
THE LINK

Methodist Link Churches Magazine

December 2011 – January 2012 Volume 46. No. 10.



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

Minister's Letter

As we approach the Advent season its worth reflecting on the fact that it is the season which *precedes* Christmas. The season of Christmas, contrary to popular belief, does not end on Christmas day – it *begins* on Christmas day and lasts until the Epiphany on the 6th January.

Advent begins on Advent Sunday (27th November this year), ends on Christmas Eve and is the first Sunday of the new liturgical year. It is a time of expectation, preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus and in former times (and still sometimes today) was observed as a time of fasting similar to that in Lent. It is still regarded as a time of penitence – a time to make your peace with God for any sin which may stand in the way of your relationship with him, before the coming of Christ.

The theme of readings and teachings during Advent are to prepare for the second coming of Christ, while celebrating his first coming at Christmas. Special readings for each Sunday of Advent direct our thoughts to his coming (first) as saviour and again (second) as judge.

The Advent season then is a very important and special time, and it is a great shame that we seem to almost miss it out altogether as we rush headlong to Christmas. We begin the feast too early by holding our celebrations of the Christmas season - our parties and carol services - during the time that should be devoted to Advent and to preparing ourselves spiritually to meet with Jesus when he comes.

Strictly speaking – we shouldn't sing a carol, or eat a mince pie until the coming of Christmas proper on Christmas day! How much more meaningful would our midnight Communion service be if it was genuinely the moment that our time of examination and penitence ended and we began the feast of Christmas?

As we inevitably make the practical preparations that go along with preparing for Christmas, let us try not to allow them to overshadow our spiritual preparation and let us make time set aside to spend with God during Advent. Then let us celebrate the coming of Christ through our worship together and our sharing of Christ's love with everyone.

Have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Rev Andrew

Deaths

Dennis Dixon Funeral November 15th at Burnham

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

Sat. 26th 10.00 - 12.30. B/H CHRISTMAS FAIR

DECEMBER

- Thur. 1st 2.30pm. B/H Thursday Fellowship - "Saints Quiz"
Thur. 1st 6.00pm. B/H Carol Singing at Tesco (see page 9.)
Sat 3rd 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Coffee Morning in aid of the Heating Fund
Wed. 7th 8.00pm. B/H Wednesday Group - The Vicar of St. John's will talk on a Christmas theme.
Fri. 9th 2.00 - 8.00pm Invitation to "Manse pies at the Mince" - Coffee & Teas
Sat. 10th 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Shoppers Coffee Morning All Welcome
Tue. 13th 12.00noon. E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - Christmas Buffet.
Tue. 13th 7.30pm. Burnham CHURCH COUNCIL
Wed.14th 12.30pm. B/H Church Lunch. (Rosaleen)
Wed.14th 2.30pm. B/H Bible Study Group All welcome.
Thur.15th 2.30 for 3.00pm. B/H Carol Singing at Tudor Lodge Brightstowe Road (see page 9.)
Thur.15th 2.30pm. B/H Thursday Fellowship - Favourite Carols & Christmas Stories.
Fri. 16th 7.00pm. E/B East Brent Carol by Candlelight
Fri. 16th 7.00pm. W/H West Huntspill Carol Service
Sat. 17th 10.30am. Brean - Coffee & Carols
Sat. 17th 10.00 - 12.00. B/H Coffee Morning by R.N.L.I.
Sun. 18th 6.30pm. B/H Burnham Carol Service
Tue. 22nd 2.30pm. B/H Carol Singing at Beaufort House Rectory Road (see page 9.)
Sat 24th 4.00pm. BR Brean Village Carol Service
Sun. 25th 10.00am. E/B East Brent Christmas Service (joined by B/Knoll) Rev. Margaret Trapp.
Sun.25th 10.30am. Burnham Christmas Service
Sun. 25th West Huntspill Christmas Day Local arrangement
Wed.28th 2.30pm. B/H Prayer Meeting at Church. All Welcome
Fri 30th 10.00 - 12.00. W/H Coffee Cake and Chat plus stalls at West Huntspill Methodist Church

JANUARY

- Wed. 4th 8.00pm. B/H Wednesday Group - Party Time
Tue. 10th 2.30pm. E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - Update on Luhimba - Mr. P. Temple. (Collection)
Wed.11th 12.30pm. B/H Church Lunch.
Wed.11th 2.30pm. B/H Bible Study Group All welcome.

