

LINK PLUS +++

(The Newsletter for the Methodist Church in Burnham-on-Sea and its surrounding area)

MAY 2025

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends

As I sit down to write this message, I have been listening to the reports of the tens of thousands of pilgrims who have flocked to the Vatican following the death of Pope Francis. The funeral service is gathering together people from many continents, and leaders of countries around the globe. I think the Pope would have been more impressed if those leaders met to discuss peace and the alleviation of poverty and suffering, rather than to commemorate his life, such were his interests and his humility. Our thoughts are with all our Catholic brothers and sisters as their Church mourns the loss of their leading figure, and a new Pope is elected.

Here in this Circuit, Judith is now on sabbatical, and I am grateful to the Circuit Leadership Team and Supernumerary Ministers who have agreed to share the load while she is away. Just having two ministers in the Circuit makes matters interesting when one is away! This month we will also be finding out the process for finding a new minister for the Link churches next year; your prayers are essential in this process.

On the 8th we will be looking back 80 years to VE day. There are less and less people who have personal memories of this event as adults, but as VE Day is commemorated it is important that we all continue to strive for peace in the places we are, so that no new Armistice/VE days are needed in this country. Of course, we are also aware that peace is not a reality in so many places around the world. Perhaps our prayer should be for VE days in 2025 for the Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and all other places of conflict. May God's peace be with you.

Steve

CIRCUIT PRAYER GROUP

A Circuit Prayer Meeting is held every month on the first Saturday. So that as many people as possible can attend it is held on Zoom between 9am and 10am. You are free to attend at whatever time you wish between those hours.

It is usually hosted by Rev Judith Lincoln but she is now on Sabbatical for the next three months. So, to be included in the group and receive the link invitation for the Zoom be in touch with the host for that month. For May the host will be Beth Missen (circuitadmnwsmbos@gmail.com) and for June and July it will be Tim Widdess (timwiddess@aol.com).

BREAN

(www.breanmethodistchurch.org.uk)

'March winds and April showers do bring May flowers' was first articulated in 1557. It was an entry in the book A Hundred Good Pointes of Husbandrie, but a similar expression can be found in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales more than 150 years earlier

We hope that Easter has emerged with a ray of hope in your hearts. There is a lovely quotation by Barbara Harris, bishop in the American episcopal Church and which sounds apposite for these days:

"We are an Easter people, moving through a Good Friday world"

She was the first woman to be elected bishop in the whole of the Anglican communion; that was in 1988. She was also black and had been divorced. So it was an appointment that was somewhat controversial in America at that time, and many objected, loudly, such that she even had to be given an armed guard at her ordination in the following year.

She had an instinct as to what a Good Friday world could mean and doubtless she also knew the joys of Easter.

We are very aware that we all have much that we must struggle through in these days and yet it was a joyful Easter too. Half a dozen from Brean marched with others to the top of Brean Down to celebrate the rising of the sun and to reflect on the deeper meaning of the occasion.

It was a joy to have Stanley administer communion to us all at our morning service. John Trebble conducted the service, and both were appreciated by everyone. We had a good sprinkling of visitors, and the church was decorated beautifully; we even had a column of Easter bunnies on the pathway outside and welcoming us to service. As usual there was coffee and tea afterwards, and Kathy had made a Simnel cake that was enjoyed by all.

We donated our Easter morning collection to the efforts of our Methodist Missions charity All We Can, to aid those who have suffered through the earthquake in Myanmar and South East Asia. The grand total of £186 was raised. Thank you everyone.

(That day (April 20) was my birthday too but before I get cock-a-hoop, I am also reminded that it was Hitler's birthday too)

And then Pope Francis died on the following day. With fortitude he had shared Easter Day among his people in the Vatican Square, thus illustrating that for him the core of his Papal ministry was largely exercised following in the way of Jesus in practical service. Our love goes out to the community in Burnham's Catholic Church at this time

We at Brean look forward to the coming days, the season of Easter, recognizing that the world is not as we would like it to be but in the hope that through our relationship with God and each other, we might contribute to the journey of faith.

