

LINK PLUS++++

July & August 2022

Summer Bumper Edition!!!



(From West Huntspill Church Anniversary)

Dear Friends

Welcome to the summer edition of Link Plus++++. I hope, whether home or away, you will have a relaxing and enjoyable time as our area fills with visitors and the sun shines (hopefully!!).

At the end of June we held our Circuit Meeting at which we learnt that Rev Angie Hoare and Deacon Gary Hoare will not be staying with us beyond 2023. Angie is hoping to sit down (the Methodist term for minister's retirement) for health reasons, and Deacon Gary will be seeking fresh challenges elsewhere in the Connexion. We have been advised that our Circuit is not large enough to warrant two new ministers, nor can we afford to replace both Angie and Gary, so we have decided to request a Presbyter for the Weston end of the Circuit. We will need to find different ways of covering the work that Gary is currently involved in. Please pray for the Circuit Leadership Team as they work with the churches in the Circuit to shape the way forward. Your prayers will be especially important during the Stationing process.

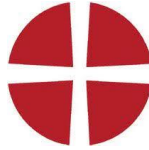
I hope you have enjoyed our brief look at the book of Isaiah during Bible Month. I know that it has been impossible to cover such an extensive book in four weeks of preaching, but I have been inspired to further study, and I hope you have been too. The words we find there speak to us in these uncertain times, as it spoke to the people of Judah, bringing us God's promises of redemption and reminding us of the hope we find in Jesus.

The Circuit Meeting also heard many good news stories about things happening around our Circuit, reminding us all that this same hope is seen all around us today. It made me realise once more, that thankfully God's light is not as unpredictable as the summer sunshine in Somerset.

May God's light shine on us in all we try to do in his name, even when times seem dark and the future in uncertain.

Steve





Brean

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

The queen came to our Jubilee lunch at the beginning of June. She was marched in by Kathy and a friend of hers and there she stood, in a corner of the room presiding over our festivity. I didn't see her eat anything but then I am told she eats very little on such occasions anyway. Meanwhile and under her gaze we all, about 22 of us, just ate and chatted as normal making the most of the great piles of food that had been provided in this Bring and Share meal. Earlier we had joined in worship at St Bridget's church where we were reminded that, apart from it being a celebration of the Queen's long reign, the day was also Pentecost.

The meal finished with a wealth of leftovers to take away and we all duly departed, most of us to watch the parade on TV. Kathy and her friend transported the life sized cardboard cut-out back to her place of origin, and life resumed as normal. A much enjoyed day with due appreciation for all who had made it so successful.

Our church was decorated inside and out by streams of pennants in red, white and blue and also by plants which Judy and others had dug in some weeks before. Following proper protocol the plants had flowered in time to celebrate.

It seems to have been an odd month for our flowers. I have been very much aware of the abundance of oxide daisies. They have been a feature of our garden and all around. We went on holiday into Pembrokeshire in the middle of the month and there they were again luxuriating along the side of the road wherever we went. On the other hand there have been no gooseberries on our plants this year at all and the number of currants could be counted on my fingers. It's a strange world.

We had a lovely week in South West Wales and if anyone goes there do make the effort to visit St David's cathedral for the day (a spiritual presence that is its own); and Caldey Island, a twenty minute boat ride off Tenby and home to a Cistercian monastery of a couple of dozen monks. A wonderfully peaceful island about two and a half miles long and one and a half wide. We stayed

for a week at Saundersfoot about three miles from Tenby. Being elderly and less mobile we were glad we chose not to stay in Tenby, our other option, for its ups and downs are very challenging for pedestrians of our ilk.

In church we have managed a congregation of about a dozen most weeks and our Monday morning coffee and chat is still up and running, though we could do with more visitors please (10.30am for an hour or so). We are very glad to have a number of regular visitors, though we were shocked early in the month when Steve from Cheltenham suffered a mild stroke. We were pleased that he seemed to have improved by the next week but it was a timely reminder to us of our human frailties.

