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# THE LINK

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**Methodist Link Churches Magazine**

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**February 2010 Volume 45. No. 1.**

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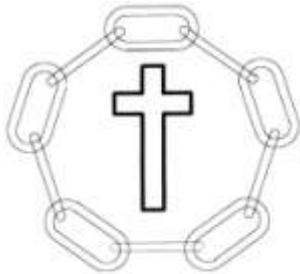
**BREAN**



**BRENT KNOLL**



**WEST HUNTSPILL**



**EAST BRENT**



**BURNHAM ON SEA**

# *Minister's Letter*

## Happy New Year

By the time you read this we will be nearly a month into 2010 – the start of a new decade. It seems like only yesterday that we were celebrating the turn of the century – and now here we are ten years into the third millennium since the birth of Jesus Christ!

This time of year is a time when we think about new beginnings. We sometimes make New Year resolutions – a statement of intent to change something in our lives. I don't tend to make resolutions but it is a good idea to reflect on our lives every so often and take stock.

The apostle Paul tells us that our lives should be “a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him”. As Christians we should be aiming for our lives to become as close to Christ as possible. Andrew Baughen puts it thus “Christians should be... out of the ordinary, grace filled versions of humanity. People who act as moving billboards for God”<sup>1</sup>. It therefore follows that we should occasionally check and review our lives to make sure we are on track to fulfil God's expectations for us.

This also applies to our churches. It is important to review our activities, our traditions and our approaches every so often to ensure that we are still fit for the purpose of fulfilling God's calling to “take the gospel message to all corners of the earth” (Mark 16:15). If we are not reaching our communities with the message of Jesus' love, if our churches are not acting as beacons of light in our communities, drawing to us people who are curious about what we have, then we need to be doing something differently.

Have a Happy New Year,

Andrew.

**1. Baughen, Andrew.** *The because approach. Inovating church for all.* Milton Keynes : Authentic Media, 2005.

# CALENDAR

## JANUARY

Sat. 30th 10.00 - 12.00. Shoppers Coffee Morning Burnham All Welcome

## FEBRUARY

Tue. 2nd 7.30pm. **BURNHAM CHURCH COUNCIL**

Wed. 3rd 8.00pm. Wednesday Group - Singing Children of Africa at Home - Dorothy May- All Welcome.

Thur. 4th 2.30pm. Thursday Fellowship - Mr. Harry Kempson.

Sat. 6th **10.00 - 12.00.** Coffee Morning in aid of the RD Fund -

Tue. 9th 2.30pm. LINK Villages Fellowship - David Hodges - Life in the Police Force.

**Wed 10th 7.30pm. Christian Aid AGM**

Sat. 13th **10.00 - 12.00.** Shoppers Coffee Morning and Sale in aid of Redevelopment Fund.

Thur. 18th 2.30pm. Thursday Fellowship - Home Missions – Mrs. Joyce Pipet.

Sat. 20th **10.00 - 12.00.** Coffee Morning in aid of Singing Children of Africa. Burnham - All Welcome

Sun. 21st **LAST Day for items for the March LINK**

Tue. 23rd 2.30pm. LINK Villages Fellowship - Roger Flower - BARB – Collection.

Wed. 24th 2.30 & 7.30. LENT Course at St John's Church Highbridge

Sat. 27th **10.00 - 12.00.** Shoppers Coffee Morning Burnham All Welcome

## MARCH

Wed. 3rd 2.30 & 7.30. LENT Course at West Huntspill Methodist Church

Wed. 3rd 8.00pm. Wednesday Group - TBA.

Thur. 4th 2.30pm. Thursday Fellowship - Cedric May – Video – “Rockies.

Sat. 6th **10.00 - 12.00.** Coffee Morning in aid of the RD Fund -

Tue. 9th 2.30pm. LINK Villages Fellowship - Pearl Hunt.

Wed. 10th 2.30 & 7.30. LENT Course at Burnham Baptist Church

Sat. 27th **10.00 - 12.00.** Shoppers Coffee Morning Burnham All Welcome

Wed. 17th 2.30 & 7.30. LENT Course at St Mary's Church East Brent

Thur. 18th 2.30pm. Thursday Fellowship - Easter Quiz.

Sun. 21st **LAST Day for items for the April LINK**



Learn lessons for life in Lent 2010

# Life Source

Churches Together in Burnham-on-Sea & District led by Local Church Leaders using materials by Kate Bruce & Robert Warren

Wednesdays at 2.30pm & 7.30pm

24th February

Source of Life - prayer as a relationship

At St. John's Church, Highbridge & co-led with St. Andrew's, St. Peter & All Hallows, All Saints', St. Mary's (Berrow) & St. Bridget's.

