

LINK PLUS +++

MAY 2024

Rev John James is giving support to Burnham during the absence on Sabbatical of Rev Steve Bennett

May is a month awash with celebrations - Christian Aid Week and Aldersgate Sunday, not to mention the Eurovision Song Contest and FA Cup Final (altho' my team, Bristol Rovers, aren't in it this year and, to be honest, never have been). But towering above it all is Pentecost, the release of the Holy Spirit as described in Acts 2. Of course, it was a long way away and a very long time ago, but it's neither place-specific nor time-specific. Because it's about how God, through the Holy Spirit, can speak any language, can address all sorts and conditions of people whatever their race, colour, creed, sexual orientation, station in life, history or mood. There are those who will testify to the Holy Spirit working in places that might appear to the casual observer Godforsaken. But there's no place on earth, nor I guess in the universe, that is forsaken by God. And there are those who will testify to their experience of the Spirit working through unpromising people, not that God regards anyone as unpromising. And there are those who will testify to their experience of the Spirit working in times of trauma and despair, because even in our deepest depths there is God - remember Jesus on the cross.

So, what about those other celebrations? I'm not sure it happens so much now but for years teams of us from local churches would go from door to door delivering and collecting envelopes. sometimes engaging in (usually) friendly conversation about the work and purpose of Christian Aid. It was just something we did, but who or what prompted us to do it? And on that May evening in Aldersgate Street, what was it that caused John Wesley to feel his 'heart strangely warmed'? And, perhaps more trivially, when the winners of the Eurovision Song Contest and their compatriots, and the winners of the FA Cup and their supporters, find themselves cheering, hugging, shouting and singing in moments of ecstatic joy, what's all that about? I don't believe we can contain the Holy Spirit in a religious cocoon, but recognise and rejoice in its (some would say her) presence and potential in all areas of life and living, encouraging and even expecting those of us who call ourselves Christian to be vessels of the unity, hope and joy that are in God's loving heart.

With all best wishes

John James.

BREAN

April and then May signify a period of increasing light, as the sun rises higher in the sky and the days grow ever longer. We have gone further in our church and have replaced the light bulbs with extra strong LED ones. They not only give a noticeably more powerful performance but are much cheaper to run.

All the better then, to enjoy our Flower Festival that we are running in collaboration with St Bridget's. We hope you have all got this noted in your diaries. For us it seems like a bit of fresh air in that, after several years of little going on between us, we are working the event in co-operation with our Anglican friends. It has demanded not only willing arrangers but also involved a lot more planning than you might think. So please make sure that you give us as much support as you can. Sunday May 26th from 2pm to 4pm, and Monday to Thursday 27th to 30th from 10am to 4pm. And there are refreshments available in both churches.

Just one worship service was held away from our church in April, and we were happy to be at East Brent as they took their turn in the monthly rota that we share alongside Brent Knoll also. May 19th, Pentecost Sunday, will be the last of the joint services before the summer break and will be held in our church. On the previous week we are worshipping at St Bridget's church.

Enjoy the month and be enlivened by it, for there will be, after all, Pentecost...

Harvey Allen

“The sun was warm but the wind was chill.
You know how it is with an April day.
When the sun is out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
a cloud come over the sunlit arch,
And wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle of March.”

Robert Frost

BRENT KNOLL

Thank you so much to everybody who supported our Spring coffee morning. The school room was full - not only of people, but of the voices and laughter of Circuit and Village friends catching up. We are hugely grateful to all the cake makers, raffle prize donators, refreshment providers, and the generosity of all who attended. We raised over £130 for our Church works, but I think all of us agree that the real joy was in a morning spent so socially on a wet and miserable Spring morning! On behalf of all of us here at the Methodist Church, thank you so much for your support.

We are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel as far as our decorating and repair works are concerned. The worship area is virtually finished, and we are just waiting for minor repairs to our roof and a few of our windows.

We will be joining with our friends at Brean Methodist Church on 19th May to celebrate Pentecost, so please note that there will be no service here at Brent Knoll that Sunday.

From all of us here at Brent Knoll, we continue to hold our Circuit and its churches in our prayers.

God bless

Rosemary Krull

EAST BRENT

It was great to be back in the Church after a couple of services in the Hall, and Rev Tim Widdess took the service with communion on that Easter Sunday, it commenced in the hall at 10am with coffee and a range of fruit on skewers, then into the Church where the cross, originally bare, had been decorated fully with posies of various flowers. The communion service was very well organised and two hymns played by Tim from his i-pad came across very successfully. After the service the decorated cross was carried outside for the passing traffic and pedestrians to admire for a few days.

