

LINK PLUS++++

April 2022

Dear Friends

The war in the Ukraine has been going for over a month now and I am struck by the speed of the devastation caused there. It will take many years to rebuild what has been destroyed in so few days.

This has led me to think about the speed in which all sorts of things can be damaged, and how much time and effort is needed for restoration. I think of harsh, ill thought-out, and often painful words or actions, that can ruin relationships. I think of the selfishness that denies the freedom or choice of others. I think of countries and societies whose demands for their own rights do not allow the rights of others to flourish.

In extreme cases, it takes many years to reconcile people and even nations. I remember the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, through the work of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, which sought to hear the voices of both the victims and the perpetrators of Apartheid. That work now forms a base for our modern understanding of how differences can be resolved through peaceful means.

We too are guilty of hurtful and painful things. We often want a restoration of relationship but are unable to humble ourselves to seek it. As Jesus went to the cross, this was the price and sacrifice that needed to be paid not only for the sins of the world, but our sins too; sins that are often so quickly done or thought or spoken. In humility, not for himself, he suffered. In obedience to God, to reconcile the world, he faced the horrors of death. In that moment he enabled our

relationship with God to be rebuilt, and provided a basis for our understanding of forgiveness and love.

But this was not the end.

The restoration was not ended on the cross. This month we will celebrate the sign of the empty tomb, the sign of Easter, and proclaim 'He is risen, Alleluia'. Having saved us by his death, Jesus has returned to his Father in heaven, paving the way for us.

Steve

Brean

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

So April means Easter this year. At the present rate most of our daffodils will be gone, the lambs will have been born, and our yearly tourists will be well established in our midst. A time to enjoy the welcoming sunshine at last (though the forecast for the first week of the month looks hardly promising). A time to remember that whatever has gone before Easter is a time of blessing. And how much Ukraine must be in our hearts this Eastertide.

At Brean we welcome Kathy and Cathy into full membership of our church on Easter Day. They have both been regular members of the congregation for two or three years and felt that this would be an appropriate time to recognise that. Welcome to you both.

After all the discussions about future organisation, we at Brean decided to continue to 'go it alone' and stay as a church congregation in our own right. Of course, the decisions by Cathy and Kathy to become members were helpful, taking our relevant membership up to 14, but the choices made by other churches in the Link (West Huntspill to link with Burnham, and for Brent Knoll to link with East Brent) and that they were comfortable with their decisions, were also helpful.

There is still much to be gone through and our thoughts and prayers are with all concerned as they work through the processes, which need to be finalised by the end of the summer.

We at Brean, send our good wishes to everyone for Easter.

Harvey Allen

Burnham

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

When I wrote in the August 2019 Link, I started with 'what a busy time it has been' not for one minute thinking a few months later, my next Link column would start with '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'. But we did meet, on Zoom and speak to people on the telephone, looked after our friends and neighbours and carried on with that community spirit.

I also wrote in the 2020 Link, 'I always write about our planning for social events and that 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. And they have

Our fundraising group is in the process of planning Jubilee celebrations which we are looking forward to and we have even arranged a date for our Christmas Fair! We have recently re-started the Baby and Toddler group on a Friday morning. We continue with our Saturday morning coffee and chat and monthly social events, all of which can be found in the weekly notices and on the website.

Our Methodist Way of Life groups are continuing as we move forward in our ever-changing world.

As I write this Link, the clocks go forward this weekend, Spring has sprung, daffodils are flowering, lambs being born and we can't even

complain about the weather, the sun is shining and the sky is blue (well it is today).

When having a sort out the other day, I came across the April 2014, 2016 and 2018 Links, and the front covers read "Easter Greetings", with a photograph of the crosses on Brent Knoll and people gathered. Two years ago we couldn't do this, and I made my own Brent Knoll crosses on my garden shed. This Easter let's reflect on our faith and commitment as we ask God to guide us on our journey and in our daily lives.

From all here in Burnham, we send Easter Blessings to you all. Until next time.



Marian Kingsbury

East Brent

Soup and Cheese scones/bread rolls were enjoyed at our recent Church Council followed by Jill's excellent sponge cake before we got down to the serious business of discussing our future after the edict from Manchester that churches with less than 12 members must close or merge with others. Our preferred choice would be to merge with another local church (if they would be willing to allow us do so) and we currently await the decisions taken at other Church Councils.

We usually give our Christmas collections to the Marafa John Project in Kenya which is run by ex-members of our congregation, Derek & Judith

Parry. This year they asked us to consider a different beneficiary as they have been unable to visit Kenya for the last two years due to Covid restrictions. In light of the terrible situation in Ukraine, we unanimously agreed to donate £200 to the Methodist fund, All We Can.

Can I remind you that crosses will be erected on the Knoll again this year and if you are physically able to help with this then please meet in the grassed car park opposite the farm on the Brent Knoll side at 2pm on Saturday 9th April. The service at the top will take place on Sunday 10 April at 3pm.

Rosemary Gilling

PLUS +++
POEMS, PRAYERS and OTHER
MESSAGES

Prayer for peace in Ukraine

Holy and Gracious God

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness.