Sun. 15th		B/K Joint Covenant Service at Brent Knoll
Thur. 19th	2.30pm.	B/H Thursday Fellowship - TBA
Tue. 24th	2.30pm.	E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - To Buy or Not to Buy – Mr. & Mrs Endall.
Wed. 25th	2.30pm.	B/H Prayer Meeting at Church. All Welcome
Fri 27th	10.00 - 12.00.	W/H Coffee Cake and Chat plus stalls at West Huntspill Methodist Church
Fri 27th		BR Games Evening at Brean - all invited
FEBRUARY		
Wed. 1st	8.00pm.	B/H Wednesday Group - Who do we think we are - A look at how to research our family history
Thur. 2nd	2.30pm.	B/H Thursday Fellowship - Mrs. Gerda Dixon.
Tues 7th	7.30pm.	B/H CHURCH COUNCIL
Wed. 8th	12.30pm.	B/H Church Lunch. ()
Wed. 8th	2.30pm.	B/H Bible Study Group All welcome.
Tue. 14th	2.30pm.	E/B LINK Villages Fellowship - Rev. Robin Hutt.
Thur. 16th	2.30pm.	B/H Thursday Fellowship - Home Missions - Joyce Pipet. (Sales table).

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

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### Invitation: Manse pies at the Mince

Andrew & Julie invite you to share tea/coffee and mince pies at the manse – 28A Caernarvon Way, Burnham on Sea, on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December. Come any time between 2pm and 8pm.

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THANK YOU

Together with my family I like to thank everyone for your great love and support you expressed to us when my beloved husband, our dear father and grandfather Dennis died - you stood with us when we said our good-bye, recommending him into God's eternal loving care.

When Dennis could not come to Church any more so many of you sent him your love. You also assured us of your prayers which I know were answered. Dennis was able to bear the burden of his various illnesses bravely and I received all the strength I needed to care for him over the years and together with my family in the last difficult weeks. It gave him great pleasure when he learned his small contribution to the LINK magazine was appreciated - Thank you for so many beautiful cards of sympathy and offers of help.

I like to thank our minister Andrew for being with us in hospital during the evening before Dennis died. Also for his help in preparing the funeral service, and then leading the service in Church and at the crematorium in a very caring way.

A special thank you goes to Rosaleen and Dorothy for providing us all with food and drinks in the hall after the service. Dorothy also did the beautiful flower arrangement in the Church

Thank you Bridget for playing the organ, and thank you Cedric for playing the music (CD) before and at the end of the service. It has been with us for over 50 years.

Now I can only end by saying it is a great blessing to belong to such a loving Christian Community.

My love to you all,

Gerda (Dixon)



From Margaret Hicks

May I commend this prayer to any going through difficult times, especially long term crippling illnesses and also to those who support and comfort them.

Written by Revd Martyn Atkins and published in the Methodist Prayer Handbook 2010/2011

God does not always lead by the shortest route,
Because some things are best learned on longer journeys.
God sometimes leads us into the wilderness, as well as by still waters,
Because some destinations are reached with scars as well as smiles.
God urges us to travel light, but also to take things of our precious past
with us,
Because some things remind us where we've come from and bring hope of
a future.

God guides in different ways, sometimes half- hidden, as in a grey cloud,
sometimes blazingly clear because God's people are called to travel as God
guides them, and there is never a time when God's guidance fails or ceases.

As Jesus said, "I am with you always." Amen.



Equip your town or village for winter weather

Somerset Highways has invited your parish council and local county councillor to depot open evenings in November.

The purpose of these visits is to explain the winter road service; how Somerset Highways decides which priority roads are included in the precautionary salt treatment network, which other roads will be cleared during prolonged periods of snow and ice if time and resources allow, and how weather forecasts and roadside condition data are used to plan gritting runs.

It is also a chance to show the equipment available for parish councils to buy; things like shovels, grit bins and hand spreaders for sprinkling salt that cost just £3 each.