3rd March

Source of Joy - prayer as enjoying God

At West Huntspill Methodist Church & co-led with Brean, Brent Knoll & Burnham-on-Sea Methodist Churches.

10th March

Source of Light - prayer as listening

At Burnham Baptist Church & co-led with Hope Baptist Church

17th March

Source of Wholeness - prayer as honesty

At St. Mary's Church, East Brent & co-led with St. Michael's Church & St. Christopher's Church.

24th March

Source of Love - Prayer as care

At 'Our Lady' RCC, Burnham-on-Sea & co-led with Burnham Community Church & The Gospel Tabernacle Church

**An important date for your diary.**

Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> **Cheddar Male Choir** will be singing at Victoria Methodist Church Weston s Mare at 7.30pm. The Soloist will be Beverley Gregory of Milton Methodist Church.

All profits will be for Burnham Methodist Church Redevelopment Fund.

More details later. Please book the date.

Dorothy May.

**Burnham Methodist Church**  
**A Sale of Good Quality Clothes**  
**(second hand)**  
**and Bric a Brac.**  
**February 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**10.00 – 12.30**  
In aid of the Redevelopment Fund.

Christmas is over  
and I've put on a little fat  
with quite a lot of this  
and far too much of that  
I must diet, that is plain to see,  
"Oh my goodness, gracious me"

Dennis Dixon

# LINK VILLAGES' FELLOWSHIP

Everyone enjoyed a delicious Buffet Lunch on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> following which we were entertained by East Brent First School who performed their Nativity Play. This included an act where the Angel could not smile – however when the Baby was born he smiled with joy.

Unfortunately, the meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup> had to be cancelled owing to the snowy weather.

On Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> Rev. Andrew Biggs is to be our Speaker.

Mr. David Hodges will tell of his experiences in the Police Force on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> Mr. Roger Fowler will tell us about BARB. There will be a collection on that occasion.

On Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> Pearl Hunt will be our speaker.

If anyone would like to join us on the second and fourth Tuesday afternoons of each month, we shall be pleased to see you.

Eileen Goundry.



## Harvey's Wanderings

### THE SAFFRON MONASTERY AND MARDIN

'My God,' said Symeon. 'Is it war?'

The atmosphere at the monastery when the travel writer William Dalrymple\* visited the Saffron monastery in 1994 was exceedingly tense. In this beleaguered part of Kurdish Turkey the Christian churches had lived a precarious existence over many centuries. In last days of the Ottoman

Empire at the beginning of the last century many Christians were massacred and the Church had been constantly harassed ever since. Dalrymple's journey was shadowed by Turkish police and there were said to be armed groups marauding the hills in the neighbourhood. And then, while he was at the monastery soldiers carrying machine guns swept up to the monastery and stayed until he made a hasty retreat. Dalrymple was endangering both himself and the residents of the monastery just by being there.

Fifteen years later a lot has changed. The Kurdish threat is now much reduced and the authorities have realised the potential for tourism. The Saffron Monastery (Deir-el-Saferan), so called because of the colour of its stone walls, lies on elevated ground with spectacular views over the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia. Behind it mountains tower above and at one time five more monasteries could be seen from it. A lot of work has recently gone into the complex to make it more attractive and a new reception area has been built for the tourist trade. Our party of 15 was welcomed and shown round by a lay brother. The monastery dates back to the late fifth century though it was built on an earlier foundation and claims links back to the time of Jesus. Until about 1930 it was the seat of the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, but pressure from Ataturk and his army forced the exile of the Patriarch and most of the clergy to Damascus. Nowadays only two priests remain, together with a number of lay people who maintain the building and grounds.

Here the people speak Syriac and they worship in Aramaic of which Syriac is a dialect. As the lay brother showed us round the courtyards and parts of the building (not all of the 365 rooms!) we came to the part used as the church. Here the monks had worshipped for 1500 years, and here we persuaded the brother to recite to us the Lord's Prayer in Jesus' language, Aramaic.

It was a moment to treasure, a moment of surprise, a moment that bound us all together. He spoke boldly and

clearly, from the heart and from memory. Each member of our group was much moved and silent for many seconds afterwards. Clearly the Spirit of our Lord was moving in our midst.

Yet at Chalcedon when the Churches came together to define what was orthodox belief in 451AD, it was this Syrian Orthodox Church who with the Egyptian Copts were excluded and termed heretical!