We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine. And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son. Lord have mercy. Amen

(No apology for repeating this again this month)

Flower Arranging

Flower arranging has always been a passion of mine. I have a City and Guilds in Floral designs and Floristry. During lock down, I rekindled my enthusiasm for anything relating to the Flower arranger's world. While finding the therapeutic effect it has taken me from Charity shops to Harrods. Looking out for accessories, props ideals. Researching modern techniques as well as traditional methods. I am able to demonstrate all aspects of floral care and design .Inspiration ideals for village shows----arrangements for Church, Clubs and Societies --Titles embracing the season and occasion. Please contact me if you require further details for demonstration or talk.

Myra Cox 01278 784110 or coxmyra20032000@yahoo.co.uk

My call to preach

Is Preaching a calling, anyway? It all depends on what you mean, I guess. I never felt a command from on high; no heavenly being sat up there on his throne. Nor any seraphim nor angels of any description. No inward compulsion either. How sad!

Instead, the invitation came from a little five foot nothing deaconess who hailed from Cornwall. The scene was a community room much in need of decoration in Central Hall, Westminster, where Judy and I were members back in the 1960s. John Wesley looked down upon us from his portrait along one of its walls. Around us were thirty or forty people mainly young adults enjoying their weekly evening fellowship that went by the name of Rendezvous and which, because we were all working in central London, started straight from work.

So, we had had our usual egg and beans on toast, played a couple of games of table tennis, had had chats with friends and then an hour's talk on some subject or other, after which Judy and I fell into conversation with a couple of deaconesses before the Epilogue that followed half an hour later. There was a rota to take Epilogue and I

had successfully excused myself from it for all the three or four years I had been coming to Rendezvous. Until that is, a couple of weeks earlier when I could find excuses no longer. I had dreaded it. Public speaking was not my forte and I couldn't see myself praying in front of a crowd of people. Besides I had a variable speech impediment and as a result was somewhat self conscious in those circumstances. But I did it and survived; perhaps I even enjoyed it a little.

I think this was all part of our conversation that fateful evening. As was the thought vthat Judy and I had planned to leave London even then. So in a moment of madness I laughingly said, you never know, then I might consider preaching. I was not being serious. But oh dear, I had not had the last word. The little one looked me in the eye, and said, you should do it Now. I had no words I could formulate as I stared back at her.

But there were these two deaconesses, for Barbara, the tall one, joined in with Marjorie's encouragement, and I found no escape whatsoever. Margery led me up into her study, gave me a couple of her books and left my details for the Superintendent Minister to follow through.

Whatever had I done? Being relatively new to Methodism I had no great idea of how Methodism was organised and even of what being a preacher meant. There was no way that I could have preached in Central Hall anyway; that was the kingdom of the Super. And the other two churches in the Circuit, one at Ebury Bridge near Victoria Station, and the other down King's Road in Chelsea, were not places with which I was familiar.

But I set out and I spent the next two or three years studying, taking services at Ebury Bridge and Chelsea, and being reviewed. In 1971 I was deemed worthy. Just; for all that hard work does not inevitably lead to success. As preachers on trial we were never present when being discussed at Preachers' meetings and many years later that I found out that the Superintendent, who had only heard me at my last trial service, wasn't very sure of me. He was an enthusiastic evangelical, typical of many Central Hall preachers, and that was not

my style. But those two deaconesses thought otherwise. They had supervised my training and were not prepared to let go. I am told they stood their ground in the meeting and with other support too, I was through.

The closest I ever got to preaching at Central Hall was to read a lesson. Only once, but I loved it. The worship area was not the intimidating place I thought it was. Its design allowed for considerable intimacy even though there could be four or five hundred people present. Apart from that I continued to preach at Ebury Bridge and Kings Road churches and, once fully accredited, answered the call for preachers to fill plans elsewhere in the London South West District, even as far as Horsham down on the south coast. New places, new people, new insights.

So, was I sure that my preaching was a call? I am still not certain. My doubt is to wonder whether it was as much to do with my inner needs as it was to a call from God. And is it any more a calling than teaching, or healing, or caring, or even serving cups of coffee. It is how the call is received and how you respond to it that matters.

Ten years ago, I celebrated 40 years of having been fully recognised as a preacher. I was preaching at Brean on the morning of the presentation, and I thought I would look back to my first sermon. To my surprise, I found that it still stood up. You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart and soul and mind is still just as relevant now as then. Instead, I had learned things that had developed on the way rather than that my fundamental thinking had changed; the journey itself is as important as answering the call.

I am glad that I did say yes to Margery all those years ago. She and Barbara became close friends. Margery is still alive and is living in her beloved Cornwall. She is now very frail and nearly blind but still blest of an indomitable spirit. It has been a privilege to have known her and I was particularly glad that she was able to come and stay with us on the weekend of my 40th preaching anniversary in 2011, and thus to

hear me preach for the first time since those Westminster days. She wrote to me afterwards, a letter I still cherish, words of thanks and encouragement. It was heart-warming but also humbling.