If there is anything you think your parish council can provide your town, village or street to help over winter please do contact them as soon as possible. The County Council needs to know what parish councils need before the bad weather sets in. Please remember that nothing can be sold to the public directly from Somerset Highways.

As in previous years the Council has offered 20kg bags of salt to parish councils to fill these grit bins. The salt is for use on public highways, it is not for use on private driveways. Large bags will be dropped at the roadside in remote locations featuring steep slopes for drivers in difficulty.

We appreciate the help that Somerset County Council gets from parish councillors and residents each year. There will be more information soon about how residents can safely clear snow and ice themselves, particularly from their own property and pavements.

More detail about the entire winter road maintenance service can be found on the Council website www.somerset.gov.uk/winterservice.



Highbridge & Burnham Youth Project Update

As I hope you are aware by now, Churches Together have spent the past year raising money to have 2 trainee Youth workers come and work in Highbridge & Burnham. After raising £8,000 out of our £12,000 target we decided to take the next step and apply to SWYM (South West Youth Ministries) to have two students come to us on placement. Our application was successful and the Youth Project team are very pleased to announce that our two trainee Youth Workers are now in post. We are very pleased to welcome Sarah Bagouin who comes from Cornwall, and Steve Kearns from St.Helens, Merseyside. Both are 22 years old and have already begun their work of supporting the Youth of the area both in secular and in church settings. They both have great enthusiasm for the work God has called them to do, and I know they have already had a very positive impact on the Youth they have met so far. They are initially here for a year, but we are hoping, if all goes well, that the project will be ongoing into the future.

The project team would like to thank all of you have contributed in some way to getting the project this far, through coffee mornings, concerts, donations etc. The project is about to be registered as a charity, and we are making progress with grant applications which should make a considerable difference to our funds.

However, if we are to continue to impact the lives of the young people in this part of the world then we need to continue our fund raising efforts! So, when your group or church is planning events or allocating monies raised then please keep us in mind. We still need a few more coffee mornings before Christmas to meet our target of '20 elevenses' in 2011. If you could have one in your house or church please let me know!

Last month, 2 boys from St. John's in Highbridge did a sponsored bike ride in aid of the project calling at all the Burnham & Highbridge churches. They left sponsor forms at each of the

churches and it is not too late to add to their total if you haven't already done so. Congratulations James & Thomas!

Donations can be given to me or sent directly to the project treasurer Richard Jones at 32 Quantock Court, South Esplanade, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1DL. Cheques should be made payable to 'Highbridge & Burnham Youth Project'.

Finally, please put our next event in your diaries which will be a 12 hour music marathon to be held at St. John's on Saturday 21st January from 10am -10pm. If you'd like to do a musical stint then let me know! Otherwise just pop in and enjoy the entertainment and some refreshment.

With many thanks for your ongoing support,

Julie Biggs (on behalf of the project team).



Update on Julie!

Some of you will have noticed that I haven't been around so much lately. This is because I now have a job. I am working 25 hours/week at Nailsea & Backwell Methodist Churches as their Family worker. This involves running the toddler group, which meets 2 mornings a week, helping with their Messy Church, and generally supporting their work with children and families.

I have also begun my local preaching training and am currently working alongside Rev. Stanley Pipet. So all in all I am pretty busy! I would appreciate your prayers as I go where I feel God has called me, and look forward to seeing you all when our paths cross.

Best wishes,

Julie.

CAROL SINGING

The Burnham Choir will be Carol Singing in aid of Action for Children and invite you to join them at these venues and dates:-

Dec 1st 6.00pm at TESCO (Please wrap up warmly as we will be singing in the entrance – Refreshments will be provided by Tesco)

Dec 15th 2.30 for 3.00pm at Tudor Lodge Brightstowe Road

Dec 20th 2.30pm at Beaufort House Rectory Road

Do come along and enjoy Singing the Carols



We still have a selection of Christmas cards in aid of Action for Children.
Please contact Cedric - Tel. 784204 to see them.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

Burnham Methodist Church

Saturday NOVEMBER 26th

10.00 - 12.30

Variety of Stalls

**Homemade Cakes, Handicrafts, Choc-a-holic,
Jewellery, Bric-a-Brac, Christmas Gifts Books
Cards**

“Christmas Raffle”

