
THE LINK

Methodist Link Churches Magazine

December 2010 – January 2011 Volume 45. No. 10.

**A Joyous Christmas
and a Happy New Year**



Minister's Letter

One of my favourite party foods is Trifle – especially the non-Methodist variety! It's not just one thing – it's got lots of different layers of lovely sweet stuff – and of course that layer soaked in what Methodists never touch! It seems less fashionable today though than it once was – and the “Birds” plastic variety is just not the same as my Gran used to make!

In his book “The A to Z of Christmas”, Arnold Kellett likens Christmas to a “Christian Trifle” because it has gathered so many layers over the years. At each stage of history a different layer has been added creating the “vast, international bean-feast of increasing complexity and magnitude, now so big that it is almost unmanageable, the supreme compulsory festival which forces itself upon us year after year, dominating the lives of countless millions....”¹

For example, in pre-Christian Rome Saturnalia was an important festival held on the 25th December and involving a carnival of evergreen decorations, exchanges of presents, eating, drinking and making merry (sound familiar?).

Christians gradually took over many of these practices to celebrate Christ's birth – because it was a time when they could legitimately be seen to be celebrating without risking persecution. Of course once Christianity was officially adopted by the Emperor Constantine Christians began to make full use of the Saturnalia festival – keeping 25th December as Jesus “official” birthday (because we don't know the date of his real one).

In medieval times a number of pagan customs were consolidated into Christianity – the use of holly and mistletoe for example. This was why St Francis, keen to keep the essential message of Christmas alive in the thirteenth century, encouraged the setting up of nativity scenes and the singing of carols.

The Puritans under Oliver Cromwell added another layer when, reacting to excessive self-indulgence, they outlawed the celebration of Christmas altogether! It was restored with Charles II in 1660!

Then of course the Victorians added another rich layer – the writings of Charles Dickens and the example of Queen Victoria encouraged the revival of Christmas celebration in church and in gatherings of friends and

¹ “The A to Z of Christmas” Arnold Kellett, Inspire, 2006

family. This era saw the introduction of Christmas trees, cards, crackers and Santa.

The latest layer of course is the modern layer of commercialisation. Although this began in the Victorian era, the difference today is in mass production, aggressive marketing, and media hype. Christmas has become so commercially exploited that it has become the essential money making period for most businesses. For many it has become nothing more than a reversion to the self indulgence of Saturnalia.

As Christians we can and should reclaim Christmas for Christ. We do this by making sure that the celebration of Christ's birth is central to all that we do as we partake of the customs and traditions of the season. If we do nothing else, then celebrating through worship should be the key event. Let us tell the story of his birth – the greatest story ever told, at every opportunity, and reintroduce the idea of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Have a Blessed Christmas and enjoy your Christian Trifle!

Rev Andrew



CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Wed. 1st	8.00pm. B/H	Wednesday Group - Brian Dallimore will talk on a Christmas theme.
Thur 2nd	2.30pm B/H	Thursday Fellowship - "Moose International" Terry Cornelius
Sat. 4th	8.30am.	Trip to Birmingham German Christmas Market
Sat. 4th	10.00 - 12.00.B/H	Coffee Morning in aid of the RD Fund – Sunday Club
Sun. 5th		Burnham GIFT DAY
Sun. 5th	4.00pm. B/H	Messy Church
Wed 8th	12.30pm. B/H	Church Lunch Club Christmas meal £10.00.
Fri. 10th	2.30pm.	Carol Singing at Beaufort House. Rectory Road
Sat 11th	10.00 - 12.00. B/H	Shoppers Coffee Morning & Organ Recital - All Welcome
Tue 14th	2.30pm. E/B	LINK Villages Fellowship - Christmas Buffet.
Thur 16th	2.30pm B/H	Thursday Fellowship - Favourite Carols & Christmas Stories – members
Fri 17th	7.00pm E/B	Carol by Candlelight Service East Brent
Fri 17th	7.00pm W/H	Carol Service at West Huntspill Methodist led by Rev. Andrew Biggs

Sat. 18th 10.00 - 12.00B/H Coffee Morning in aid of Singing Children of Africa - All Welcome

Sat. 18th 10.00am BR Coffee & Carols

Sun 19th 6.30pm B/H Carol Service Burnham

Mon 20th 7.30pm. B/K Carols on the Green Brent Knoll

Tues 21st 3.00pm. B/H Carol Singing at Tudor Lodge Brightstowe Road.
7.30pm. Carols in the Barn - Ash Lawn, Rooksbridge

Thur. 23rd 6.30pm. B/H Carol Singing at Tesco.