I am glad that I answered that call and have stayed the course. Hard at times, but it became an enriching journey, a road of deepening awareness and renewal and of meeting challenges. Along the way, it has been a privilege to have had fellowship with other preachers, and of course the security and support of my homelife.

I have often wondered what would have happened if I had rejected Margery's call though. Would I have eventually walked away from the church, as many of my friends and contemporaries have done over the years? That in itself is a reminder that when the call comes however we discern it, and wherever that it leads, and however imperfectly we fulfil it, we are well blessed when we respond.

Harvey Allen

A RECIPE FOR A GRANDPARENT

by Katie Cleverley

A base mixture of age and wisdom,
A teaspoon of clumsiness,
A handful of memories,
A sprinkle of wrinkles; then stir
And chuck in a chequered jumper
Just for good measure.
Add a smidgeon of forgetfulness
And a teaspoon of laughter.
Make sure you drizzle generously
So they will go crazy at Christmas.
Pour funniness and mix it in,
Till they have you laughing.
They mustn't be embarrassing
When they start dancing,
So throw in some common sense
To fix that problem. Line the tin

With woolly socks and slippers
Then bake till warm to the touch.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

by Robert Browning

Oh to be in England
now that April's there,
and whoever wakes in England
sees, some morning, unaware,
that the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf,
while the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
in England – now.

And after April, when May follows,
and the whitethroat builds and all the swallows.
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
leans to the field and scatters on the clover
blossoms and dewdrops, at the bent spray's edge.
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over
lest you should think he never could recapture
that first fine careless rapture.

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
all will be gay when noontide wakes anew
the buttercups, the little children's dower,
far brighter than this gaudy melon flower.

Both poems submitted by Judy Allen

50th Anniversary Concert

It's time for the Burnham and Highbridge Choral Society to perform their Annual Spring Concert. They will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary. It will be at Our Lady and the English Martyrs Roman Catholic Church, Burnham on Sea, TA8 1LL. On Saturday 30th April 2022 at 7.30pm. The choir will be performing Handel's Coronation Anthems and The Dettingen Te Deum. We will have two professional soloists joining us this year. Anthony Mansfield and Charlotte Sleet.

Anthony Mansfield began his musical training as a chorister at Hereford Cathedral. In 2012 he was appointed as a gap year Choral Scholar at Hereford Cathedral and then the following year he held the same position at Exeter Cathedral. Since returning to his native Hereford he has accepted a Lay Clerkship in the Cathedral Choir. Highlights of his singing career have been singing J.S.Bach's settings of the St John Passion and Christmas Oratorio and singing for His Holiness Pope Francis during a tour to Rome.

Hereford-based mezzo soprano Charlotte Sleet enjoys a busy freelance career, combining ensemble singing with solo engagements and teaching across the UK. Recent engagements include Duruflé Requiem with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Handel Messiah with the English Sinfonia and live broadcasts with the BBC. An in-demand concert singer, Charlotte has recently performed with the BBC Singers, Papagena and was a Vocal Young Artist at Southwell Music Festival. Charlotte graduated with First Class honours from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, during which time she was a prize winner in the Lieder and English Song prizes. Upon completing a postgraduate choral scholarship at Hereford Cathedral, she was appointed Assistant Lay Clerk there, the first female appointment to each of these roles in their respective histories. Charlotte continues her studies privately with Louise Crane and James Platt.

The choir will be joined by an orchestral ensemble of 15 professional musicians including percussion. Tickets are £10 and £7 for children. They are available from: Coffee, Cake & Curtains, Victoria Street, Burnham on Sea, Sopha, Church street, Highbridge, members, or our website www.burnhamandhighbridgechoral.org.uk . Tickets may be purchased at the door, but best to get them early to avoid any disappointment. [Burnham and Highbridge Choral Society](#)

Finally, please note the deadline for
the May Link Plus is
30th April.

LINK DIARY

Date & Time	Location	Event
Weekly		
Wednesday 10.00am	Zoom	<u>Link Bible Study</u> Meeting ID: 842 8627 4955 Passcode: 358753
Thursday 11.00am	Zoom	<u>Link Coffee Morning</u> Meeting ID: 854 3680 5731 Passcode: 419002
April		
4 th 7.00pm	Burnham	Quiz Night
11 th – 14 th	Various gardens	Holy Week reflections (contact Liz Bennett for details)
14 th 7.00pm	Burnham	Maundy Thursday Communion
15 th 10.00am	Burnham	Good Friday Service followed by Walk of Witness (11.30am at Cathloic Church)
15 th 7.00pm	West Huntspill	Good Friday Reflections
17 th 6.00am	Brean Down Brean Beach	Easter Sunrise Service Communion Service
27 th 7.00pm	Uphill	Local Preacher Fellowship (on bible month)
30 th 6.00pm	Burnham	Indian Meal
May		
1 st 6.30pm	Milton	Circuit Service
10 th 7.00pm	Zoom	Circuit Safeguarding Meeting
28 th All Day	TBC	Stationing Training
29 th 10.30am	Brent Knoll	Church Anniversary