Admission Free

In aid of the New Church Heating Fund



**Whatever the weather outside
You will be sure of a *warm* welcome at our
Christmas Services.**



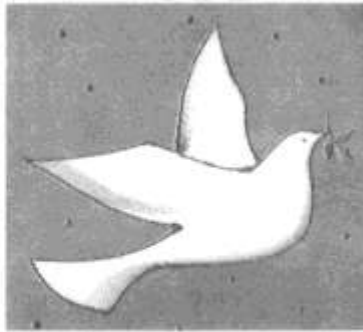
**Carol Service
Friday December 16th
At 7pm
Led by Revd Andrew Biggs**

O, come let us adore Him

Christmas Day Service

At 10-30am





O, Little Town Of Birmingham

(1) O, little town of Birmingham,
How still we see thee lie,
Above thy clubs and many pubs,
The silent stars go by.
But in thy still streets walketh,
The homeless refugee,
The hopes and fears of many years,
Are met in thee tonight

(2) How nosily, how noisily,
The many gifts are given,
But frightened strangers find no place,
Who from their homes are driven.
No ear may hear the weeping,
But in this town today.
While clubs abound and gifts are found,
We spend and look away.

While Shoppers Shopped.

While shoppers shopped by day and night,
All wondering how to pay,
A mighty credit card appeared,
And said I'm yours today.



Coffee, Cake and Chat

Mornings are being held on

December 30th 2011 & January 27th 2012

10am - 12md

Bric-a brac & Fairtrade stalls

CHRISTMAS AT BREAN

Saturday 17th December from 10.30am

Coffee and Carols

Saturday 24th December at 4pm

Village Carol Service

Readings and Carols in an informal
gathering

All our Link friends are warmly invited to
support our celebrations for Christmas

Fancy an evening celebrating Christmas?

Then come along to The Burnham and Highbridge Choral Society's, Christmas Concert on 15th December in St. Andrew's Church, Burnham on Sea, commencing at 7.30pm. The performance will include a new carol with words and music from choir member Eileen Wedgwood. Hopefully there will also be a performance by the children from a local school.

Entrance is £3, payable at the door, which will include light refreshments.

We look forward to your company.

LINK VILLAGES' FELLOWSHIP

We were pleased to welcome Mrs Pauline Alvis back again on Tuesday, October 25th. She gave us a very interesting insight into her husband's and her year as High Sheriff of Somerset. The post of High Sheriff goes back several centuries, when it was founded for the office of law upholder in the County. They are answerable to the Lord Lieutenant of the County. Pauline told us that as Somerset is a large county it is divided into four areas so the post only comes into our area once in four years. She showed photos of her husband in his uniform and her outfit She also told us of some of the functions they attended and experiences they had.

On November 8th, Mr Bob Teifer, a former Fire Officer gave some very valuable hints for safety in the home and also ways of looking after our property in our cars. It was a most interesting and informative afternoon.

Mr B. Deahl will give an illustrated talk on the R.N.L.I. on November 22nd-

We shall have our usual Christmas Buffet Lunch on December 13th.

We start our 2012 season with a visit from Paul Temple who will give us an update on the work at Luhimba in Tanzania on January 10th. There will be a collection on that afternoon for the ongoing work in Luhimba.

Mr and Mrs Endall appeared on the T.V. programme "To Buy or not to Buy" and will give their account of being on the T.V. programme on January 24th.

On February 14th we shall welcome Rev. Robin Hutt.

Eileen Goundry



EAST BRENT

Our Church members turned out in force, complete with a huge assortment of cakes to sell at our annual Christmas Sale, but only a handful of people turned up to buy. Never the less it was a very enjoyable morning and most of the helpers who brought cakes, bought a different one to take home with them.

You can still buy Christmas cards – just contact Evelyn to have a look through the box!

We hope that Paul and Julie have recovered from the shock of finding a dead bird in their Tesco salad. Not a very nice way to get your picture in the papers and be a TV star for a day.

Sorry to have to report the death of Avis Allen, a long time member of East Brent, she moved to Pawlett in 2006 and attended Pawlett Methodist Church, a few months ago she had to move into a home where she fell and broke her hip. She was in hospital 2 weeks where she died.

