

LINK PLUS++++

Special Edition – April 2020

Friends

Many of the link messages were written before the seriousness of the Covid-19 situation was aparent, and the extent of the effect on the life of the church was known. I hope the contributors will excuse me for editing some of their pieces, where to publish would have been confusing.

Although we do not meet together in these strange times, we hold each other in prayer, and offer each other to God's love and care. Knowing that others are praying for me is very helpful during this time and I hope it will be for you too. I have supplied worship material for each Sunday and I hope to be able to continue to do so. This enables us to 'meet in spirit' even if we cannot physically meet together.

We cannot help being afraid at times, or confused, or frustrated or hurt, or lonley, or sad; but I hope that this special edition of the LINK will bring some happiiness, hope and light into your life.

We are encouraged to 'Rejoice in the Lord always' (Philippian 4: 4) and perhaps this is more imporant now than ever. We rejoice because we know that whatever will happen over the next few months, God will have the victory, a victory that has been won for us by Jesus on the cross.

Steve

West Huntspill Coffee Mornings.



The picture shows the presentation of the cheque for £555.72p to Sian Johnson Community Fundraiser of the Alheimers Society. "We are extremely grateful to everyone at West Huntspill Methodist Church for choosing Alzheimer's Society as their charity to benefit from their monthly coffee mornings throughout 2019 and raising a fantastic total of £555.72. We're facing an incredible challenge: one person every three minutes develops dementia and there is currently no cure. We're here to change that but we need more people like West Huntspill Methodist Church to join us as we take on dementia together."

Brent Knoll

Only a month ago I was complaining about the atrocious weather we were all experiencing here in the West Country. Now that doesn't seem quite so important anymore.

As I'm typing, the sun is shining and offering some real warmth on a beautiful Spring day. But it's small consolation with all that's going on in the world at the moment. We are all aware of the headlines and are conscious that we may have to make some difficult decisions in the near future, depending on what direction the coronavirus takes.

With that in mind, we here at Brent Knoll Methodist Church have decided to cancel our regular morning worship on Sunday mornings for the foreseeable future. At the time of writing (16th March) we are still hoping to open our doors each Sunday morning for as long as we are able for those who would like simply to come in and spend some time in quiet contemplation. We will, of course, notify our Superintendent Steve and the Circuit of any changes.

When this magazine comes out, we will be approaching the beginning of Holy Week. The time when we join Christians the world over in journeying to the cross with Christ, remembering the darkest moments of that first Good Friday. But we then celebrate the wonder and the joy of the resurrection on Easter Sunday. A timely reminder that even when things appear to be at their lowest ebb there is always the light of hope to come. Things may seem uncertain at the moment and undoubtedly many of us are experiencing the fear which uncertainty often brings. But we can only do our best, heed the advice of the experts and most important of all, we need to look after ourselves and each other.

As a church, we will continue, if course, to offer prayers for all of us at this time and will continue to keep you updated as to the status of our church.

From all of us here at Brent Knoll, we send you every blessing, peace and hope that the season of Easter offers.

God bless

Rosemary Krull

Burnham

As I write this month's column, we are in a situation we have not experienced before with current events affecting everyone in the world.

It seems we will not be able to meet together for some time, which has resulted in isolation and uncertainty. As we think about our own separation and what it means to us, let's take time to remember our thoughts are centred on Lent, the time Jesus spent in the wilderness and the challenges he encountered. Can we in this time pause and, in the quietness, read and reflect on this season and then listen to what is being said to us. We started our Lent Course, but unfortunately could not meet up to Holy Week. A reflection from the session handbook included-

"There is no aspect of human life and emotion where God is not present. Yet God's way of being present often confounds our expectations and our preconceived notions. Moments of joy, of intimacy, of confusion and despair can be the opportunity for a deeper awareness of God's presence"

We must remember we do have each other. I know that people are phoning, e-mailing and using social media to stay in contact and we will get through this.

You will find updates for Burnham by logging onto the following website: <http://www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk/>

Latest updates are available including a Sunday Service to follow in your home, a link to live streaming of services from Wesley's Chapel London and much more.