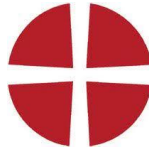
Just in time for this Link, though, because of Covid, a year later than first intended, West Huntspill celebrated their 170th (now 171st) anniversary with their 24 knitted panoramas of Bible scenes depicting the life of Jesus. What a splendid array of creativity and skill and a treat for the many people who came and saw them. Congratulations to Christine and all the many people who contributed to this magnificent display. And to complete the weekend, 40 people filled the church for the Circuit Service conducted by an earlier minister, Rev. Nicola Reynolds. She added a 25th (this time verbal) picture to the scene. It was no less graphic though, for the subject was the Resurrection appearance where Jesus fed the disciples beside the lake and then asked Peter if he loved him, and Nicola drew out the deeper meaning of Peter's responses. All this and the quality and depth of the other elements of worship (not least the congregational response), produced a fitting end to the weekend's celebrations.

Our thoughts go with West Huntspill, as also to Brent Knoll and East Brent as they work to fulfil changes in the way they are to administer themselves over the coming years. And let's hope and pray that the Methodist Conference doesn't spring too many more bombshells on us as they meet this year. We pray that wisdom, justice and care are at the heart of their deliberations this month.

Meanwhile, some of us will sit and enjoy Burnham's Mexican Feast. Having attended, Indian, Ukrainian and Chinese evenings we know that a treat is in store. It is a great joy to meet with friends from other churches and so good that Burnham are again taking a lead in this respect.

No Link magazine until September now, so a reminder about our open air (inside if it rains of course) Songs of Praise service on the last Sunday of August. It has been a popular event over the years attracting forty to fifty people each time. Please come and support us if you can and tell others about it too.

Harvey Allen



Brent Knoll

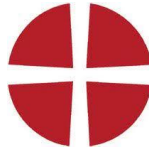
Our Methodist Chapel here in Brent Knoll will be turning 185 years old this coming August - so what better time to hold a Summer of celebration and thanksgiving for its life and presence in both our Circuit and the village. Celebrations will begin at 10.30am on Saturday 30th July with the first of our four coffee mornings and will continue on the three following Saturdays in August (6th, 13th and 20th). We will also be holding a barbeque at the Chapel on Saturday 20th August.

Throughout the Summer, we will be sharing memories of the life of the Church, which will be decorated with photographs of its history and, of course, the people who have played such an important part in its service to the community here in Brent Knoll and who have shared fellowship and worship over so many years. Any proceeds from our coffee mornings will be donated to various charities, including All We Can (a Methodist Charity which helps people in need, no matter where they are, but especially those suffering from the conflict in the Ukraine at this time), the RNLI, and a charity which supports those with acquired brain injury. We also will be donating to local causes with any proceeds received from the barbeque. Do join us in our celebrations - you will be guaranteed a very warm welcome!

Our Chapel has been a part of both the Circuit and the community at Brent Knoll for so many years and, as we continue to hold discussions together as to its future, we ask that you continue to hold it in your prayers throughout our Summer of celebration for its life and service.

And, of course, we will continue to hold you all in our prayers as we enter the holiday season. Whether you are going away or enjoying a "staycation" in this beautiful part of the World, we wish you a peaceful and restful Summer. With blessings from all of us at Brent Knoll Methodist Church.

Rosemary Krull



Burnham

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

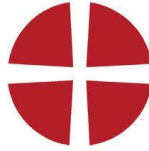
My word what a strange year we have had thus far. As a nation we appear to have come through the last of the lock –downs and straight into a massive ‘everyone wants to be somewhere as fast as possible’. It reminds me of many, many years ago coming out of school on the last day and can’t wait to be free for six weeks.

We at Burnham enjoyed a street party (which seems a long while ago already) in which we shared the whole event with our friends at Burnham Baptist Church and what a great time was had by all. For me, and I am sure many others, we made new friends and I hope that we are going to have the opportunity to share again with the new friends have made. Burnham is proving to be an interesting and exciting place to be. There is the proposed Waffle hub coming in to being soon, we have seen a small increase in Church attendance, and we are putting together events and activities to hopefully encourage more folk to come and join us.

Conversely we are aware of the changes that are coming in our Circuit and our thoughts and prayers do go out to all the churches that have very difficult decisions that have to be made. We are all brothers and sisters in faith, and I am certain the good Lord will be with us through these next few months and through our thoughts and prayers and together.

On behalf of all the team at Burnham may I wish you all a very pleasant break and enjoy the summer.

Geoff Stait



East Brent

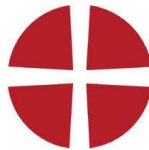
We have enjoyed a few months of celebrations with the warmer weather and able to move around easier, people have seemed happier giving you a smile while a few months ago they looked elsewhere.

