in East Brent Methodist Church Hall on the second Tuesday of each month at 2.30p.m. and all are welcome to join us.

Joyce Pipet

CHURCHES IN AUS (tralia)

I found all the places of worship I visited very welcoming and felt totally at home in them. I was staying with my cousin in Goolwa on the Fleurieu Peninsula, near the mouth of the Murray, where the river joins the sea, separated by a wooden barrage, much loved by both pelicans and seals, as they perch on the thick wooden beams or balance precariously just above the water level, taking little notice of the craft making their way through at intervals when the bridge swings open.

We were making our way down to the waterfront when we passed a golden brick built building signposted as Church of Christ. I asked my cousin if it was a sect or anything but she didn't seem to think so, so I set off on a warm sunny Sunday morning to be welcomed literally with open arms into the fellowship which closely resembled my Baptist heritage. Worship was led by several people but mainly David Spencer who gave a challenging talk from Jeremiah 8v10 on the Joy of the Lord is my Strength, which was proclaimed on the overhead, illuminated in sunlight. In both Australian and New Zealand churches, the indigenous people are acknowledged and respected at the commencement of worship as follows (depending on the location):

We acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land on which this church is constructed, and the surrounding lands and waters. We acknowledge their Elders, past, present and emerging, and their continuing connection to land, culture and community. In this place we meet together to worship God as one people. After the service, which included communion and detailed prayers for named members, there was the traditional tea, coffee and cake where subjects ebbed and flowed, but their main focus was on the upcoming World Day of Prayer on the 7th March for which they were creating a Pacific Island theme, with colourful costumes and decorations for the church. I left feeling privileged and uplifted by sharing their infectious enthusiastic faith.

My next sharing experience was in Adelaide at Unley Baptist Church, only in the next street from the friend I was staying with, I'd researched it the day before as temperatures were 39 plus so not possible to walk too far, but the street was shaded by trees and I soon reached the church where groups of people were chatting informally outside, exuding a welcome to passers by.

Unusually the communion elements were laid out individually for worshippers to collect at the entrance and take in with them. It was a very large congregation, seated in polished wooden (comfortable) pews, with crimson carpet throughout. Again the overhead screen advertised all the various activities going on to many groups in the community, all stressing their theme of Faith Connection and Belonging. Emphasis was on Parenting Support and partnership with the Iranian congregation in the neighbourhood, amongst other outreaches. The service was streamed online and a very comprehensive Link magazine, inviting others into the fellowship was handed out at the door. The message was Ask Seek and Knock and again I left refreshed and blest to have met more believers on the other side of the world.

My third experience was in New Zealand where I was staying with another friend, so again we researched the area as we didn't have transport and the nearest fellowship was Mosgiel Presbyterian church, where actually she had got married many years before. A banner hung at the front of the church proclaiming Ordinary Times, Extraordinary God. Again, the welcome was wholehearted and the worship closely resembled ours, with slight variations such as holding hands as we shared the blessing at the end.

We were only a little way into the service when there was a mandatory fire evacuation practice which amused me. I was chatting to a lady in the congregation who had lived in 4 Trinity Close Burnham and knew all about the Christmas lights so when I returned I was able to take a message to her neighbour – amazing! We had a challenging message about the Great Banquet where all were invited but some were too busy to accept. Again, there was a generous offering of coffee, homemade cake and all sorts of home grown produce such as beans and other fruit and vegetables to which anyone could help themselves. I walked out into the sunshine enriched and glad to have been there.

Kathy Hurrell

MORE THOUGHTS ON THE STATIONING PROCESS

In October, the Stationing process changes gear. Our Circuit Invitation Committee (CIC, comprising Circuit Stewards plus representatives from churches), have sent the Chair of District a profile of the appointment we are seeking to fill and, after discussion, the Chair has sent it to Connexion. There, it is added to all the other profiles received from across the country (including Scotland and Wales but not Northern Ireland), both of stations to be filled and of ministers available. The Connexion will bring all the profiles together and then send out two volumes, one of ministers that is sent to circuits, and one of circuits that is sent to ministers. Unfortunately, the one of circuits will be larger than the other this year, simply because there are significantly more stations to be filled than ministers available. It is an uncomfortable feeling that many circuits will therefore be without a minister next year. One of them could be us, leaving our circuit to try to find a way to deal with the shortage.

But that is for the future if it happens. Now the fun begins as the CIC reviews the volume that contains ministers available. It used to be called the Yellow book after the colour of its cover, and its details are confidential to those who receive it. The stewards' aim is then to choose a list of ministers that it feels would best fit our profile. This is happening all over the country among circuits who also seek ministers, and a similar exercise is also taking place in the homes of ministers expecting to have to move. It can be a lengthy process and CIC needs to consider a reserve list even at this early stage because some preferred candidates may well have been matched elsewhere before our 'turn' comes during the matching round.

Our list of preferred candidates is passed to our District Chair and discussed with him. Most Districts will have more than one appointment to be filled and the Connexional committee construct a list of priorities to take to a Matching Group where all Chairs meet together with Connexional staff in a two day session around the end of the month.

A formula is agreed between Chairs and the Connexional officers as to when each District will be called as one by one, stations are discussed and possible matches are arranged. This can be a very sensitive debate as the Connexional officer identifies a District for the next match and the Chair nominates a station and the preferred candidate. A discussion often agrees the match but sometimes a case is made for a different minister from a different District to be considered as well. Perhaps there are elderly relatives needing support or education's needs or health matters. This is a pastorally sensitive approach and much time can be spent on making the best solution. Eventually matches are made and things down the list continues until no further progress can be made.

The dates of the meeting are known by those who are affected by this process and I have no doubt there are many ministers and Circuit stewards who make sure they do not go out that evening as they wait beside the telephone for what news their Chair is going to give them.

The ball is now in the court of the CIC. There is an urgency in getting the individual matching discussions. They can't say, thank you and I will deal with that after Christmas. It must be dealt with now, so the Senior Circuit Steward (for us that is Rosemary Krull) must be in immediate contact with the offered candidate to arrange a visit within a week or so. And so the process meets its next stage ...

Harvey Allen

DIARY DATES

<u>Regular days</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
Monday (except Bank Holidays)	10.30am	Brean	Coffee morning
Thursday	11.00am	Zoom	Coffee chat (Details from Steve)
Monday to Thursday	9.00am to 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>			
Wednesday 1st October	7pm	East Brent	Circuit Safeguarding Meeting
Sunday 5th October	10,30am	Burnham	Harvest Festival
Tuesday 7th October	2.30pm	East Brent	Link Fellowship
Sunday 12th October	10.30am	Brean	Harvest Festival
Saturday 1st November	Ethiopian Evening at Burnham – details to follow		
Sunday 16th November	6.00pm	Burnham	Thanksgiving & Remembrance Service for those who have died. (please note this has been changed from 2nd November due to Fireworks in Burnham town centre)
Saturday 22nd November	10.00am – 2.00pm	Burnham	Christmas Fair
Wednesday 26th November	7.30pm	Zoom	Local preachers meeting
Tuesday 2nd December	7.30pm	Burnham	Circuit Meeting
Wednesday 3rd December	7.00pm	Burnham	Light up a Life (Weston Hospice)
Saturday 6th December	Afternoon	East Brent	Christmas Sale and music event
Sunday 14th December	3.30pm	Burnham	Christmas Messy Church

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 26TH OCTOBER