And to Rev Judith Lincoln we wish a happy and fulfilling period on Sabbatical. May you return refreshed and encouraged Judith

Harvey Allen

EAST BRENT

(www.eastbrentmethodistchurch.org.uk)

Jill and I missed the Link Mothering Sunday service at Brean as we were away cruising The Azores in not very good weather, but we did attend the Sunday services on board ship whereby around 200 passengers were in the theatre for Mothering Sunday and fewer on the other Sunday. Both

services were with communion and the majority stayed for it, the services were conducted by a retired Deacon who gave very inspiring talks and it was also enlightening to sing and participate with a large congregation. Back home for Easter at East Brent we decorated the bare cross with many flowers and after the service carried it outside the Church for all to see. We had Rev. Tim for this service combined with Holy Communion who gave us a different aspect as to the empty tomb, which I had never given thought to previously. Our congregation was boosted with our Brent Knoll friends also two visitors. The Sunday after we experimented with holding a Café Church and held it in the hall, Brian Dallimore led the session and it such a pleasant surprise as he brought Diane Bratt along with him, it was also her Birthday so we enjoyed various cakes with our coffee/tea. The outcome result was refreshments good, but hold judgement on the rest.

Gordon Legg

East Brent Methodist Church

BRENT KNOLL

(www.brentknollmethodistchurch.com)

We will be holding our Spring Coffee Morning on Saturday 3rd May at 10.30am. All are welcome as we look forward to catching up with Circuit and Village friends over tea, coffee and cake.

Brent Knoll Royal British Legion will be celebrating VE Day on Thursday 8th May at 2pm when a short service will be held at St Michael's Church War Memorial. This will be followed by afternoon tea here at the Methodist Church. Please register for attendance (for catering purposes) by emailing Gill Poulter at Gill.poulter2@btinternet.com.

From all of us here at Brent Knoll Methodist Church, we continue to hold the Circuit and the Village in our prayers.

God bless

Rosemary Krull

BURNHAM

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

The Lent and Easter now behind us I have spent time reflecting on the whole period. I personally have found this year our church services thought provoking and leading me to more homework. I have always found Maundy Thursday and Good Friday very, very difficult. I have been very fortunate to be involved in putting the empty cross outside the church at the start of Holy Week then bringing the cross into church on Easter Sunday morning and watch members of the congregation cover it in flowers this is such a moving service and to rejoice the good Lord is alive and well.

To start Easter Sunday Morning with our early morning walk to the top of Brean Down and share the dawn breaking is a very important part to start Easter Sunday celebrations (not to mention bacon & sausage baps kindly provided by Liz & Steve).

We are now moving into early summer and we are so fortunate to be enjoying to better weather and we are looking forward to sharing services with our friends at West Huntspill and hopefully we as a circuit look forward to spending time together.

Many thanks,
Geoff

WEST HUNTSPILL

(www.wsbos.org./westhuntspill.htm)

Our Coffee Morning will be Friday 30th May from 10.30am till 12 noon, to which all are invited. We have a Sales table. With Puzzles, Books various items of Bric a Brac and handmade items. As you know we do not charge for coffee, tea, cakes etc., but we welcome Donations, which will be for the R.N.L.I. It is lovely to meet up with our friends of the Link. We also have had a number of Local folk. The following piece is from "The Lion Book of Famous Prayers" which I wanted to share.

Prayer from the Third World TWENTIETH CENTURY

The great missionary outreach of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that churches were established all over the world in countries where there had previously been very little or no Christian presence. Today many of those churches, especially in Asia, Africa and South America are flourishing and developing their own styles of worship and church life. Now

the movement has begun to reverse itself, as missionaries from the 'deprived' Third World countries help the declining Western church. Their enthusiasm and fresh outlook, as well as their awareness of their countries' pressing social problems, can be a spur to make us re-examine the effectiveness of our own faith.

Prayer of a Muslim Convert

O God, I am Mustafah, the tailor, and I work at the shop of Muhammed Ali. The whole day long I sit and pull the needle and the thread through the cloth. O God, you are the needle and I am the thread. I am attached to you and I follow you. When the thread tries to slip away from the needle it becomes tangled up and must be cut so that it can be put back in the right place. O God, help me to follow you wherever you may lead me. For I am really only Mustafah. The tailor, and I work at the shop of Muhammed Ali on the great square.

Prayer of an African Girl

O great Chief, light a candle within my heart that I may see what is therein and sweep the rubbish from your dwelling place.

Janet Johnson

SPRING HARVEST 2025

Minehead. 14th to 18th April.