In the afternoon, we walked around the nearby city of Mardin. The guidebook says there are 11 churches left, 8 of which still offer worship on a rotational basis to a fast dwindling congregation. But it is a pitiful existence. Christians get very few benefits in that sort of society even though it is supposed to be a secular state. We went into two of the churches, one of which displayed a huge mural depicting 40 martyrs who chose to die (some say frozen to death on ice, others that they drowned) rather than deny their faith in Jesus Christ – clearly the people identify with the past recognising that staying faithful to one's calling is a pilgrim endeavour which can result in discomfort, deprivation, and agony.

In the evening we shared a very pleasant meal on the roof of a local restaurant. We could see over to Syria three or four miles away, and where many Christians sought safety from the various campaigns against them.

But it was a subdued affair for we couldn't forget the memories of the day we had experienced.

Harvey and Judy Allen.

*\*Dalrymple's book is called From the Holy Mountain and charts Dalrymple's attempt to re-create the journey of 6<sup>th</sup> century monk John Moscho around the monasteries of the eastern Mediterranean.*

# BURNHAM.

[www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk](http://www.methodistchurchburnhamonsea.org.uk)

## STEWARDS COLUMN

“All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players” –  
(Shakespeare’s “As You Like It”) –

Very appropriate if like me you played the “Nasty Man” (otherwise known as King Herod) in the Burnham Nativity Service on Christmas Eve. That was quite an eye-opener I can assure you. In over 50 years on the amateur stage I don’t think I have had such a spontaneous reaction before – especially from the small boy playing a shepherd who was horrified that I would think of killing all the boy babies and made his point very vocally (several times!) I got demoted to a guard captain in Stanley Pipet’s service – but still in charge of the slaughter of the innocents. I do hope that after being the “villain” over Christmas my good name has been restored.

Then of course, THE WEATHER! The snow forced us to close our churches which was a blow for all of us but I hope that all our members remained safe, warm and well and everyone came through the snow and ice unscathed. Now that the snow has gone normal service can be resumed. (No pun intended.)

So, here we are at the start of a New Year with all the new opportunities that will bring to take our message to the wider community with renewed commitment and vigour.

To everyone in the Link who is under the weather and not feeling so good we send our prayers and best wishes.

Every Blessing,

From the Burnham Stewards,

Barry Hall.

# BURNHAM REDEVELOPMENT FUND

The total money in hand at end of December was **£7,978** towards the final payment of **£21,563.00**

## FUTURE EVENTS

We hope to arrange dinners. Please look on Church Notices.

February 13<sup>th</sup> A Sale Good quality second hand clothes and  
Bric a Brac.

May 15<sup>th</sup> Cheddar Male Choir at Victoria Methodist  
Church, Weston s Mare

May 29<sup>th</sup> SPRING FAIR 10.00 – 12.30



### Sale of Calendars.

The sale of calendars in aid of Church funds has been a success, a total of 75 were sold. £3.00 going to the Redevelopment Fund and £2.00 to the General Church Fund to cover cost of the photocopies from each sale. ie £225.00 to RD Fund and £140.00 to general fund and £10.00 for paper.

I will hopefully produce another for next year and have it available earlier.

This year it was in October when we had delivery of a different photocopier and saw the quality of colour printing that was available that I decided to give it a go.

I sold a number of single copies, only to get multiple repeat orders which have been sent by members to friends around the world.

Cedric



## **Carol Singing on behalf of Action for Children.**

Our first venue on December 14<sup>th</sup> was Beaufort House in Rectory Road. The residents enjoyed our visit and many joined in the carols.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> we went to Tudor Lodge. There we saw Joan Pitkin and Elsie Sealey. This was our first visit there, but I am sure we will be welcome to go again.

Finally we were at Tesco on 22<sup>nd</sup> December where we sang for an hour. It was good to see some of the staff joining in the singing.

Thank you to everyone who came to one or all three. The total amount raised was £164.25.

Thanks have been received from Action for Children



## **BREAN**

**[www.brean-methodist-church.home.dhs.org](http://www.brean-methodist-church.home.dhs.org)**

It's been really splendid on the beach these last couple of days, a good sign that the snow has gone, even if only temporarily. We managed to hold a morning service each Sunday through the bad weather though, and were much encouraged by the number who came to worship.

Our modest attempts at innovation continue to be successful. Over 30 came to the Saturday morning coffee and carols held on 12<sup>th</sup> December and we still get a dozen or more to the Monday morning coffee chat. In each case we are happy that non-church people from the village are prepared to cross our threshold to meet with us. The Christmas tree outside the building is also much appreciated.