Fri 24th 4.00pm. B/H Nativity Service Burnham

Fri 24th 11.00pm BR Communion Service at St. Bridget's Brean

Fri 24th 11.15pm B/H Midnight Communion Burnham

Sat 25th 9.15am BR CHRISTMAS Service at St. Bridget's Brean

Sat 25th 10.00am E/B CHRISTMAS Short Family Service at East Brent

Sat 25th 10.30am B/H CHRISTMAS Service Burnham

Sat 25th 10.30am W/H CHRISTMAS Service West Huntspill led by Rev. Andrew Biggs

Sun. 26th No Service at East Brent

JANUARY

Wed. 5th 8.00pm. B/H Wednesday Group - New Years Party

Sat 8th 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Shoppers Coffee Morning All Welcome

Sun. 9th 10.30am. B/H Annual Covenant Service Burnham - Rev Andrew Biggs.

Sun. 9th 3.00pm. B/H LINK Epiphany Service at Burnham.

Tue 11th 2.30pm. E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - Mr Ellis Davies - Reminiscences of a Headteacher.

Sat 22nd 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Shoppers Coffee Morning All Welcome

FEBRUARY

Wed. 2nd 8.00pm. B/H Wednesday Group - Derek Cooper (former mayor) will tell us about finding his birth mother.

Thur 3rd 2.30pm B/H Thursday Fellowship - Home Missions – Joyce Pipet (Sales table)

Sat 12th 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Shoppers Coffee Morning All Welcome

Thur 17th 2.30pm B/H Thursday Fellowship - Guest Speaker –Rev. Margaret Trapp

Tue 25th 2.30pm. E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - Julie Draper – St Margaret's (Somerset) Hospice.

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Thur 3rd 2.30pm B/H Thursday Fellowship - Home Missions – Joyce Pipet (Sales table)

Tue 8th 2.30pm. E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - Miss Evelyn Tucker – Favourite Hymns.

Sat 12th 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Shoppers Coffee Morning All Welcome

B/H Burnham, BR Brean, B/K Brent Knoll, E/B East Brent, W/H West Huntspill.

Birth Kieren Matthew a third child for Paula and Michael Knott and fourteenth grandchild for Ruth.

Funeral Brian Whitehouse at Burnham on 15th November
Geoff Tullet at Brent Knoll on 19th November
Elsie Horsley at Burnham on the 26th November

CAROL SINGING

The Burnham Methodist Choir and friends will be Carol Singing on
Friday 10th Dec. 2.30pm. at Beaufort House Rectory Road.
Tuesday 21st Dec. 3.00pm. at Tudor Lodge Brightstowe Road
Thursday 23rd Dec. 6.30pm. at Tesco.
Do come along and join in! You will be very welcome.

R.A.F.A. BAND -SCHOOL CHOIR AND CHORAL SOCIETY CAROL CONCERT On THURSDAY 16th DECEMBER AT 7-30 p.m. in St John's Church Highbridge. The Burnham and Highbridge Choral Society will hold its Annual Carol Concert, supported by the Choir of St. Andrew's School, B.O.S. and members of the ROYAL AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION BAND. Entry by programmes sold at the door are £3.00, to cover expenses. Children are free. The retiring collection will be for The Children's Hospice.

Coffee Mornings

C.C.C. Come, Chill and Chat

Where? West Huntspill Methodist Church

When? Last Friday of every month, starting on

28th January 2011 between 10.00am -12 noon

Come along and bring a friend and make new friends. Relax and chat in a warm friendly atmosphere.

FREE coffee, tea, cakes and biscuits

There will be a sales table.