The following week Rob Jenks took our service and we had such a pleasant surprise, as who should arrive and join the congregation but Charlene and Alan Hutchings who were here in England for six weeks, of course the after coffee chat went on and on. Charlene was here on a ministerial exchange from America in 1991 and Alan was a member at East Brent. When Charlene went home they continued to keep in touch and then married. They now live in North Carolina, for those who remember it was a very rewarding time for the Burnham and country Churches.

How does one follow that, well we had Ruth Malyan next and she was excellent and left us with a lot to dwell on, we also again had intriguing conversations over after service coffee.

Our Link service was taken by Rev Andy Hardwick and was the first time he had been to East Brent for a service, he is unfortunately planned mainly in Weston and for those who missed the service well you missed what I would describe as a breath of fresh air and Andy is an asset to this circuit. It was also good to welcome our Brean and Brent Knoll friends to East Brent.

What about this coming Sunday, well, we have no preacher, so we are arranging to take the service amongst ourselves with possibly a surprise speaker!!!!

East Brent can always cope with most situations.

Gordon Legg

BURNHAM-ON-SEA

Well here we are in May almost half way through the year! Where has the time gone? March and April have been busy at Burnham. We hosted Roger Jones and his team for a worship weekend. I have known Roger for over 30 years as we were at the same church in Birmingham, he is a very gifted worship leader so it was wonderful that he agreed to come to us. Over 50 people came on the Saturday and we experienced new and innovative ways to worship our God. Roger came back and spoke powerfully at our Sunday Service and although many people were not used to him and his team's way of worship, I think everyone was really blessed.

This event was swiftly followed by Easter. Personally I always find the Good Friday Service very moving, and it was so good to come together for the walk of witness. Then the joy of Easter Sunday, particularly the Sunrise Service on Brean Down.

As we come into Summer things are really busy. Steve and Liz are on a well earned Sabbatical but the Waffle Hub is still still open every weekday. Our many outreach events continue. Now we just need a bit of good weather. Best wishes to you all.

Jackie Clark.

Congratulations

Some of you who have a long memory of Burnham church and The Link will remember Tim and Hilary Lansdown and their daughters. Tim was a well respected local Preacher in our circuit in the 1970s and 1980s, and was and still is a staunch Bristol City fan. They left our area when Tim landed a senior bank role in Bristol. Tim and Hilary celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary recently; so congratulations to them.

WEST HUNTSPELL

The Prayer Group will be meeting on Tuesdays at 2.00pm. on the 7th and 21st of May



If you know of anyone in need of Prayer, please let Mrs. Christine Thomas know.



Coffee and Chat this month will be on Friday the 31st of May 10.30am – 12 Noon
Please come and join us, we love to meet up with our friends from the Link Churches. This year
we are raising funds for the SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST



Babes, Tots and Carers. Wednesdays at 1.30pm till 3.00pm, term time only
Contact Carol Hester 01278 780730 for full details.

THE FAMILY

If you have a family, cherish them with care,
Give them words of kindness and always treat them fair.
Try to love and please them in everything you do.
Don't give way to tantrums, they'll only make you blue.

A family is precious, treasure them always,
Tell them that you love them and show it in your ways.
Be mindful of the blessings a family surely brings,
The sharing and the caring and all the little things.

They far outweigh the troubles, the upsets and the woes,
'Cos in a caring family, the love just grows and grows.
So always stick together and stand with one accord.
Just place yourself in God's hands and walk daily with the Lord.
Doreen J. Manning

Janet J. & Kay

LINK FELLOWSHIP

The speaker for April's meeting was Pastor Jade, from Hope Baptist Church.

When it was the World Day of Prayer on the first Friday in March, she had given a brief account of her trip to the Holy Land, which was so relevant, as the service this year had been prepared by the women of Palestine. And those of us who heard her then hoped that she might come to tell us more.

Her visit had taken place a year ago as part of her training at Bristol Baptist College, and she spoke very movingly about how their visit had interwoven seeing Biblical sites with the obvious tensions between Jews and Palestinians. Personally, I was shocked when she said that during their stay the Israeli Parliament had passed a law saying that it was permissible for Jews to spit on Christians, and that they had been spat at. Suddenly one of our members saw the time as she had said she needed to leave at the end of the meeting, and we realised that it was past the time we usually broke for our afternoon cup of tea! We had been totally absorbed in her narrative that time had sped by. At that point she had just reached the stage of their trip where they arrived at Jerusalem, so we have already booked her to return to our October meeting to conclude her fascinating insights. She asked that in the meantime we would continue to pray for peace to come to that land.