We also need to remember the sky is blue and the sun is shining, Spring has arrived.

We have friends and family we can speak to. I always write about what future activities, events and socialising is planned. None of this has gone away, it is just not happening face to face at present, those spaces in our diaries will start to become full again. Let's keep in touch and stay safe. Until next time

Marian Kingsbury

East Brent

We have increased in numbers slightly recently as Rosemary Cullimore has joined us from Pill Methodist Church. Welcome to a fellow Rosemary!

We were pleased to welcome Ildi Haraszti who took our service last Sunday. She gave us a thought-provoking service on the subject of water. We didn't know then that it would be the last time we worshipped together for the foreseeable future. The following week, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, our Prime Minister made some announcements that will restrict and change all our lives. Steve has informed us today that services in all Methodist churches are suspended for the time being. These are difficult times and we hope and pray it will not last too long. It must be the first time for many years that we have not held a Mothering Sunday Service in our Church.

Normally I would mention Crosses on The Knoll at this point, but the current crisis must also put this in doubt.

Rosemary Gilling

Brean

The bushes in front of our house give us protection from being observed from the road. They also give fortified accommodation to a multitude of birds, mainly sparrows but also tits and finches.

Every day Judy has fed those birds. We have a basic feeding station just outside the window opposite them. Before she has even fed herself, Judy has filled up their various containers with seeds and fat balls, and whatever else. And we have been rewarded, if that is the right word, with a cacophony of noise from the depths of those bushes that can be clearly heard from the church next door; there must be as many as fifty birds resident there waiting for their daily sustenance.

Since Judy went off to hospital for an operation in mid-February and in her recuperation afterwards, I have been elevated to Head of Housekeeping and Curator of Birds. By and large that continues to this day, though the cooking element was quickly wrested away when Judy came out of hospital, and she does sometimes get to the birds before me.

New responsibilities mean new ways of seeing the world. Being i/c birds I can look at things slightly differently now. I open the door to the choir chirping. 'It's OK chaps he's coming.' They then disappear to the safety of their respective branches and let me get on with serving them. Feeders full, I retreat indoors but hardly get back to my observation point before they are all there attacking their feeding posts, a swarm of birds pecking and shoving each other out of the way, yet without falling out with each other totally. And from all sorts of angles. How can they hang on to the wires head down, and eat upwards for example? Have you ever tried to eat the wrong way up – it is fearsomely difficult to swallow.

Much of it is gone by lunchtime. One day a couple of long tailed tits then came up to the window and constantly tapped on it with their beaks. Perhaps it was seeing their reflection in the glass but to us it was them saying 'Hey what about us, them sparrows have taken all our grub.'

But in moments of quiet look again, there's none of them exactly the same, observe their plumage, look at their habits. Sparrows are brown

birds but that is just a catch all. There are all sorts of shades and markings. It's a marvel really, when you come to think about it, but not one of them is forgotten, scripture tells us. After a while you begin to recognise different individuals and often it seems that those with very distinctive markings become the most aggressive. Why is that do you think?

In the days to come, those birds will move on from our bushes, find new sources of food, have their young and move around our gardens and countryside more extensively. Our need to provide for them will be diminished but I hope that over the next weeks and months, this almost childish instinct (for it is a remembered activity of childhood) to enquire, to cherish and even to make fun of, what is around us, will stay with us as we strive to remain positive in our rapidly changing circumstances.

Harvey Allen

**PLUS +++
POEMS, PRAYERS and OTHER
MESSAGES**

Lord there are so many ways of seeing the world in which we live. Jesus encourages us to consider even the sparrows of the hedgerows, even the lilies of the fields. Grant us the insights and the patience to see the world in new and rewarding ways, that we might be strengthened in your spirit to face the world and its complexities in the coming days.. Amen.