We look forward to meeting you there.

DAY OF PRAYER OF CHRISTIAN UNITY 2011

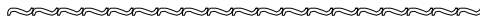
Methodist Church West Huntspill

Saturday January 22nd 10.00am - 4.00pm

A Journey to Jerusalem

10.00 am	Welcome and Introduction
10.15 am	Devoted to Teaching
10.45 am	<i>Coffee</i>
11.15 am	Devoted to Fellowship
11.45 am	Devoted to the Breaking of Bread
12.15 am	Devoted to Prayer
12.45 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
1.45 pm	All Together
2.15 pm	All Things in Common
2.45 pm	All in Their Need
3.15 pm	<i>Quiet Time</i>
3.30 pm	Holy Communion To be followed by tea

You are welcome to join us for one or more sessions



The minister had travelled from Birmingham to London to attend to the details of a new banner that was being made for his church. On his arrival he discovered that he had lost the piece of paper with the details on. He sent his wife a telegram asking her to send details by return. When the answer arrived at the post office, the postmistress almost fainted when she read.:-

"UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN.
EIGHT FEET LONG. THREE FEET **A**
WIDE. ASSORTED COLOURS."



Different Way

There was a lot of laughter as our Bible Study * took shape. We sat in a large circle and one by one we were drawn into an inner ring to be characters in the tale being told. It was the story of Jackie, a skilled farmer and keen business woman, whose talents brought her four husbands, twelve daughters and one son. As the story drew to a close there was a question - What did we think of it? Was it easier to say what we really thought because the familiar roles were reversed? In our group women were in the majority but imagine using this form of the story with a group of men in a male dominated society. How might they react? This could be risky. But Bible Study is always risky, especially if you ask people what they really think, encourage them to consider how it applies to their own situation and then come to a decision on what to do, how to act.

Look Evaluate Act

These are the three processes, developed by Latin American theologians, which suggest a different way of reading the Bible.

I hope that what I have written above may give a brief flavour of one session in a very full weekend at Ammerdown, organised by the South West Branch of M.W.M. {Methodists for World Mission} .Each annual Conference concentrates on one area of the World Church and this year it was South America. We were fortunate to have as our leaders the Revd's. Maggie and David Stringer, who had spent several years as Mission Partners in Bolivia, a very different society from our own. The theme which I found most thrilling concerned a group of women who were poor, ill-educated and dominated by their men folk** but who were nevertheless empowered to grow and to shape a new destiny for themselves and their families. What has happened may best be summed up in the name of their organisation **CLEM**

C	Comunidad	=	<u>Community</u>
L	deLibertad	=	of <u>Freedom</u>
E	yEsperanza	=	<u>and Hope</u>
M	de la Mujer	=	<u>of [for] Women</u>

Maggie described how a group of women, who were fed up with their situation and with what the traditional church offered them, were encouraged to think for themselves, make decisions and take action to

change the future. They have developed a place for themselves, built up a business enterprise and established a Medical Centre, which has the health concerns of women and children as its primary aim- though men will not be turned away! All this has been accomplished by an Ecumenical Group of Women, who have little formal education but who have pioneered new ways of working. No one person, is in charge. All decisions are shared, as are any jobs which pay a small wage. They have won a new respect from their men folk, from the authorities and from the whole community. Their story is wonderful and we can be proud that we have a very small part in it. In 1995 a Methodist Network grant helped them set up their first “Women’s Space” where they started a photocopying business. Then in 1997 they started a sewing service, making bags from Bolivian cloth, which Network have helped to market in this country. Waistcoats are also made, and colourful stoles - you may have seen some which I have and which I always enjoy wearing. I shall appreciate them even more now that I know more of the story that lies behind them.

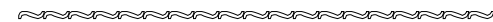
We have much to learn from these women and from the Worldwide Church, of which we are a part. Next year M.W.M. “visit” China so why not join us at Ammerdown *** October 28th - 30th. 2011?

