

LINK PLUS++++

Special Edition – November 2020

Friends

On returning from a few days away in Bognor Regis (exciting I know!) I had to re-write this message after the announcement from the Prime Minister on 31st October, so please excuse the late arrival of the November edition of Link Plus.

Whilst individually we are not in the 'close up everything' sort of lockdown that we experienced earlier in the year, November will be a month of closure for the churches. The official guidance from the Methodist Church reflects the government message, we like all churches, cannot hold acts of public worship during the lockdown. I know that this will come as disappointing news to those who have been able to gather for worship together, and for those hoping to join with us for Remembrance Sunday.

Nevertheless, Zoom and paper based worship resources will continue. Again, I urge you to contact me if you know of anyone who, whether members or not, who would like to receive these.

While we were away, we met up with old friends we had not seen for nearly 3 years. It was wonderful to be able to speak face to face rather than Facebook chat and emails. You know good friends when, however long the gap has been since you met last, there is no awkwardness, no hesitant start, and it is as if you saw

them yesterday. The love and friendship you shared before is still there!

This reminded me that, if something like this exists in the best of human relationships, how greater it is in a relationship of pure love, that between God and us. However long it has been since we last spoke to God, however long since we last thought of God, however far we have moved away from God, the love of God means that when we reach out we find a lifegiving relationship awaiting us. As if we had never been away, as if we only spoke or met yesterday.

Perhaps this lockdown is a time to reach out to God again.

Steve

Brean

At the start of this Covid epidemic and the advent of the Lockdown that was its result in March, various of our friends with whom we are in a WhatsApp group, announced that they were going to use the time to do some of the things that they had been putting off for too long. One announced she was going to repaint her house (or much of it) even though you and I might have thought she was not up the task. Others decided to go through all their books and throw out all those that had exceeded their read by dates, and then they went on to other things. A couple decided to redesign their gardens. All as far as I am aware they all achieved their ambitions and many were very glad when the Highbridge re-cycling tip re-opened in May.

What a good thing to do, I thought, but as for typical me, I lacked the enthusiasm and energy when it came to the point. The books are all still in place, no decorating has been done and if there is now activity in the garden it is because Judy has led the campaign and because the problem of ground elder has finally embarrassed us into activity.

But things like epidemics do give us the chance to do something else and actually buckling down to do it is helpful for our mental and physical well being. And by the summer, those friends of ours had sufficiently cleared their minds of the cobwebs of jobs to do, to spent much of the warmer months visiting period houses and gardens, and traipsing down to the south coast and elsewhere.

Now confronted by more of the Covid same, they are ready to face the winter with disappointment of course, but also with a positivity that might otherwise not have occurred.

I remember that nearly 60 years ago I picked up a book called The Amazing Results of Positive Thinking. It changed my life, I would even say it was seminal to my way and thinking. It drew me into the church in a way not expected. It is a pity that people like Donald Trump have seized the words and misapplied them to their own way of grasping wealth and power; but the heart of the book, and its companions, all written by Rev Norman Vincent Peale, is about spiritual renewal.

It seems to me that positive thinking is important to us all as we enter a winter where Covid and its consequences are going to be with us day by day.

At Brean chapel, we are still coping pretty well with the Covid restrictions, though one Sunday in October it was pretty cold with all the doors and windows open.

But Covid has reared its ugly head and we are (to be) in Lockdown for a month. It means we shall have no services in our church. November 8th we were to be at St Bridget's anyway as Remembrance Sunday. St Bridget's congregation (or at least some of them) worshipped with us for our Harvest Festival Service, which was much appreciated by all, though we had to do without the customary lunch afterwards of course. We were due to have Chairman of District on 15th. That will have been the second time his service with us has been cancelled. So please don't forget us, Steve, when normal service resumes and we are due a visitation.

Celia has joined the Honourable Order of Zoomers as her family have helped her to become proficient in using the laptop she has recently bought. It is a joy to know this and to be able to share in the benefits that it brings. All our regulars are now linked electronically which is super.