About 45 came to the Christmas Eve carol service, a bit less than last year but again there were several local people that we hadn't seen before. The other Christmas services were held at St Bridget's who also enjoyed good numbers.

St. Bridget's congregation though, are suffering somewhat at this time with illness and hospitalisation, and our prayers are with them. The LEP covenant between our two churches is due for a review in the Spring but

this may have to be delayed because their congregation is so badly depleted.

Meanwhile our building will be under scaffolding for much of February as we have to have the roof extensively renewed.

Pancake Day on the 16<sup>th</sup>... Yay!! And a fortnight or so after that we shall begin to see some of our holiday visitors.

Harvey Allen.



## BRENT KNOLL

Knowing it is my turn to write this contribution to “The LINK”, I’d begun to thinking about what needed to be said ten days or so ago and I resolved not to make any reference to the recent “weather incident” which as usual brought us to a state of near paralysis, however one thought persists. I was brought up at a time when severe winters were the norm, in a three storey house heated by one fire and a Valour oil stove. We larked about on frozen ponds, fell off our home made sledges, slithered along longer and longer slides and the schools never closed So how come that i,m still alive to tell the tale? I don’t recall any broken bones either but maybe. I’m looking back through rose tinted spectacles.

Now I’m going back to pre-Christmas events, with no apologies about ancient history. We had a wonderfully successful Christmas coffee morning when thanks to support from the village and all the Link Churches we raised £360.00 which was shared between M.R.D.F., the Children’s Hospice South West and B.A.R.B/. We are so grateful to all of you who helped us achieve this result.

In December we had proof of the old proverbs about the ill-wind. Unfortunately for various reasons the Youth Clubs were unable to go ahead with their planned Nativity presentation and we’d abandoned any idea of trying to replace it. However we’d failed to recognise the hidden talent in our midst. Kathleen Burridge wrote a wonderful series of monologues entitled “The Witnesses” in which

members of the congregation represented various people who were in Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth as well as reading beautifully; they displayed extraordinary ingenuity in the creation of minimal costumes for each character, and we enjoyed a wonderful and very different version of the Christmas story. A big thank you to all who made it possible.

Since Christmas, we have plodded on quietly with little to report. Numbers on a Sunday have been steady despite the difficult time of year. We miss Keith, who is awaiting a much needed hip replacement and suffering much pain. We pray that all will go well for his operation at the end of January.

Our Toddler group is flourishing with numbers growing again after a recent decline. We are delighted that our premises will be used for a coffee morning, organised by the Friends of Toddlers on Saturday January 30<sup>th</sup> 10.30 – 12.00 for the Haiti Relief Fund and we hope it will be well supported. We are all appalled at the suffering and devastation in an already poverty stricken nation and every little we can do helps.

Now we wish all our friends all the best for this coming year and hope for the first signs of spring to cheer us on our way.

Barbara Drew.



# EAST BRENT

It seems a long time since the issue of the last “Link” Magazine. We’ve enjoyed Christmas and have cleared up the trimmings, the tree, and other bits and pieces. Church wise our celebrations were quite well attended especially with help from other country churches in the Link.

The Church looked beautiful in candlelight and we had lovely comments about the atmosphere that was created. We held our usual short service on Christmas morning when Rev. Stanley Pipet conducted our service using carols from four different countries. The service reminded us of the real story of Christmas. The Collections at both of these services were for our Luhimba project. We collected £233.00 to buy animals for the village.

Unfortunately we didn’t start off our Christian Year with a Covenant service because of the weather. We were all isolated in our various homes and not in fellowship together in Church on the first Sunday.

Some people regard this as just another service but the Covenant service is a form of commitment which we do well to think about during the year.

Having such good services and congregations at Christmas worries me somewhat as at the Covenant service the congregation is very often ‘thin’ I wonder why this should be? I know some people are still away on holiday but it seems to me that our attendance should be obligatory at one of the most important of people called Methodists, in order that we renew our Covenant with God.

Perhaps this year will be better because of postponement to a later date.

Our thoughts go out to anyone who is poorly and to those who suffered in the snowy conditions. Especially now we remember all those who have experienced pain and suffering and loss in the tragic Earthquake in Haiti.

Our thoughts and prayers are with that community and no doubt we have done what little we can to alleviate their need by giving and prayer.

Perhaps a little late, but to you all from the Church family at East Brent we send our Best Wishes for a Happy and Peaceful 2010

Evelyn M. J. Tucker

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**The Deadline for the  
March 2010 “LINK” is  
Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2010**

**LARGE PRINT COPIES (A4 format) of the “LINK” are available.  
Please contact the Editor if you would like one.**

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