

LINK PLUS++++

October 2021

Dear Friends

Our harvest season is well under way and, whilst someone suggested I ought to be 'fed up' with having to sing the Harvest hymns, I find great comfort that 'all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above'. These words remind me of the wonderful generosity and provision of God, even though they challenge my unfruitfulness. They also challenge the priority I give to both the ecological issues of our time, and my generosity when faced with the needs of those who have generous provision denied them.

Generosity comes in many forms. I remember being in a hut in the Gambia receiving the generosity of our guide, who had welcomed us into his home to escape the torrential rain that had unexpectedly started. We had been passing his village on the way to a local tourist attraction. As my family looked around the hut, saw the poverty in which the guide lived, the small space in which his family sheltered, and the lack of anything modern, we gratefully realised that generosity can be found in other things – like his care for us and our wellbeing.

I have shared meals with folk whose generosity of welcome has insisted on sharing, even though this might mean them going without, or having less, for the next few days. Just like the feast prepared for the return of the Prodigal Son, the best being provide for their guests.

Where have you seen generosity today, and where have you shown generosity? When have you reflected your harvest thanksgiving in words and deeds? These questions that I ask you, I also ask myself!

Steve

The Villages Link Fellowship.

After discussion with a number of members from the Villages Link fellowship it has been felt wise not to recommence our meetings until the warmer weather in the Spring.

It is uncertain what this winter will bring in the way of infections, and with due consideration to the ages of those of us who attend we feel this is the wisest move we can make at present. Once Spring comes we can discuss again the right way forward.

Love and prayers to you all

Joyce Pipet

Brean

September to us at home has been noted for the progress of moles. After more than ten years of having a mole free garden, we have been invaded this year. Recently when I cut our grass, I found the remnants of about twenty five molehills that had appeared since the last cut a fortnight before. How persistent they are. A farmer once told me that in order to catch them you have to see the beginning of disturbance on the soil and then wait for the third 'push' before banging the head of the mound to stun them. You can then quickly dig under them to reveal them before they disappear underground again. What you do with them is up to you of course!

It is a sign of autumn and this month's poem from Judy is by Charlotte Bronte and is appropriate for the season.

Our sign of autumn in the church has been a reduction in numbers worshipping, a number that often seems greater than usual because members are away on holiday or visiting family. Even our own minister suffered from this one week, so these variations take no account of who is the preacher.

We had Becky Baker taking videos of us during our service at the end of the month. She is compiling a sequence of us at worship and declaring why we come to Brean chapel, and which may be added to our website pages.

Many of you have celebrated Harvest Festival already. We trust that it has gone well for you. Our celebration is on 10th October. Still feeling a bit sensitive about Covid conditions, we shall not be having lunch afterwards, as previously, but hopefully there will be extra cake to have with our coffee afterwards. Members attended St Bridget's harvest in September, and we shall welcome members from St Bridget's at our celebrations too.

Marjorie Godwin's funeral was duly held at the Crematorium during the month. And we were sad to hear of the death of Joan Hicks. A member at East Brent, she held strong connections with us at Brea also and our condolences go to her family and to our friends at East Brent over this loss.

We normally have our Church Council during October but this year it will be on 7th November after service. I guess we shall be talking about what next, where do we go now. Developments in the Circuit, especially after the effects of Covid, urge us to be visionary and yet remain concerned for one another.

Invitations for flu jabs and for booster inoculations for Covid prevention are now amongst us. And so, as our summer season comes to its end we wish you all health and good strength. Enjoy whatever you can of the autumn sunshine and the colours that abound at this season.

Harvey Allen

Burnham

"I have a new idea".

"We could re-start that, but in different way".

"This has worked well in other churches".

"What we need is...".

The Burnham on Sea Church Council will have a lot to consider when it meets on 6th October.

In last month's Link Steve wrote about 'challenges' that face the Methodist Church nationally and locally. Those include how we remain relevant to and serve our immediate community. How we make best use of the resources that we have. Marion mentioned the 'Methodist Way of Life' groups.

At Church Council in June, it was decided to form four groups to consider the way forward for Burnham Methodist Church. Any member of the congregation could join any group, or groups. Perhaps because of Covid concerns, the numbers of people attending were small; however, the discussions were productive. Each group focused on one aspect of the 'Methodist Way of Life' – Worship, Learning & Caring, Service and Evangelism.