Plans are already in place for our Christmas Services. We shall be using last year's order of service (which was cancelled due to the snow) for the Carols by Candlelight. So if you were going to be a reader then I hope you will still be available this year.

The first Sunday in December we have a Christening, a good way to get a full Church.

Sunday 25th December Christmas Day at 10.00am (**NOT** 10.30 as in the plan) and Brent Knoll will be sharing the service with us, the following Sunday we shall be going to Brent Knoll.

We are looking forward to the first Link service in the New Year, which seems to have been missed off the plan or is down for the wrong Sunday's.

We wish everyone in the Link a peaceful Christmas (no hope there) and a Happy and Healthy New Year, and hope to see you at one of our services.

Carols by Candlelight at 7pm. Friday 16th December.

Christmas Day 10am. Short Service led by Revd. Margaret Trapp.

Jill Legg

BURNHAM.

www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk

STEWARDS COLUMN

Don't you think that this year has flown by? I certainly do – I can't get to grips with the fact that Christmas is approaching fast. However reality hit home when I realised that the first Sunday in Advent is on 27th November and we were completely out of red Advent candles at Burnham. A quick visit to the Christian Resources shop in Bridgwater solved that problem – but it gave me pause to reflect, with the end of 2011 racing quickly towards us, what have been the highlights (and lowlights) this year.

For Andrew and Julie the Ordination ceremony in Southport was, no doubt, a very special highlight and it was also memorable for those members of the congregation at Burnham and the Link Churches who were able to attend this significant event.

Here at Burnham, Messy Church still flourishes, albeit with fluctuating numbers but no lack of enthusiasm on the part of families who attend, or that of our stalwart group of helpers. (We have begun to notice that the activity table where we locate the colouring and word activity sheets, which were intended as something for the children to do whilst waiting for a space at a more creative activity table has been taken over by the grown-ups – helpers included - who seem to love colouring in pictures and doing the word searches. Second childhood syndrome??) The Messy Church worship is inspiring and so much fun!

We have also had our first experience of Cafe Church. This took place in the Church foyer, tea and coffee were served and it was an interactive service in which we all took part – in discussions and a feedback session -and appropriate hymns and prayers creating an uplifting evening service. We will be having Cafe Church services during 2012 - do come and join us. We have also started a Bible Study group and a Prayer group – both fulfilling a need in our church life.

My year changed in May when I became Senior Steward at Burnham. I was quite naive and unprepared for task I was undertaking. I had to learn on the job very quickly and didn't always

get things right (still don't!) but the Burnham stewards are a great team and I have had much support for which I am truly grateful. We have also had a new steward join the team – Daphne Hill. We needed you Daphne, and we would be pleased if there is anyone else who feels called to serve the church in this way.

On the downside, we still have no heating system in church and as the colder days are here we are relying on our electric heaters and may have to hire gas heaters so that we can still congregate in our beautiful church. We are however in the process of receiving tenders for the replacement of the heating system so we are moving in the right direction.

We are saddened by the recent loss of Dennis Dixon who gave much of his time and creative talents to the church. Every time we look at the lectern we see the evidence of his skill and craftsmanship and give thanks for his work and life.

So – Christmas approaches and on Saturday 26th November we are holding our Christmas Fair. That will be a fun and hopefully profitable morning and then on the 18th December we have our Carol Service and this year we will be joined by 2 young people, Caitlin and Tom who will be singing for us and hopefully singing with the choir as well.

We are holding in our thoughts and prayers all those who are unwell, in hospital - those who feel weary and alone especially at this time. There are many for whom we can find the space and time to pray for them to feel God's loving warmth around them.

We send Christmas wishes and blessings to all in the Link and may the coming year renew and deepen the faith we share.

Happy New Year

Ann Hall (for the Burnham Stewards)



BREAN

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

On Sunday last, we were reminded of the ending of this church year and the start of the next. So as we move into the season of Advent, with Christmas almost upon us, it is a time to look back over the last year but also a time of new beginnings.

More than a hundred people from all walks of life were present at Walter Godwin's funeral in November. He was a much loved person and will be missed by us all. Our thoughts and prayers are with Margery and his family.