Margaret Trapp

*Genesis 29 v.15 - 30 v.24

**Beating a woman only became illegal in Bolivia in 1994.

***Ammerdown Ecumenical Study Centre is set in a wooded country estate near Radstock. More details of M.W.M. and its conferences from Rev. J. and Mrs. J Le Sueur or from me, Margaret Trapp.



Calendars of Burnham Then & Now

Cedric has produced another Calendar in aid of the Burnham Redevelopment Fund selling at £5.00 each.

Size A4 Portrait. A page a month with a photo of the Burnham Methodist Church on the cover and an Interior view inside.

Further details from Cedric on 01278 784204

Or see the Church website for details in colour

www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk

NORTH SOMERSET DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS **SOCIETY**

NSDFAS is a local Society of about 160 members that meets monthly to enjoy lectures and presentations on the Arts. Being affiliated to the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies we are able to draw upon their Directory of Nationally approved lecturers.

The lecture on Wednesday December 1st at 2.15pm is by Right Reverend Dr Christopher Herbert who has gained an international reputation as an authority on Christian Art, and who until recently was Bishop of St Albans. It is entitled

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI:

1700 YEARS OF THE THREE KINGS IN CHRISTIAN ART.

Members of the Link who are interested will be welcome at this illustrated lecture (visitors' fee is £5).

We meet at 37 Club, Puriton (off the Puriton to Woolavington Road).
Phone me if you want more details – 01278 751434.

Harvey Allen – Chairman, NSDFAS



LINK VILLAGES' FELLOWSHIP

On Tuesday, October 26th. we were pleased to welcome Mrs Janet Cryer back to give a slide presentation to explain the work of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. She told us how the dogs were selected to suit the people who were in need of a dog. They received dogs of various sizes and from a variety of sources. Before the recipients have their dog, they stay in one of the centres to familiarise with all the situations which will arise in their homes and out in the outdoors – on the streets, in shops etc. At the close of her talk, a collection box was passed around which raised £31.00.

Rev. Robert Channon was our Speaker on Tuesday, November 9th. He had brought a large selection of Bibles and explained how each one had a special place in his Christian life – from the one which had been a presentation on leaving Worle School. He finally told us of the old family Bible. It was a very thoughtful talk and enjoyed by everyone.

On Tuesday, November 26th. Rev Christine Nelmes will be our Speaker.

We shall have our Christmas Buffet lunch on December 14th. after which the children from East Brent First School will give us their Christmas presentation.

Mr Ellis Davies will give some reminiscences of his life as a Head teacher on January 11th.

On Tuesday, January 25th, Mrs Julie Draper from St Margaret's Somerset Hospice will give a Power Point talk on the work of the Hospice.

Miss Evelyn Tucker has asked members to choose their favourite Hymns so that on February 8th she will give an explanation about the writer and reason for the Hymns.

Eileen Goundry.

Balancing Family and Career

HE MUST MANAGE HIS OWN FAMILY WELL.' 1 TIMOTHY 3:4
NSV

Balancing family and career calls for tough, unselfish choices. If you make the right ones you'll look back with joy, not regret John Ortberg writes: 'A friend of mine is a professional musician. For many years he made his living on the road. He was becoming increasingly successful. Then three years ago he became a father. He was on the road about half the time. He realised that when his daughter was about a year old she hardly knew him. He knew he needed to make a change but it was frightening to him. What if his career slowed to a crawl? What if being home more, actually made life harder? He took a job as the head of a music department at a university. He still performs, but he travels now only a fraction of the time. His relationship with his daughter has become a source of pride and joy in his life that he otherwise never would have known. He did have to let go of some of his old dreams, but he has since recorded a bestselling CD and been nominated for a Grammy. Most importantly, he realises his daughter will grow up a fundamentally different human being now, than she would have if she had grown up with a hole in her heart where her father was supposed to be. By the end of his life he will have a title that means much more to him than Rock Star. The title is "Dad!" 'The Bible says a leader' must manage his own family well...' (1 Timothy 3:4 NIV) And that doesn't just apply to leaders, it applies to all of us!

H.K.

SPIRITUAL JUNK FOOD

READ:

Hebrews 13:1-9

Do not be carried
about with various and
strange doctrines.