I was unable to say what our next meeting would be as I was waiting on a reply from Rev. Rod Ingrouille. He will come in June, so I thought that for our May meeting we could share readings/ poems about summertime, or holidays – or share memories of memorable holidays.

That meeting will be on Tuesday May 14th at 2.30pm at East Brent Hall. All are welcome.

Joyce Pipet

RAPESEED

Visit to a Rapeseed oil farm

Judy and I recently visited Fussels, a farm on the outskirts of Frome. We were part of a group of about a dozen, members of a Food & Wine Society to which we belong. As it happened the visit took place a couple of days after Earth Day, an international day in which ecology takes pride of place. The brothers who run the enterprise are clearly dedicated to running their business along relevant lines

Andy runs the agricultural side. He led us to one of their fields and guided us through the cycle of production from sowing the seed in early August through the early months (winter has been good for the crop this year as was clear from the vibrant state of the bright yellow blossom that confronted us as we surveyed the crop in one of his large fields}. Soon now, that blossom will drop away and the pods of seed will begin to appear. Harvesting will take place in early August and the rootstock will be ploughed up immediately ready for the next year's cycle to commence. But not with more rapeseed. It has taken too much goodness away from the soil, and they are not keen on chemicals. Instead, maize will be next year's crop and rape will be grown elsewhere on the farm. Wheat and barley and even fodder, can also be used on a four- or five-year rotation, all part of their drive to keep their business as close to nature as possible. We talked about many things in the production of rapeseed, from the density of the crop (as Andy said, just because a field looks thick with rape blossom doesn't mean that that is the most productive way, for each plant will grow according to the space available as well as the state of the soil). And we also looked at the bugs and other pests that affect the plants; not all bugs are harmful, and Andy's view is that, as long as bugs can be kept under control, it is best to leave them, rather than take the draconian stance of destruction.

The brothers process the seed themselves on their premises. It is stored until needed, some of it for a full year; and is then cold pressed to ensure that the oil is in best condition, before being bottled. Tim, the other brother, showed us round this part of the operation and then demonstrated the bottling

process during which herbal flavours are added. Some of the oil is also smoked. He then fed us with some snacks he had made using different varieties of the oil. Gorgeous, it was all the encouragement we needed to make use of their shop next door Judy had never been keen on Rapeseed oil in her cooking - smells and tastes a bit like cabbage she says, which course is natural because Rape comes from the same family of brassicas. But the end product that the Fussel brothers produce is very different. They are very keen to show people round their farm and inside premises. If you get chance, go; you will be well informed and entertained. At this time when we embrace Earth Day it seemed to me to be a good example of humans and nature working together. (<https://fusselsfinefoods.co.uk/>).

ECO CHURCH

East Brent and Brean churches are the proud possessors of the Eco Church bronze award. The Bristol District of our Church encourages all churches to get involved in the concept

Here are some notes from the Spring edition of the Eco District Newsletter. They illustrate the wide variety of ways in which churches can be involved:

- Over half the churches in the Bristol District are registered with the District Organisation and 55 have gained an award. St Mark's church, Cheltenham have recently been awarded the silver status having done much to insulate the church and to install a solar PV array on the roof; and the Junior church members have erected bug boxes to make the place more wildlife friendly. Stonehouse and Thornbury churches have also been granted silver awards;
- Nailsea church ran a community Eco fair which involved twenty organisations engaged in environmental work in the area, including the management of wildlife and rewilding areas, gardening advice, maintenance of dry stone walls and other matters, climate challenges, energy saving. More than 170 people attended the fair.

DIARY DATES

Regular days	Time	Location	Event
Monday (except Bank Holidays)	10.30am	Brean	Coffee Morning
Wednesday (restarts in September)	10.00am	Zoom	Link Bible study
Thursday	11.00am	Zoom	Coffee Chat
Monday-Friday	9.00am-5.00pm	Burnham	Waffle Hub Community Cafe and Associated Activities
Other Dates			
May 7 th , 21 st	2.00pm	West Huntspill	Prayer Group
May 14 th	2.30pm	East Brent	Link Fellowship
May 26 th -30 th	10.00am -4.00pm (Sunday 2pm –4pm)	Brean	Flower Festival
May 31 st	2.30pm	West Huntspill	Tots and Carers

Thank you to all correspondents for your help in compiling this Newsletter. Your articles are very much appreciated. News from churches for the June edition together with any other contributions should be with me by May 28th please.