In each group, the members prayed and discussed what could be the long- and medium-term goals for the church. Also, what short- and medium-term results would be seen if the church were on track. Groups produced more than 40 ideas for actions that would contribute to those results. Several actions involve re-starting activities that existed in pre-Covid days; others involve taking a different approach from before; yet others involve entirely new activities.

“So, what do we do first?”

We knew from the start that there are not the resources to carry out every action that was suggested. However, it is a 'good problem' to choose the actions that will see the church moving forward toward its goals. At Church Council on 6th October, we will consider the work of the groups and the actions to be taken. This will enable us to remain relevant to and serve our immediate community.

David Patient
For the Burnham Stewards

East Brent

At last we are almost back to normal in church when we can begin the week with Sunday worship. We celebrated harvest this month with Rev Angie taking our service. Not the usual vegetables and fruit but

mostly tins of all sorts and boxes of dry goods. These were taken after the service by Angie and given to Somewhere To Go.

While we were celebrating, we are terribly sad within the church family. We have said goodbye to Margaret Green who was cremated on Friday 24th September. She was a faithful member of our congregation – although she found lockdown difficult, and she wasn't quite ready to join us when we started meeting again. She enjoyed the fellowship within the church and the Link Fellowship. We shall miss her at coffee and biscuits!!

While we were thinking of Margaret, another of our members, Joan Hicks, has died on Harvest Sunday. Joan who was 99 years old has not been able to join us for a while because of her disability of not being able to see and hear. She was a delight to talk to and she was always asking after the church when visited by Jill. We send to Joan & family our prayers and sympathy especially to Jeni who when visiting her mother would often join us for Sunday services – which she did on Harvest Sunday.

To all those who mourn, be assured of God's love and care for you.

Back to more mundane matters, we are to have our Church Council meeting on Sunday September 26th and any 'marvels' that come from this meeting will likely be reported next month.

Evelyn Tucker

PLUS +++ POEMS, PRAYERS and OTHER MESSAGES

We had this given many years back, and it hangs in our kitchen. It came from an Easter Morning Workshop in the Philippines. It seemed an appropriate reminder to share at this time of year and it is called

A prayer for sharing

Help us to share

For the letters of **SHARE** are in **HARVEST**.

Forgive us if we have too much,

For the letters of **HAVE** are in **HARVEST**.

Help us to save and not waste,

For the letters of **SAVE** are in **Harvest**.

Help those who starve.

For the letters of **STARVE** are in **HARVEST**

Please God,

Let us who have too much

Learn to share Your **HARVEST**

With those who are starving.

Joyce Pipet

Baptism – Nancy Jade Winder

The church in Burnham was buzzing on Sunday 19th September.

Family and friends of Lewis and Nicola Winder joined the congregation for the, Covid-delayed, baptism of Nancy.

Nancy's 'big brother', Maddox, chose a song to be included in the service – "There is joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart" – complete with actions for all to join in.

Delicious refreshments rounded off the event.

David Patient

The Eternal Wall

As some readers may be aware, I am a regular listener to Radio Somerset most Sunday mornings at 8am, whilst enjoying my first cup of tea of the day.

Recently there has been a wide variation of Christian individuals/groups leading worship. Last weekend the Service was led by the Eternal Wall Team. Who or what is The Eternal Wall, I chuntered to myself? So courtesy of Google I discovered some interesting facts, which I would like to share in the hope that it will be of interest to Link readers across the circuit.

The Eternal Wall will be a colossal piece of Christian architectural sculpture; a giant infinity loop built of 1 million bricks reaching 50m into the sky, visible from nearly 6 miles away and be the largest database of hope stories in the world (twice the size of the Angel of the North). Visitors will be able to point their phone at a brick to reveal a story of Jesus answering someone's prayer contributed by individuals from across the world and the hope that lies within.

After 5 years of constant prayer the team have the land, the design and planning permission for a 10 acre site in Coleshill, Birmingham to start building. The access road is in place, the interactive app is being developed and the engineers and builders are ready to start. All administration costs have been covered and if £2.5m can be raised construction of this incredible landmark will commence Spring 2022.

Worth a visit next year, don't you think?

Sandra Nelson

Charlotte Bronte's poem on the autumn colours

The gilding of the Indian summer
mellowed the pastures far and wide.
The russet woods stood ripe to be stripped
but yet were full of leaf.