Hebrews 13:9

THE BIBLE IN ONE
YEAR;

Ezekiel 8 - 10

Hebrews 13

In many countries, childhood obesity is at an all-time high. A major culprit in such unhealthy weight gain is poor eating habits and junk food.

The term junk food refers to items that taste good but lack nutritional value and are often very high in calories and fat. Chips, soft drinks, chocolate bars, cookies, and many meals purchased at fast-food restaurants fit these criteria.

To be spiritually healthy, we have to avoid 'spiritual junk food' as well. Some religious teachers proclaim "a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6), ranging from health-and-wealth to a counterfeit spirituality. And some Christian music and books also contain false teaching.

Taking in this kind of 'food' may seem to satisfy spiritual hunger, but it will not lead to spiritual health.

Hebrews warns us: "Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace" (Heb.13:9). False teaching is detrimental to our health and is not profitable, because it cannot cleanse from sinner give power for spiritual growth. But biblical content that is based upon grace and truth does both. Avoid' spiritual junk food 'and instead feast on God's Word to promote your spiritual health. - Dennis Fisher

*To walk close by Your side, my dear Saviour,
To be led by You, doing each task,
To feast richly on grace at Your table,
And to know You is all that I ask. Somerville*

Feeding on God's truth will help us avoid Swallowing lies.

H.K.

EAST BRENT

I think the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is over and we are now into winter – wet and some what dark at the end of the afternoon. Having said that the primroses and violets are out in flower in the garden, so prospects are looking good.

Our congregation for services has been much depleted during the last few weeks because people have been on holiday

Jill and Gordon have been on a cruise – at the time of writing they are not back yet.

Margaret Scott has been to Australia to see her son.

Ruth has been to Cyprus on holiday.

With all their returns there will be much delight at the bigger Church Family gathering.

News of Gwen Oldham who has been poorly and in hospital she is home now and we wish her well on the road to recovery.

We hope that June Nethercott is on a slow road to recovery and send her our Best wishes. We must thank the Rev. Pipet for stepping in for June at our Armistice Service where we had the pleasure of meeting the Vicar of East Brent. He and several Church members joined in afterwards for a warming cup of coffee in the hall. This was received with gratitude.

The next events on our calendar are,

17th Dec 7.00pm Carols by Candlelight at East Brent

**21st Dec 7.30pm Carols in the Barn at Ash Lawn,
Rooksbridge**

25th Dec 10.00am Short family service at East Brent

26th Dec No service at East Brent

We would welcome any attendance at either of these events.

I know it's early but can I wish all members of the Link a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year from the East Brent Family.

Evelyn M. J. Tucker.



BURNHAM.

www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk

STEWARDS COLUMN

During the last few weeks so many people have said to me that this year had gone so very quickly, I feel this too; however we have to accept that Christmas is fast approaching. The first Sunday of Advent is 28th November, The season of Advent is a time of preparation, preparing for the birth of the Christ child. As we travel around we are already able to see some homes decorated and Christmas trees being decorated. We can enjoy wandering around nearer Christmas to see the beautifully decorated homes. Although our days are busy with preparations for Christmas Day we must remember that on that day we are celebrating the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

On Saturday 13th November we held our very successful Christmas Fair raising £1000.00 for the Redevelopment Fund. Our thanks to everyone who worked so hard, and all who supported.

Details of all Christmas Services will be found in the Calendar.

On January 9th we have our Annual Covenant Service when we renew our Covenant with God. At 3.00pm the Link Epiphany Service will be held at Burnham.

We remember in our thoughts and Prayers all those who are missing a loved one this Christmas, the lonely and the housebound and those who are sick and unable to come to worship. As I write this we especially remember Eric Horsley and all family and friends on the death of Elsie. We shall all miss Elsie's friendship, her baking, especially her scones and the cards which she made so beautifully.

We send Christmas Greetings to Andrew and Julie, to all our readers and friends of the Link.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Dorothy May

On behalf of the Steward Team.



The late Elsie Horsley

I am sure that all members of the Thursday Fellowship will join me in acknowledging our deep regret at the sad loss of Elsie. She was loved and respected by all who knew her and she will be greatly missed.