(Harvey Allen)

Comfort in Covidia

I imagine I'm not alone in feeling that I have been pushed through the doors of some magical wardrobe and now, in a state of severe bewilderment, find myself gazing around a strange, unwelcoming landscape. It is definitely not C S Lewis's Narnia; this hostile desert - which I take the opportunity of naming Covidia - is much more alien and daunting. Yet the door is closed behind us and, to use the old words of the King James Bible, you and I find ourselves "strangers in a strange land" (Exodus 2:22). What we face is threatening and even frightening.

Nevertheless, I'm comforted by the fact that many of the followers of Jesus have trod this path before. Although we find the present COVID-19 pandemic unusual, it's worth remembering that if you look back over history it was a rare generation that didn't have to grapple with such things as the Black Death, plague, cholera or the like. Other men and women of faith have crossed this discouraging landscape before us.

Reverend Canon J. John (sent by Sandra Nelson)

Desperate for Air.

After breakfast he said,
"I want you closer."

So I wrapped him
in my arms
and covered him with kisses.

Perhaps this
is what we've been missing,
holding our own children.

Perhaps this is the time
to rename the stars,
to ask
the cherry tree to dance
and how her blossom is coming along.

To pass on the song
that Grandmother knew in her bones,
the beauty of home,
to teach him the sacredness
of tea,
the wisdom of poetry,
to plant seeds in the dirt
and water them joyfully.
I imagine in less than a year
the internet will be flooded
with pictures of the gardens
that were planted,
the art that was created

NOW

how we discovered that in death
there was love
and what life was left
gave new breath
to an Earth
desperate for air.

Clear water for those who thirst
the strong putting the vulnerable first

a promise not a curse
to hold those in our homes
closer
and everyone tight in our hearts.

The invitation to start
s l o w e r
to investigate peace
in the fractured parts,
to sit with everything
we usually run from,
to put down distractions
and b r e a t h e
finally allowing the ancient grief

to surface
allowing the stillness
to nurture us,
teaching compassion
to the future.
Reaching out in new ways
to each other,
distance somehow
bringing us closer.
Everything slower.
Everything s l o w e r .
We'll find ink in our veins
and paint on our hands
songs in our mouths
and we'll understand
each other's fears more easily
because we can see
they are the same
and there'll be space
for all of them,
for all of us
because
in the distance
hearts will grow bigger
as we discover
that in death
there is love
and the life that is left
gives new breath.

Poem by Beki Nagel (daughter of Rev Tim & Janet Widdess)

Light a candle and say a prayer

Following the suggestin of Churches Together for Mothering Sunday, it would be wonderful if we could all light a candle, put it in the window, and say a prayer every evening during this crisis.

(Janet Thompson)

Lord, in Jesus there is no human experience you don't know about;

You are there in our concern for the welfare of loved ones.

You are there in our helplessness to do some of the things we'd like to do for others.

You are there in our worry, our boredom, our bewilderment, and any and all of our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual pains.

Help us to find you in all this, and in finding you to also find the love which meets and answers our deepest needs.

Amen.

(Rev John James)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Lord,

At this time of uncertainty and fear we may feel separated from your love. Help us to have faith that your love never fails. May we in faith pray for all impacted by this pandemic.

We pray for all who face hardship economically and physically.

We pray for all in distress. Those suffering directly and indirectly from the virus. May you grant peace and healing.

We pray for refugees and all people who undergo persecution. Please grant them help and comfort in their time of need.

As economies contract we pray for children unable to go to school. We pray especially for all who face hunger, inadequate shelter and clothing.

We remember all who even before the pandemic faced danger through armed conflict. We pray for peace and protection for them.

We pray for all who feel separated from you love that they may have the confidence of St Paul who said:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Rev Tim Widdess)

There are people in this home (Tudor Lodge) who must be suffering and should be particularly prayed for. I am thinking of the very elderly and/feeble whose family, especially daughters, normally visit almost daily. Nobody is allowed in here except staff who are very caring, but family do things and bring things as well as being company. These few must be desolate especially as they probably don't understand.

(Margaret Hicks)

*Margaret, thank you for these thoughts -
We remember in our prayers all those in Tudor Lodge and in
Care/Nursing Homes around our area and beyond. We remember too
those for whom their own homes have become places of isolation in
these weeks.*