

LINK PLUS++++

March 2022

Dear Friends

March sees us firmly in the season of Lent, a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. In this time we consider those things which we give to God, and those things we hold back from God, we give thanks for the former and seek to repent for the latter.

It is a time for finding space for God, a time for setting time aside to acknowledge the presence of God in your life and in the world. It is a time to bring to mind all that Jesus has done for you in his death and resurrection. In his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel, Jesus calls us to concentrate on three spiritual disciplines, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. It might be that this Lent you find time for these things, or simply but importantly just some time for 'sacred space'.

In this edition of Link Plus+++ Joyce Pipet has written a piece about her call to preach, the first of a series of such offerings from the Local Preachers in the Link. Thank you to Joyce for giving us an insight into her call, and for persuading others to do the same.

We continue to pray for the situations in the world that concern us, and those things in our church which we find difficult. Lent gives us a time to reflect on the glory and majesty of God, the sacrifice of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit that transcend our earthy worries.

Have a great Lent
Steve

Brean

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

What a world we live in. Four or five days of high winds, heavy rain and even both together. And immediately afterwards a beautiful sunny day warm enough to sit outside for our morning coffee. Elsewhere we've only just got rid of the worst of Covid, so it seems, than the months of tension about Ukraine erupt into the carnage we have seen in the last few days. What a world we live in. How do we deal with a character like Mr Putin? What sort of mentality does he possess? How can he claim any lasting success when you see the distress and hatred he is fermenting?

What can we do except hold a people in our hearts, not only Ukrainians but Russians too. And then give to supply their needs as we are able, give in love.

For us in Brean church, February began with a joint venture. Joyce, Stanley and I offered to fill a gap in our Plan and take morning service between us. The lectionary gave us extracts showing the call of Isaiah and then the call of the disciples. So Joyce said, what about if we talk about our call to be preachers. We had talked about this before in one way or another, and we knew that the call had been different for each one of us.

And it seems to have been a success; three or four minutes each on the call itself, then Stanley on preaching not being the only call and me on what happens next. Joyce co-ordinated the service.

So then Joyce said, now that I have finished my series on Women in Methodism, what if we offer our reflections on our calling as preachers, to our Link magazine Editor; perhaps other preachers in the Link will join with us and make their contributions also. The series starts in this edition.

On Saturday 12th February we held our Beetles and Bangers evening and were glad to see a goodly number joining in. Not as many as before Covid but still a satisfying turnout. The Beetles section was a

great hoot, not only for the fun of the games themselves but because some players found moving between tables after each round rather more complicated than intended. The chaos all added to the entertainment. Thanks to all who made the evening such a pleasure.

We had our usual joint service with friends from St Bridget's on the second Sunday, this time in our church and then, on the third, a very satisfying joint service with fellow congregations from East Brent, where the service was held, and Brent Knoll; and with friends from West Huntspill too after power cuts caused by the storms forced them to close their church for worship.

There are big decisions to be made over the next few weeks as we talked together on the new arrangements for churches within Methodism that have been imposed upon us. It inspired a lengthy discussion at our Church Council and will be the subject of debate at a Link meeting on Thursday 4th March.

It led to a late lunch after our Church Council following worship on 27th February. It was a full agenda. We noted with concern, the problems that the circuit faced many of them not caused by Covid, but not helped by it either. Yet we were positive about our own church. We were happy that two of our regulars have opted to become members and will be received at our Easter service; we confirmed our open air service as 28th August but moved the time an hour forward, to 3pm before our worship area starts to become shaded and we confirmed Harvest Festival as 9th October. We noted that we had lost some tiles during the recent storms and that dampness had appeared on areas of our internal wall, all of which need attention. And we talked about installing a cycle rack in the car park and of extending our audio visual facilities.

March is the month of (Women's) World Day of Prayer. No service in Link churches I think but some of our ladies intend to go out to Mark C of E (2.30pm on 4th March).

By then it will be Lent. From 9th March, some of us will be joining the Zoom group on a Lenten course based on St Winefride. I am sure that our minister will welcome anyone wanting to join us.

Our services in March will be at the usual time except for the 13th when we join with our St Bridget's friends for worship at 9am. And now that it is getting just that little bit warmer, what about stopping by for a coffee, every Monday morning from 10.30. All welcome.