We travelled down to Minehead on the Monday of Holy week. Seven of us in all from Burnham. Four in our car and three plus Purdy, (Jacky's guide dog) in David's car.

Tim and I had been before, but a long time ago, Marian had been for a day visit last year and Alison had never been. We were in high spirits as we sped down the M5, looking forward to a feast of teaching, worship, fellowship and fun.

We were not disappointed!

There were long queues of cars waiting to get into Butlins, but eventually we made it, checked in, found our chalet and began to make ourselves at home.

That evening we went to the Gathering, the main worship event, and joined about 1,500 others, for worship. Purdy wasn't sure what to make of it, so different to Burnham on a Sunday morning!

The singing was amazing, the teaching was inspiring, the Holy Spirit was moving in that place, and several people went forward at the end for prayer ministry.

In other venues, there was all age worship, youth worship and a quieter, more reflective service for those who preferred that style. Something for everyone!

The days were packed, too much to do, we couldn't fit it all in! A highlight for me was an interview with Bear Grylls, fascinating to listen to. The programme started at 8.00am with Holy Communion and the day finished at about 11.15pm after the late night event. Pacing oneself was essential!

We all agreed that it was a great experience and we are looking forward to next year.



JOURNEYS OF A LIFETIME

(In the days after Christmas, Kathy flew over to stay with family and friends in Australia and New Zealand on a trip that had been arranged in those days before she and Roger got married. She has kindly agreed to give us an insight into some of what she saw over there.)

The flights

The most dramatic journeys usually begin with the massive silver bird spanning the miles, crossing the dusks and dawns of continents, with its cargo of passengers, packed into its reclining seats, being fed regularly, watching the progress of the flight on the screen, counting the hours until touchdown. The destination finally looms into view, houses and buildings becoming larger as the giant descends and the wheels touch the tarmac of another adventure about to begin. The usual tiresome routines have to be endured, passport checks, carousel of cases making their circular journey through the waiting passengers, eager to grab their belongings and start exploring. The journeys shared here usually have been on the other side of the world, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, with their aura of mystery and otherness, so far removed from our usual routine.

Singapore stopover

The elegant glass sided lift gliding silently from floor to floor of the Garden Hotel in Singapore, giving pictures of different floors with their restaurants, pools and colourful gardens, slim oriental girls gliding around in their floral dresses, like butterflies, the heady scent of the flowers clustering in sculptured flower beds and the gentle strains of inspirational music providing a background of tranquillity. The cable car making its breath taking journey, high above the bay, to the Island of Tranquility, taking about 15 minutes, seeming longer, as we glanced down at the boats below, some with miniscule swimming pools on deck. The sturdy bum boat chugging its way steadily along the Singapore River, past the statue of Stamford Raffles and later on the famous Raffles hotel, with its unique cocktail, the Singapore Sling. Farther out the exciting night safari, at Singapore Zoo, discovering glimpses of nocturnal animals, their peace disturbed by the gentle rattle of the small railway transporting us through the recreated forests and jungles.

In Australia, South.....

Australia offers a vast variety of journeys, all memorable, the ship sailing around Sydney's harbour, under the arched bridge, famous for hosting a

lavish firework display to usher in the new year, past the majestic sails of the opera house, opening its doors into a world of music and dance, transporting the listener to another universe for the duration of each performance. The helicopter lifting us swiftly, earphones firmly in place, to fly over Jacobs Creek, the home of rich red wine, distinctive in its flavour, its grapes bathed in warm sunshine before they release their aromatic taste. The white water rafting, requiring the travel insurance to be waived before embarking on the perilous journey through rapids and fountains of foam battering the boats. All passengers are tipped in anyway, into the calmer waters, to prepare them for any future turbulence. A memory that sticks is the boatload of dainty Japanese tourists, who had applied their make up on the coach, perhaps not grasping the realities of the journey ahead, sadly the cosmetics were quickly washed away when some boys in another boat thought it was fun to toss a tree frog into their boat, causing them all to come flying out at speed, no damage done except perhaps to their foundation and lipstick. The cockle train which meanders along the coast from Goolwa to Victor Harbour, giving views of magnificent bays. Its carriages are divided into cubicles and the so called "Royal Carriage" has an ornate crimson and gold ceiling, created for royal visitors many years ago. Its original use was to transport the crop of large succulent cockles from one town to another for processing.