Such a caring person, Elsie had a way of making you feel special. She had many qualities; friendliness, helpfulness and dependability with an urge to ensure everyone was well fed! Oh dear, Elsie we shall indeed miss your cheese scones!

Among her many friends I will mourn her passing.

Our loving thoughts are now with Eric who supported Elsie, and their families.

Sandra Brown.

On behalf of the Thursday Fellowship



BURNHAM REDEVELOPMENT FUND

It is with grateful thanks we record that the CHRISTMAS FAIR raised £1,000. After several wet and windy days we were favoured with a fine day and this really brought the people out. At one time nearly every seat in the Church was taken with people either having tea/coffee or simply resting!!

Other money raised: Ros for "Puddings Day" £175.00, Alison, additional £2.50 Alison for Sponsored ½ Marathon.

I can report that we have now raised all the money and loans repaid for Phase 1 of the Redevelopment of the Premises. The cost of Phase 1 was £223,000 of which we raised £128,300.

Joyce F. Plumb



Toddler Group Autumn Term 2010

Hi everyone

The first 10 weeks into 2010/11 have been very happy and encouraging.

Everyone is enjoying the activities including the craft activities which have included Collages, Mask making, Father Christmas picture, Paper angel. Christmas cards, Pencil holders and of course we always have our popular play dough, and this terms colour is green Wow!

After ten weeks into the new term our average attendance over those weeks is 51 people per week with the average number of children being 28 per week.

We will continue to monitor numbers attending to keep within safe limits.

In the name of Health and Safety we have purchased new cups with sip lids to prevent any spillage accidents.

Our charity this Christmas remains Toybox and we have sent a donation to aid the work with street children in Latin America.

We are all looking forward to our Christmas service in the Church on December 10th followed by a party in the hall with Father Christmas

On behalf of the team and all that attend “The Methodist Toddler Group” may we wish you a happy Christmas and New Year

Paul and Sheila Creswick
20 November 2010



BREAN

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

We've just been watching Songs of Praise which outlined J Arthur Rank's contribution to the British Film industry and to Methodism to which he was as passionately devoted. In the 1960s and early 1970s Judy and I were members at Westminster Central Hall and the programme evoked something of that spirit of vitality that we felt as part of that great church. The then minister, Rev Dr Maurice Barnett, sought out Lord Rank's expertise in dealing with the enormous debt then hanging over Central Hall, a debt that with vision and insight, was cleared within reasonable time. Today Central Hall is a vibrant witness at the heart of London, opposite Westminster Abbey and within sight of Parliament across the Square. Judy and I were very much involved, I remember, with the group raising funds for developing the basement at the Hall as part of the vision for the future.

Our vision at Brean is far more modest. But in December at least, there is much going on that will keep us all occupied. On the 5th December our joint worship with St Bridget's will find several people from both churches taking part in leading worship on The Advent Hope. Afterwards we shall share lunch. On Saturday 18th December we invite the village, and you too if you care to come, for a coffee and carol sing in our Schoolroom, from 10am to 12 noon.

Our carol service is on Christmas Eve at 4pm as usual. In the past we have been blessed by solid support from the Link Churches and we very much hope that you will come and enjoy an informal start to the Christmas activities, with refreshments to follow the 45 minute service.

With St Bridget's we are also running a weekly Advent study group on Thursday afternoons, and we have restarted our joint prayer fellowships.

In January we are at St Bridget's for the joint service on 2nd January and on the 16th we, with East Brent, will share in the Annual Covenant Service at Brent Knoll. This will be the first of an experimental period where we share monthly worship with one another during the winter months.

Enjoy Christmas. It is a vibrant festival. One to thank God for. Be happy in His name. In Jesus, God became human – what a thought!

Our best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year.

Harvey Allen.