The February meeting of the Arts Society to which Judy and I belong heard a lecture on the development of the harp and the lady lecturer brought along various instruments to demonstrate its history. It was good to imagine David playing the instrument all those many years ago. Our next meeting, on 2nd March, also has a church theme, when the lecturer will speak about how cathedral building developed through the Medieval period.

Harvey Allen

Burnham

Hello! As this is my first time of writing the Link here is a brief word of introduction.

My name is Jackie Clark and I moved to Burnham, with my husband Martin, three and a half years ago, from Birmingham. Back there I was an Anglican but everyone at the Methodist Church in Burnham made us [and my Guide Dog Katy] so welcome we ended up staying. Towards the end of last year I became a Steward, so it has been a real learning curve. I am so grateful for the patience and kindness of my fellow stewards and church members, for all their support and friendship they have shown us as it has helped enormously.

March is one of my favourite months as it is a time of renewal and new beginnings. This year that fact seems to be more relevant than ever. Not only can we see regrowth and rebirth around us in nature but also in our church. It has been a joy to see members returning to worship in person after so many months of lockdown and restrictions. Here we

are looking ahead with our focus groups, to move us forward into the future. It is both challenging and exciting as we try to ensure the right way ahead for all our Fellowship.

At this time I pray we will all find hope and optimism for the way ahead, whatever that may be.

Jackie Clark.

East Brent

At East Brent we are almost back to normal. Our Sunday worship has been well attended by the members whenever it was permissible during 'Lockdown'.

Worship comes first and then we have our weekly discussion. This includes any church business that needs attention, and tales about local matters – at the moment such as housing plans of new builders, and how many people to expect from new houses – and general discussion about all sorts of things. Coffee has become a time of closer bonding between us.

Today we were privileged to host the Link Service. A goodly company we were because we were joined by some of West Huntspill's congregation – Janet and her family celebrating Janet's birthday. West Huntspill had closed because of the loss of electricity due to the storm.

After this, we at East Brent held our Church Council. Business, of course, centred around the subject of 12 members. I expect we will pray and ponder about this for some time to come. All our officers were duly thanked and re-elected, and dates decided up to Christmas 2022. We remembered John, whose wife June is in hospital at this time and hope she will recover.

We journey on in the hope for the future, not knowing what the outcome might be. So keep safe and take care everyone. God bless.

Evelyn Tucker

PLUS +++
POEMS, PRAYERS and OTHER
MESSAGES

Prayer for peace in Ukraine

(from the Methodist Church website)

Holy and Gracious God

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

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

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

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

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

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine.

And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son.

Lord have mercy. Amen

Circuit Administrator

Please note that Beth Missen from Milton is now in place as our new Circuit Administrator. The email address remains the same circuitadmnwsmbos@gmail.com and her telephone number is 01934 413664.

Please update your records accordingly.

Steve

Spring District Representative Synod

We are hosting the District Representative Synod at St Andrew's, Bournville on Saturday 2nd April.

Synod comes to our Circuit once every 7 years, and we want to ensure that we provide a good welcome. We need volunteers to help with car parking, serving refreshments, soup & cake making. If you can help, please speak to Rev Steve or a Circuit Steward, or simply pass your name to Beth Missen.

Lent Activities

Poems for Lent: 40-day challenge

Written by Kim Payne and recommended by Janet Widdess, this book can be purchased at Amazon using the following link

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B09SP826BS/ref=cm_sw_r_apan_glt_i_ZHX1T5W4W1B7SPQ7TTSR

Lent Knitalong

Victoria Methodist Church in Bristol are hosting their third Lent Knitalong and are excited to be joined this year by knitters all around the UK (and some further afield!) Participants will receive weekly emails split into daily segments, each containing a daily reflection and a couple of rows of knitting pattern (or knitting 'clues'). The exact design of the knitting pattern is a surprise, but knitters will create a cushion cover which can be sewn up on Easter day. The daily reflections and meditations have very kindly been written by Ministers, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders in the Bristol area and beyond.

An email has already been sent to Link members but if you missed it, please contact Joyce Pipet.