...and North

The trip to Cairns to see the iconic Barrier Reef offered several more expeditions, the trip out there on the gleaming Quicksilver, then the glass sided boat, taking us beneath the surface of the warm turquoise water, nosing its way among the many inlets, rich with colour and movement, scarlet and blue corals waving and shoals of fishes performing their unique aquatic dance, rising up in a spray of silver bubbles and diving down again into the safety of the depths. Back on land we were transported one evening in a kind of sedan chair propelled by a cyclist who repeatedly played "Who shot the sheriff?" on his radio as he gave us a tour of Cairns. The trip from the luscious foliage and deep pools of the Daintree Rain Forest back down to the plains was aboard the Kuranda Mountain Railroad with its gleaming wooden carriages being pulled along precipitous railway lines with views to take your breath away at the steep drop rushing by, before reaching the safe haven at the end of the journey.

And then to New Zealand

A taste of New Zealand as we climbed into the so called Gondola, climbing higher and higher into the mountains to give an amazing view back over the

lakes and hills of Queenstown, South Island. The four seater motor bike roaring around Dunedin, wind rushing past us, glad of the padded jackets we'd been given despite the warm day, stopping for photos of the saddle shaped hill, shrouded in Maori tradition as a giant sea serpent is supposed to have wriggled across its peak dividing it into two hills and making a river bed for the Taieri or silver stream. Another remarkable journey was on the Gorge Railway, making its way along the coast, where gaps in the rich foliage gave tantalising glimpses of wide bays, with lace edged waves whispering across them to lap gently on the silver sand. The railway station with its regal architecture, inside and out, resembled a palace. So many precious memories to treasure and to light up dreary winter days with their magic.

Kathy Davies

(As time allows, Kathy will bring us more insights on her experiences during her journeys 'down under. Thank you Kathy.)

God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but by subtracting.

Meister Eckhart

Walk joyfully on the earth and respond to that of God in every human being

George Fox

THE LINK FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship had a very interesting meeting when we gathered in April. Our speaker was Paul Temple who for many years had been involved in work in the village of Luhimba. He had come on occasions in the past to speak about the work being done there, but this was his first visit since Lockdown. This time he had an illustrated talk which traced the major undertakings that had been carried out since his involvement about forty years ago. It was fascinating to see the difference that the money raised had made to various areas of life such as health, education, farming and wells for pure water. Evelyn Tucker was able to give him a cheque from monies that had been

raised over Christmas by East Brent Church, and a decision had been taken at our previous meeting that we would donate a special collection to this work. We topped this up a bit from our funds to give him £100.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday May 13th. As this is the meeting shortly after VE Day on May 8th, and Liberation Day for the Channell Islands on May 9th Stanley and I are going to talk about what the German occupation of the Islands meant. Stanley will share something of his memories, having been born in Guernsey during the war, while my family were evacuated to Manchester.

As usual this will be in the hall at East Brent Methodist Church at 2,30 p.m. and all are welcome to come and join us.

Joyce Pipet

SMILING

by Spike Milligan

(In the April issue of Link Plus the last line of each verse seems to have got lost. As these lines seem to hold the key to the message of the poem, here it is again. Enjoy.)

Smiling is infectious, You catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I walked around the corner and someone saw me grin;
When he smiled I realised I had passed it on to him.

I thought about the smile and then realised its worth,
A single smile like mine could travel round the earth.
So if you feel a smile begin don't leave it undetected,
Start an epidemic and get the world infected

MOTHERING SUNDAY

(At the Mothering Sunday service at Burnham on 27th March, members of the congregation were asked to share their stories. Here's what DLD provided)

The Yellow Dress

The excitement grew as the Sunday school anniversary approached. I was seven. It was the year that my mother told me that I was to play an active part in the celebrations. As she broke the news my heart sank at the thought of joining those tiered rows of children on the stage.

'But I can't sing or recite poetry from memory. I'll probably be sick, like Enid Wotsit was. Or burst into tears and run off like Judith Whosit did.'
'Don't worry' my mother consoled 'there's plenty of time to find something for you to do, no need for memory or singing, perhaps a passage from the scriptures read straight from the bible' I wasn't consoled. I thought of Judith and Enid and I felt sick.