WEST HUNTSPILL

I was asked to write a notice of our vision for outreach. One of my readings that day was so appropriate; as follows:

GOD'S PRESENCE AT CHURCH

I love reading church slogans. You know the ones you see on the notice board in front of churches. Recently I noticed a slogan that said. "Come in and experience the presence of God". That one caught my attention, primarily because it's an important promise to make and sometimes a hard promise to keep. Hard because if we're not careful; our churches might reflect the presence of its people more than the presence of God. So what would a church have to do to display the presence of God? Its people would have to live like Him! Dynamics like hospitality, the loving acceptance of all kinds of people, a quickness to serve, a tangible love for one another that makes people feel safe and included regardless of colour or class, and a patient tolerance of one another's weaknesses would all be a great way to start. Paul said we should walk in a manner "worthy of the Lord" (Col. 1:10) And he also said that being worthy means that we will be humble, gentle, bearing with one another in love, eagerly maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:2-3)

Let's live in such a way that others will experience the presence of the God who lives in us -wherever we are, but especially at Church. -Joe Stowell (from "Our Daily Bread" November 7th)

Janet Thompson

BRENT KNOLL

“How disappointed God must be
When someone Questions “Where is he?
Then passing by a gracious tree.
Sees nothing there at all!

I quote a poem that was written in my childhood autograph album and it impressed me then at an age when I looked upon trees as providing swings, climbing frames and conkers. This autumn, more than ever, I can't believe that anyone can have failed to notice the glorious riot of colour that we've seen everywhere even in Tesco car park. It had to come to an end of course, but surely we can let the memory linger till spring comes around again? No matter what horrors await us, cold, snow, ice, the crunch lot, the new buds will be there to remind us that God's promise to Noah never fails. We suffer loss but new hope arises.

At Brent Knoll we have lost three staunch members this year, the latest being with the passing of Geoff Tullett, who had been worshipping with us for the last 4 years or so. He loved the occasional opportunity to play the organ and certainly we have loved to hear him read the lesson, or one of his own apt little poems, a gentle quiet man he had a smile for everyone and soon made himself part of the Church family.

Unfortunately ill health dogged his last years and we watched with admiration as he struggled to keep himself going. He was in Church a few days before he died. A full house at his funeral was testimony to how much he meant to so many. But we always say. 'As one door closes another opens' and it is with much pleasure we welcome Mrs. Irene Knott and her daughter Rosemary who have transferred their membership to us. We also have two more regular attendees' Mary Coles and Carol Fisher. It is lovely to have them all with us.

An extra bonus too has come with the birth of Kieren Matthew a third child for Paula and Michael Knott and fourteenth grandchild for Ruth. Congratulations and a big welcome from us all.

Now Christmas looms and this year I'm determined not to be a miserable grouch, moaning about commercialism, over-indulgence and total absence of the essence of Christmas. There is still an enormous amount of generosity, kindness and love around as I myself have experienced during the months since Bill died. If we as Christians can't appreciate all that is genuine and real, then we are in a sorry state indeed. We celebrate the birth of our Saviour, let's be positive!

Best wishes to you all Barbara.

WOULDN'T IT BE NICE

Wouldn't it be nice if old folk were respected?
They've lived their lives and now should have their peace;
Instead of that by con men they're affected
Who think life's savings are for them to fleece.

Wouldn't it be nice if children had good manners?
And parents taught them how they should behave;
Today's kids grow to be tomorrow's planners;
Our highest standards they are charged to save.

Wouldn't it be nice if our peace was never shattered?
By blaring radios and revving cars;
You'd think that noise was everything that mattered,
With thudding bass and deafening guitars.

Wouldn't it be nice if our landscape was protected?
Developments would not then scar our land:
Monstrosities would never be erected
And town and country could live hand in hand.

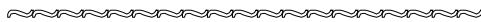
Wouldn't it be nice if property was sacred?
And vandals didn't have to interfere:
Why must they wreck what others have created?
No thoughts, no sense, no minds it would appear.

Wouldn't it be nice if principles of living
Were based on what our Saviour said they should:
If taking what we can was not a substitute for giving
And peace on earth and will to men was good.

Wouldn't it be nice if this world was as it should be:
No terrorists, no suffering, no pain:
But that's exactly how it could be
If men were not so much obsessed with gain.

GEOFF TULLETT a few weeks before he died

'FAITH IN SOCIETY'



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