Lent Course

Our zoom Bible Study group are following the Lent course from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). If you would like to join

in (even if you are unable to join the zoom, the link to the material which is free and downloadable is:

[Lent study 2022 \(ctbi.org.uk\)](http://ctbi.org.uk)

Steve

A Quiet Day at Uphill Retreat Centre

THURSDAY – 10TH MARCH

10.00 am – 4.00

**Led by – The Rev Karen Murphy
(Chaplain to Weston Hospice)**

*Take time to be quiet and renewed
Reflecting on the mercy, forgiveness and grace of God*

COST £8 – Including Lunch

**book NOW with Steve 01934633311
or email m- s,j,marr@btinternet.com**

My call to preach

If you looked at the circuit plan when I was growing up in Guernsey, you would have found only one woman's name – that of a retired deaconess.

As a result, the unspoken implication was that preaching was not a calling for women?

However looking back, there were experiences I gained that in hindsight prepared me for when I was challenged about such a calling. There was an annual Sunday School Anniversary where we were all expected to learn, and recite our pieces in a church about the size of

Burnham – but of course with no microphones in those days! So I'd got used to facing a congregation.

But more importantly, when I got to 14 and too old for the senior section of the Sunday school, normally we'd be transferred as Sunday School teachers. But there were too many of us to do that that year, and as the youngest I was approached with a suggestion. It was that instead of Sunday school meeting in the morning before church as it had done, a new junior church was to be set up, starting in church, then going out for our own worship, and I was to organise that. I was given books of stories, told to ask members of the congregation to come in to do that part, and there was a lady who would play. But I was to put together the service each week – chose a story, a reading to go with it, the old Sunday school hymn book had responsive prayers and psalms at the back that I used. So I'd work a couple of weeks ahead – sometimes leading myself, and at other times asking others of those attending to do so. Writing it down like this makes me quite amazed at what was being asked of me! Youth Club/Youth Fellowship did the occasional service & I got roped in as well.

Then at 18 I went to Southlands College to train as a teacher. In my first year it was a women only college, and the chaplain was running a Friday night group for preachers in training and those interested. Women were training to preach! A friend I'd made during that first week was on trial as a LP, but didn't want to go alone, so persuaded me to go with her. And we had discussions, bible study and preparation for services that a group would go out to take in the circuit, but which we all had a hand in shaping.

Back in Guernsey we'd had a new minister come that September with a daughter a couple of years younger than me. We'd become friends, and I'd promised to write to tell her about College life. I suspect that this was how her dad got to know about this group, and possibly asked around the church about my Christian background, because the first Christmas I was back home, I was invited to go & have a coffee with him. We talked for a bit, then he challenged me as to what God was calling me to do. Could he put forwards my name to be given a note to

preach? It felt very right to say yes to test out that call – a call that has remained with me ever since – though always presenting fresh challenges and opportunities in different times and places.

Joyce Pipet

Daffodils by Charles A. Heath

With the sight of these flowers so early in this year, I have chosen this poem to herald the month of March

And now here come the daffodils,
The trumpeters of spring,
All tooting joy, which thrills and thrills,
The while again they bring
Their happiest note attuned with cheer
To tell that spring is truly here.

I am always glad when daffodils
Lift up their golden horn,
To wake a day whose waking fills
With mellowness the morn,
And lures the southwinds thru the air
To bear away my winter's care.

I always thought the daffodils
Which rise from frigid earth
Were heroines with hearts and wills
To understand the worth
Of holding hope thru days severe,
And burst with joy when spring is here.

So blow your best, dear daffodils,
I will listen full and long,
To every note which ever thrills
With your returning song;
And when at night I rest my head,
I will dream sweet dreams thus comforted.

(last month's poem was by Philip Larkin. Apologies for this omission) Judy Allen

Finally, please note
the deadline for
the April Link Plus is
27th March.

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
March		
1 st 4.00pm	Burnham	Pancake Party
3 rd 2.00pm	Brean	Link Meeting
19 th 2.00pm	Milton	Exploring Mission (details to follow)
22 nd 7.30pm	Brean	Circuit Meeting
April		
2 nd	St Andrew's Bournville	District Representative Synod
4 th 7.00pm	Burnham	Quiz Night
15 th 7.00pm	West Huntspill	Good Friday Reflections
17 th 6.00am	Brean Down	Easter Sunrise Service
May		
1 st 6.30	Milton	Circuit Service