'Mind you, we can't have you standing on the stage dressed any old how'. Mother said suddenly and casually, 'This is definitely a new dress occasion.' Within minutes I had found our bible and we were living within for a suitable passage for me to rehearse. The nervousness did not leave me entirely as the time came for my stage debut approached but I concentrated on my reading as much as the thoughts of my new dress would allow.

What a dress it was and how I loved it. Silky and shining it was the colour of the light from stars, glossy and warm as fresh buttercups, and smelling so new it was like holding a draper's shop in my arms. It fitted me so perfectly and I vowed to be buried wearing it if I should die on stage. But I didn't die and although my nervousness returned, I knew that I could face the whole world believing that I would be remembered as the girl in the yellow dress and not as I remembered poor Edith and Judith.

On the day as I took my place on the stage I remember scanning the sea of faces that was the audience until I found that of my mother. She smiled her reassuring smile and I was confident that I would neither be sick or cry. I knew that I could recite Genesis 29 verses 11-15 from memory, so keen had I become to prepare for that day and so often had I read it.

I was too young to appreciate the subtlety of my mother's form of psychology but from that day those words from Genesis have been a close link between us especially verse 15. It goes: And behold I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will again bring thee into this land, for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

I know the words were for Jacob and about angels going up and down ladders to heaven but they apply just as much to unforgettable mothers and fond memories of a little yellow dress.

POETRY PAGE

ZEBRA QUESTION

by Shel Silverstein

I asked the Zebra

Are you black with white stripes?

Or white with black stripes

The Zebra asked me

Are you good with bad habits

Or are you bad with good habits

Are you noisy with quiet times

Or are you quiet with noisy times?

Are you happy with some sad days

Or are you sad with some happy days?

Are you neat with some sloppy ways

Or are you sloppy with some neat ways?

And on and on and on and on

And on and on he went

I'll never ask a Zebra

About stripes

Again

DIARY DATES

Regular days	Time	Location	Event
Monday	10.30am	Brean	Coffee morning
Thursday	11.00am	Zoom	Coffee chat (details from Steve)
Monday to Thursday	9.00am – 2.00pm (Wednesday to 4pm)	Burnham	Waffle Hub Community Cafe and Associated Activities
Wednesday	2.00pm	Burnham	Knit 'n Natter
Friday	Morning	Burnham	Mothers and Toddlers
<u>Other Dates</u>			
May 3rd - Saturday	10.30 to 12noon	Brent Knoll	Coffee morning with stalls
May 3rd – Saturday			Stationing Training Day
May 8th - Thursday	2.00pm	St Michaels, Brent Knoll	VE Day Remembrance followed by tea at Methodist Church (booking needed)
May 13th - Tuesday	2.30pm	East Brent	Link Fellowship, all welcome
May 20th - Tuesday	7.30pm	Brean	Local Preachers Meeting
May 24th - Saturday	10.00am – 4.00pm	Burnham streets	Town Food Festival (as if you need reminding)
May 30th – Friday	10.30am to 12 noon	West Huntspill	Coffee morning. Sales table Donations for RNLI
June 28th – Saturday	3.00pm	East Brent	Scones and Songs Proceeds to Christian Aid

WELCOME TO ALL

If you are visiting our area, or perhaps even coming to live here and are looking for a church, you will find a warm welcome at each of these churches. All are in or adjacent to main roads and parking is close by. Burnham has no on site parking for the general public but the Somerset Council carpark in Oxford Street (opposite Lidl) is close by and parking is free after 6pm and on Sundays at the moment.

These churches (collectively we call them The Link) form part of the Weston-super-Mare and Burnham-on-Sea circuit of the Methodist Church. Rev Steve Bennett exercises Pastoral care of the Link churches and is Superintendent Minister of the whole circuit. Rev Judith Licnoln has care of the Weston churches at Uphill and Milton and at the ecumenical ones at Bournville and Locking Castle.

Each church has its own website and further information is also contained on the Circuit site on:

www.wsmbos.org

Link Plus+++ is issued on or around 1st of each month except for January and August. Members of our congregations are encouraged to receive a copy each month. Register your interest by sending your email to our minister, Steve, on: steve.bennett@methodist.org.uk

And thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. It is much appreciated and I hope that you and others will continue to do so.