We were also very pleased to learn that Becky Dean, daughter of Rosemary and Steve Baker was nominated for an acting award in the Somerset Fellowship of Drama competition. She is a member of the Huntspill Players and the nomination was for best female actor, for her performance in one of their productions last year.

And Morag has a grandson. He was born half an hour before our service on 25th October. Congratulations to parents, grandparents and to great grandma (Margaret Hicks)

Finally, Judy remembers this poem that she learnt at school. It is called November and is by Thomas Hood. At first glance it doesn't sound very cheerful but there is something about it that says, this is what life brings to you, read, digest and work through it for better days are yet to come:

*No sun - no moon -
No morn - no noon -
No dawn - no dusk - no proper time of day-
No sky - no earthly view -
No distance looking blue -
No road - no street - no 't'other side the way' -
No end to any Row -
No indications where the Crescents go -
No top to any steeple -
No recognitions of familiar people -
No courtesies for showing 'em -
No knowing 'em -
No travelling at all - no locomotion,
No inkling of the way - no notion -
'No go' - by land or ocean -No mail - no post -
No news from any foreign coast -
No Park - no Ring - no afternoon gentility -
No company - no nobility -
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member -
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds, -
November!*

We look out for better news next month. Meanwhile, from all of us, take care of yourselves and look to the future. Christmas is just around the corner

Harvey Allen

West Huntspill

As expected, the Church Council meeting last month decided not to open the Church for services at this time, but to review the situation again at the beginning of December. In the meantime we are continuing to "meet" on-line for services, Bible study, and "Coffee Mornings". There are printed versions of the services distributed every week for those unable to access the internet. We are also using the time to plan, hopefully, for our 170th Anniversary of the Church next year.



Yes, that's right! Another knitting project!
(remember the Christmas tree in 2012)

Well, this time, we are planning to knit scenes from the New Testament. **"Tell me the stories of Jesus"**. With the rapid

advance of darker nights and a rampant virus around, we wonder if anyone would be interested in helping with this project. If you are not a knitter, there will be other ways in which you could help. We shall need backdrops and other props to enhance the displays. We have patterns for basic figures, using double knitting wool, which are about 8 inches, (20cm), in height. If you would like to be involved, please contact Mrs Christine Thomas, (01278 256771), who is co-ordinating the project.

History of Methodism in West Huntspill



We know, from his diaries, that John Wesley travelled from Bridgwater to Brent Knoll in September 1769, but earliest reference to local Methodists applying for a licence to use a home as a meeting place for worship was in July 1802. The

Methodist Church in West Huntspill was built on land given by Edwin Budge, a blacksmith, whose workshop was adjacent to the chosen site. The total cost of the building was £335! The first service took place sometime in 1851, though there is no mention of it in the local paper or any surviving records of the official opening in the Bridgwater Circuit records. Income mainly derived from "seat rents", a self-explanatory term which netted around £11 annually, during the first ten years of worship! Prominent amongst the early members were the Tilley family who lived in Huntspill Court, Alstone Court, and New Road Farm, and Charles Churchill a local saddler. In the early 1900's, if you were not seated in the Church half an hour before the main festive services, Christmas, Easter, and Harvest, then you had to stand in the aisles or in the entrance porch. At this time there were also 100 scholars in ten classes in the Sunday School, with free access to a library of 160 books. Even in the 1950's and 60's the Sunday School remained popular. There is one burial in the grounds and that was in 1890 when William Tilley of Alstone Court, one of the founder members was laid to rest.

In 1995 the bold decision was taken to remove all the pews, to provide a versatile area for general community use as well as its

primary function of worship. The work revealed some extraordinary timber joists supporting the floorboards. The bevelled and painted timbers obviously came from a building of substance which must have been demolished around the time the work first started on the building the Church. At the time of excavation these timbers were estimated to be 600 – 700 years old. A portion of one of the timbers was sent to Sheffield University to be more accurately dated. Unfortunately it was felt there was not enough rings to be accurate in dating. They were certainly very old and it would have been interesting to know which building they came from.