West Huntspill are to be congratulated on their anniversary celebrations a huge amount of work for a few people but well worthwhile when you see how splendid the little knitted people are.

This month we have had the pleasure of welcoming Humphrey Bosang and Ruth Malyan to take our services. Humphrey brought his wife and young son with him, what a delightful family and he is such a knowledgeable preacher. Ruth gave quite a different service from the usual but gave us lots to think about. We look forward to welcoming them both again soon. We are delighted that the Revd. Michael Pullen will be with us in August after the mix up at Easter.

With a smallish congregation it is very noticeable when someone is away as a couple of people have been visiting family or on holidays, so we are sitting further apart!! But we still can have a good sing and enjoy each other's company looking forward to their return.

Jill Legg



West Huntspill

We would like to thank everyone for their tremendous support over our 171st Anniversary weekend. It was so good to welcome so many people from the Link churches and beyond for what has been a thoroughly enjoyable weekend of celebration.

In addition to those who came to see the 'Knitted Scenes of the Life of Jesus' we were joined by visitors for both morning and evening services led by one of our previous ministers Rev Nicola Reynolds, who is now a Supernumerary Minister in Cumbria. We had to get out more chairs for the evening – wonderful!!

There are far too many people who have helped us to name them all. We are grateful for the support we have received from knitters, scene painters, those who helped set up and folk who volunteered on rotas to make sure that the days themselves ran smoothly.

As well as having a wonderful time of fellowship, we have raised over £500.

Exhausted & tired now, we will take some time to breathe!



PLUS +++ POEMS, PRAYERS and OTHER MESSAGES

My call to preach

My faith and the call to preach have been the subject of much reflection over the last couple of years.

The period we have come to call “Lockdown” was a time when we all perhaps had more time to spend in reflection. Thinking about life and faith, where God and the church was in all that was happening. Without the normal activity of worship and so on I spent time trying to get back to the basics of faith looking back at both the Old and New Testament. As we came out of lockdown I particularly considered my call to preach and what resuming preaching meant, indeed whether I should. Over the past few months that call has been affirmed and this month marks two milestones as it is 40 years since I became an accredited preacher and on the 14th I reach 80 years of age.

I was fortunate to have been born into a Methodist family and growing up in Bournemouth and Weymouth, Church, Sunday School, Cubs, Youth Group were a large part of life. Initially surrounded by the faith of others but gradually realising that it was my own faith. Taking small parts in worship was part of that and in my late teens a few of us met weekly with a Local Preacher for bible study and would accompany him to services and read a lesson. On leaving school I studied for a Physics degree in Brighton and became part of the student Methodist Society and at times we helped to lead worship in the Dome Mission Circuit.

On graduating I went to work initially in Oldham and then in Rochdale and attended several churches before settling at one in the Rochdale South Circuit, the one that Pam and her family attended and where we were married. Up to this point I was happy to read a lesson or lead prayers but had no wish to think of preaching. I would have called myself a reluctant preacher and probably would still do so.

This however was challenged when in 1976 we moved to Gillingham in North Dorset to a large country circuit with very few preachers. The Deaconess who

had oversight of our church began to encourage me to consider preaching. This I resisted but when the minister who followed her continued to challenge me, I eventually said I would.

What followed was not what I had expected, and that call was indeed tested. I wasn't given a note to preach and a preacher to work with. Instead, my minister said take these 2 Local Arrangements including a sermon, tape record them and pass the tapes to him. This I did, one at a small chapel and one at the larger church where I was a steward. A few weeks later I received a letter to say I was now On Trial as a Local Preacher. I had no mentor or tutor just 4 textbooks and 4 exams to prepare for. I completed these in 18 months. During that time, I was planned to take services on 51 occasions. My accreditation service was the first in the circuit for around 15 years, the sermon given by the Chair of the Southampton District and a lesson read by an ex-President of Conference.

We moved from that circuit in 1985 and we spent time in the Clevedon (now Gordano Valley) circuit and the Tewkesbury and Cheltenham Circuit (now part of a larger Gloucestershire Circuit) before coming to Burnham in 2007. Over the years I have taken a few quarters breaks from time to time to reassess preaching and in the early years here in Burnham caring for Pam after her stroke restricted my preaching for a few years but my call to preach has remained. I would though prefer to say a call to lead worship as I see hymns, readings, prayers, and sermon as all parts of an integrated act of worship.