Our Ecumenical Study Group starts up on Wednesday 1st December at 2.30pm at the home of Cedric and Sheila Lodge. We hope to read straight through Mark's gospel as far as we can before deciding what topics from the gospel that we would like to talk about further.

Our Christmas celebrations begin with the Christmas Lunch on 4th December after our lay-led service for Advent (11.am) when we look forward to joining with our friends from St Bridget's. This will be followed a couple of weeks later by our popular 'Coffee and Carols' event on Saturday 17th at 10.30 am. Do join us for some informal carol singing and a cup of hot coffee.

On Christmas Eve we will be holding our Village Carol Service at 4pm, - called the Village Carol Service but we have been very glad of the support from Link friends over the years. We shall look forward to using some of the recent carols now available in the new hymn book – Singing the Faith. Do please come and support us if you can. St Bridget's will also be holding other joint services over the Christmas period which we will be supporting.

We look forward to the Olympic Year 2012. We will be joining with other village churches in the Link for the Covenant service on 15th January at East Brent and we have a Games evening on 27th January to which all are invited.

Our best wishes to everyone for Christmas and the New Year.

Ann Hicks

WEST HUNTSPILL

With Christmas fast approaching we shall all be looking forward to singing carols in our lovely churches. At West Huntspill we are fortunate to have the Coastline Singers Choir rehearsing in our Church on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30 pm each week. Anyone is welcome to join the choir and all monies raised from their concerts is donated to mainly local charities.

Last weekend they sung at a wedding in Berrow Church and throughout November and December they will be singing carols at a number of local retirement and care homes. If you enjoy singing carols you could join them on Friday 16th December when they will be carol singing at the Highbridge branch of Asda from 3pm. The choir are really enjoying their rehearsals in the newly refurbished West Huntspill Church. We hope to see some of you at West Huntspill and from us all we wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a blessed and peaceful new year.



BRENT KNOLL

We've had many grey November days but also some wonderful ones. Here we are nearly at the end of the month and many trees are still holding their leaves, whose colour deepens every day and our spirits are lifted. There is much gloom in the world around us and we are aware of much pain but we are not a people without hope and that hope is reinforced as we come to the Season of Advent and Christmas. We are reminded once more that this is God's World, part of God's Universe and he does not abandon it, for he is Love. He suffers with its sufferings and has made plain his nature and purpose by choosing to become one of his own creatures and enter this world in a human life, that of Jesus of Nazareth. This we celebrate at Christmas and it is appropriate that we do so with lights and colour for they are symbolic of the joyful hope Christ brings. But the Light of Christ is not for Christmas only, it is there for the whole year and for every part of our lives. Sometimes the Light

may appear to grow dim or we lose sight of it and it is then that we need the help and encouragement of others on the road. The first Christians were simply called “ Followers of the Way “ or “ Followers of the Way of Jesus “ and we need to remind ourselves that we do not follow alone but in company and we can give support to one another . We don’t need structures to do this but sometimes it can help to meet in small groups, as John Wesley found with his organisation of “Bands” and “Class Meetings”. At Brent Knoll we have been providing a meeting place for a group, mainly from the Anglican Church, to follow what is called an Emmaus programme to explore and grow in the Christian Faith together. Andrew and I have met with the Rector the Revd. Simon Lewis and we are hoping to start another group / or groups in which more Methodists will take part. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this please ask Andrew or me.

Not everyone of course is able to meet with a group and we owe a great debt to those who, though restricted physically, quietly continue their faith journey and support the rest of us by their prayers. So, we send our greetings to all members of our Church family, especially to those who are housebound or unwell, either at home or in hospital. We look forward to meeting members of other Link Churches at Carol Services, and particularly on Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (not 10.30) at East Brent or 10.30 at Burnham, on New Years Day at Brent Knoll and for Covenant at East Brent on Jan. 15th. May the Light, Joy, Peace and Hope of Christmas be with you and remain with you throughout the year.

Love from,
Margaret.

Minister

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www.methodistchurchburnhamonseas.org.uk
www.brean-methodist-church.home.dhs.org
www.brentknollmethodistchurch.com

**The Deadline for the
February 2012 “LINK” is
Sunday 22nd January 2011**

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