At the present time there are only a few, faithful members, but we remain positive and are hoping we will be able to continue use the building for worship and community fellowship. Over the last 20 years, with help from our community and our friends in the Circuit, we have been able to raise hundreds of pounds for charities, both locally and further afield. We say "Thank You" to all our supporters and hope that we will all soon be able to return to more normal lifestyle. Stay Safe.

Maureen Cavill

PLUS +++ POEMS, PRAYERS and OTHER MESSAGES

How do you eat your scones? Some, the Cornish, for example, have jam on first followed by a hefty dollop of cream. Some others, our good neighbours in Devon, have cream on first. In the risk of sounding a complete philistine, I have my scone with butter, jam (always strawberry and with pips) and then the cream—an excellent solid plop of clotted cream with all its loveliness. And then is it pronounced scone as in cone or scone as in throne? But let us not get in too that debate!

It's got me thinking. I guess the way we have scones is partly by tradition and partly by habit. Is that a bit like the way we get into the business of church with all its difference? I have to acknowledge that for many years attending chapel. For me, it was always chapel and primitive Methodist in its tradition, habit and practice was partially out of habit and partly formed tradition. Habit because that is what I did on a Sunday morning and partly from the family tradition of being 'ticket holder and attending the weekly Class Meeting with its 22 questions of the Wesley Rule and the Love Fest. I think that is where I have inherited the discipline of others and in the familiarity of our way of doing things. We sometimes do things that are the same, sometimes we do similar things, and sometimes we do things that are different. That's all ok. Just as our Lord called his first friends from other towns, villages and backgrounds, our Lord calls us from different positions and different ways of looking at things – I think that

makes for a growing faith, but I believe that we are all on the same journey to fulfil our Mission.

As I step forward to bringing my Church membership back to the Methodist Church, I see something of the future discovery of faith and faith community and in how I might develop my habits of faithful discipleship and engaged fellowship. Please pray for me. Oh - I also look forward to being able to attend our church teas – with scones in all its many variations and delights.
In fellowship,

Gary Carey

“Is it Autumn?”

Questions

“How d’you know it’s Autumn?”

“Cobwebs sparkling with dew.
Glisten in the morning light.
Displaying every rainbow hue,
Then you know it’s Autumn.”

“How d’you know it’s Autumn?”

“Swallows meet on the wires,
Heading off to warmer lands,
And starlings swarm towards the spires,
Then you know it’s Autumn.”

“How d’you know it’s Autumn?”

“Boys go searching on their knees,
For treasure shiny, brown, and smooth,
Conkers! that drop down from the trees,
Then you know it’s Autumn.”

“How d’you know it’s Autumn?”
“Squirrels run to and fro,
Collecting a winter store,
Of nuts and acorns hidden now,
Then you know it’s Autumn.”

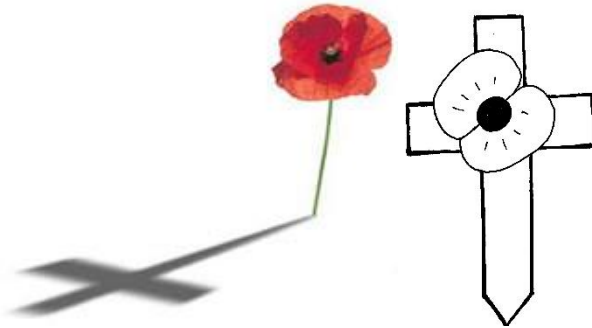
“How d’you know it’s Autumn?”
“The leaves are falling down,
Drifting gently to the ground,
Gold and orange, yellow and brown,
Now you know it’s Autumn.”

Supplied by Christine Thomas and written by her daughter Alison
at West Huntspill when she was 13 years old.

Images for reflection on Remembrance Sunday

We will remember them!





We will remember them!

Any Contributions for the December Link Plus to Rev Steve Bennett by 29th November please. Send by email to steve.bennett@methodist.org.uk or by post to 143a Berrow Road, Burnham on Sea TA8 2PN