As the years go by, I have found style changing and perhaps the emphasis of the message for we live in a dynamic world and need to make the gospel relevant and inviting. In recent years it has been refreshing to have had the privilege of mentoring Rosemary as she has followed her call. That has been an opportunity to revisit aspects of theology and preaching and to re-examine my own call.

In recent times I have been frustrated by what seems to be an emphasis on governance and management within the church rather than on pastoral and mission aspects but find that the privilege of leading a varied congregation in a united act of worship reaffirms the call to be part of God's worshipping and serving church.

Len Horlock

THE WAFFLE HUB COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Everything is starting to come together for The Waffle Hub. We are starting the process of registering as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation); starting the process of setting up a bank account; and starting to gather together all the equipment needed to make and serve the tastiest waffles you've ever had!!!

A plea was put out on Facebook, and I think Steve mentioned it at the Zoom coffee morning, for someone to help design a logo for us. We have had a few ideas, thank you, and will be choosing one soon.

We are really grateful to Burnham Church for agreeing to let us use their building as a start-up venue, and also very thankful to the Circuit for their generous donation! We hope that starting in the church building will not only help to keep our initial costs low but will also help to bring new people into the building and get them used to what could otherwise be quite an intimidating space.

There is still loads more for us to do and more equipment to buy. We have set up a 'Wish List' on Amazon for some of the things we need, and this will be kept updated. If you are interested in supporting us by buying equipment, please click on the following link to see what we need. There are some cheaper items as well as the more expensive ones.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/2VLWSFS9NX0PN?ref=cm_sw_em_r_un_un_rM19ZWjOldieF

We are holding fund raising events too: the Mexican Evening on Saturday 2nd July, and the Quiz Night on Monday 18th July (start getting your team sorted now). More events will follow as we get them arranged, watch this space!

Thank you to all for the interest you have shown in this new project, your support has been very much appreciated, and we will try to keep you informed as things continue to come together. We are aiming for an opening date sometime around mid-August, but we'll confirm this nearer the time.

Thanks again for all your support

Liz Bennett

LINK TO HOPE Christmas Shoebox Appeal.

I have collected filled shoeboxes for this charity for nearly twenty years. They send filled shoeboxes to elderly people and families in Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria and Romania. Last year they delivered 24,934 filled shoeboxes. Every year I deliver filled boxes, that friends and family have donated to a collection point in Wellington by November 5th.

This year they are asking for more help and extra filled boxes. They want to help more people who have so little. Moldova has had 471,000 refugees arrive with 87,000 people staying. If you think you could fill a shoebox either for an elderly person or a family with items such as socks, gloves, hats, scarves, soap, candles as well as some sweets or chocolate please let me know and I will give you a leaflet.

There are more details on their website
www.linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal-2022
and more ways you can help. Thank you.

Marian Foster. 01278 785360

A poem chosen by Harvey & Judy Allen

While on Caldey Island we picked up a couple of books of poems by David Hodges, one of the monks there. They are lovely. Here is a poem from one of them:

ALL IN A SUMMER'S DAY (VIEW FROM AN OPEN WINDOW)

A grey day.
The bite
of a cold wind
under a leaden sky;
the sudden rain,
then the calm
that follows.
The sound of dripping gutters
louder than the rain,
and in the purer air
my mind alert,
my thinking clearer.
Later, under a hot
high blue sky,
a fragrant breeze
comes drifting in;

sense and colours
seem to sing.
Sunlight, after rain,
Vibrant, shimmering
on the rooftops;
bright insects playing
in the updrafts.
The buzz
of a honey bee
breaks my reverie.

A message from Gary Carey

I have been thinking about the journey home over these last few weeks.

Well, a quick backstory. I went overseas for what I thought would be a five to perhaps six weeks visit. Well, seven months later, I'm home! It has been something of a marathon in two halves. Firstly, to attempt to care for someone as they prepared for surgery and recovery, and then the second half, my illness! Some might say that I'm not someone who manages illness very well; they might even suggest that I'm too stubborn - I'm not going to disagree; I am the first to acknowledge my mule-like tendencies. Furthermore, I recognise that I have become something of Job as I lament the 'why me' narrative (Job 3:11). Nevertheless, what has been interesting is to theologically and spiritually reflect on a period of physical, emotional and even spiritual exhaustion as my body failed to respond to science. Funny how we sometimes allow ourselves to become fashioned into a product on a laboratory bench as things are done to us and as things are put into us. Indeed, I sometimes felt that my surrender to a medical process was a requirement demanded by the medical industry. My compliance was a matter of being a good patient. My lack of humility certainly speaks to my not being a good patient.

My experience felt like I had been in exile and only hearing the promise of salvation as a whisper and not being able to walk its path. I felt lost and disconnected from all that was once true and real. Friends, church members, and family were distant. For the first time in my life, I felt utter loneliness and cried out why was I abandoned and cast out. My lament became real – disabling and life taking – my spiritual certainty of Grace broken. My conviction in Our Lord's love for me became distorted. It morphed into that stuff of myth and story, the light of salvation like a torch in the distance beyond my reach or hope. My prayers became like plain words, shrill and

demanding. My efforts to remember scripture –one time – the breastplate of protection and comfort now soundless lines that I could hardly recall or say or believe. I rejoiced in my misery and discomfort. I became demanding and authentic. I became me!

The way home was both a physical and spiritual journey. I was moving from a place of sometimes exile to restoration... home not only a geographic location but a place of wellness.

As I look back and reflect on that time, I see something more than a shadow. On those long nights, I witnessed Our Lord walking the corridors of our hospitals and sitting at the bedside of the ill. I witnessed the gentle hand of Grace comforting the scared and lonely. I see the quiet promise of hope offered and in Our Lord's love – unconditional - unmeasured – given to all. I understand that recovery is what it needs to be, and that wellness is something that we can achieve – being well is not the same as recovery. It's about being. It's about resigning my demands and being able to accept a gift. I cannot define it or measure it – it is about accepting it – just as it is. Was my experience a space of exile or a place of wilderness? I think something of the two and more. It is the pace at which I have come to know God's promise to us all. We do not need to put words to it or even understand it. We only need to accept it.

Be well. Allow yourselves to be well – and in that, all will be well,

Gary

A poem chosen by Stanley Pipet

“THOSE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR. “

“What go to my neighbour? You’ve got to be kidding.
That woman’s a menace – an absolute bore.
(and he’s not much better!) You’d need all Job’s patience
If you had the neighbours I’m stuck with next door.

And the people behind us are really the limit,
Their taste is appalling, their speech I deplore.
I know they are lonely, I think they have troubles,
But you can’t get involved when you’re living next door.

And I do think of others: I pray for the lonely.
I pray for the sick and the sad and the poor.
I'll always come out for the missionary meeting
(But I simply can't stand the people next door.)

And suppose, just suppose that they did get converted
And wanted to join us in worship and more.
Just think of the awkwardness and of the problems
And what they'd expect from us living next door.
And when I get to heaven there's bound to be someone
Who read the good news on some far distant shore
Through the money I sent so that they could have bibles –
Just fancy – they don't even own one next door."

But perhaps when the roll call is finished up yonder,
And the harvest is gathered on heaven's bright shore.
When the Master has gathered the hosts of the ransomed
Perhaps he'll turn around and address you once more.

And perhaps he will say, "Yes they're here in their millions
From cities, from jungles, from earth's farthest shore.
The heathen have come, and the outcasts and children.
But where are the people I gave you next door.

It's been like being in exile – well, maybe?

Finally, please note the deadline for
the September Link Plus is 28th
August.

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
July		
2 nd 6.00pm	Burnham	Mexican Meal
5 th 2.00pm	Brent Knoll	Link Churches Meeting
18 th 7.00pm	Burnham	Quiz Night
30 th 10.30 - 12	Brent Knoll	Charity Coffee Morning
August		
6 th 10.30 - 12	Brent Knoll	Charity Coffee Morning
13 th 10.30 - 12	Brent Knoll	Charity Coffee Morning
20 th 10.30 - 12	Brent Knoll	Charity Barbeque
28 th 3pm	Brean	Songs of Praise
September		
6 th 7.30pm	Brent Knoll	Local Preachers Meeting
10 th All day	Kingswood	District Synod
13 th 7.30	Uphill	Circuit Meeting
18 th	East Brent	Harvest Festival
25 th	West Huntspill	Harvest Festival