The purple of heath-bloom, faded but not withered,
Tinged the hills.
Fieldhead gardens bore the seal of gentle decay -
Its time of flowers and even fruit was over.

Submitted by Judy Allen

Mothers in Israel - (Part 5. The Bible Christian Connexion)

While the Primitive Methodist Connexion had its origins in the Potteries, at about the same time 1815, another connexion was budding in the Southwest of England.

William O'Bryan was a local preacher who broke away from the Wesleyan Connexion in Stratton Mission that was on the borders of north Cornwall and north-west Devon. He did so for very similar reasons to those that had prompted Hugh Bourne and William Clowes to form the primitive Methodists. i.e. that Methodism was getting too formalised. William O'Bryan, along with his wife had been a freelance preacher since 1812, but then a connexion began to build around him, and the first Conference was held in 1819.

William O'Bryan's wife, Catherine, was the first woman preacher in this fresh connexion, and their daughter, Mary, was one of the earliest women ministers. Right from the start of the Conference Minutes, the names of women itinerant preachers are found in a list separate from the men. However, there may have been other women who served in the Connexion prior to this time.

The process of being accepted as an itinerant minister was the same for men and women.

1. They were perceived to have been called by God, and had that call tested by the Connexion
2. They were recognised at an annual conference, listed in the Minutes, and finally accepted into full connexion
3. They were stationed.

4. They were paid., though women were paid half of what a man was.

In the Bible Christian Connexion it was frequently women who were sent out to initiate the pioneer work of evangelism, followed by men who established the societies, building on the converts the women had won. I have to confess to a personal connection to some of the information I discovered, as I was born and subsequently was given a note to preach in Guernsey. One of the women itinerant preachers took the first steps to preaching in Guernsey. To quote Colin Short in his contribution to "Women, Preachers, Methodists" on the Bible Christian women:

"Margaret Pinwill... while her father was living in Guernsey ...took the few opportunities to preach that came to her as a lay person without knowledge of the Guernsey French patois. This led to a minister there inviting her to consider the ministry."

As an aside I query why a lack of knowledge of the local patois was in itself a stumbling block, as this woman went to her first circuit in 1836, because from the beginning of the C19 English troops had been stationed on the Island to help with defence in the Napoleonic wars, and consequently Methodist churches where services were conducted in English had been established alongside those whose services were conducted in a mix of patois and pure French (as bibles and hymn books would have been in French.)

However, my delight was increased when I read on to discover that she had then been accepted as an itinerant minister and appointed to the Isle of Wight, where we spent some years during Stanley's ministry.

She was not the only connection for whom I felt warmth. Mary Ann Wherry whose ministry began in 1820 served first in Cornwall (where Stanley was stationed after the Isle of Wight) then was appointed to Guernsey where her work was so effective that another minister was sent out to help. She was then moved on to Jersey to continue the work there. There was also Mary Toms who served in Guernsey, being able to preach both in English and French.

Quite a number of appointments that were filled by women involved treacherous travelling, and looking at the Minutes of Conference it seems that this took its toll on the itinerant preachers.

In a similar fashion, but not to such a degree as in the Primitive Methodist Connexion, the numbers of women offering for the itinerant ministry declined as the years passed, but never actually ceased although at times it was only supernumerary women ministers who were on the list.

But there were new opportunities arising. From the mid 1880's the Bible Christian Connexion had begun to send missionaries to China, and by the 1890's women were to be included too. I found a quote that reinforced the status with which these women were held.

"Some women were stationed in China where their names appear in the "body" of the alphabetical list of preachers' names and not in the addendum where the "female preachers" generally stood. Therefore they were considered as ministers."

I found a telling quote written in 1909 about one of the women who served in China. She was Ethel Squires who "succeeded in winning the B.A. at London University ... a distinction which under the circumstances, indicates the possession of moral and intellectual qualities that were somewhat limited in their distribution among members of her own sex and station in life" it continued by stating she had become fluent in the local dialect before she went to China!

She was an amazing woman who pushed the boundaries of her time. There were another small group of women who were accepted as ministers in the late 1800's but when the Bible Christian Connexion amalgamated with the Methodist New Connexion and the United Methodist Free Church in 1907 to become the United Methodist Church there was only one woman minister left in post. She was Lillie Edwards, and she was a problem as the other two connexions did not recognise

women ministers. She entered into an agreement to be “pensioned off” for £135=00.

Her presence was a stumbling block and embarrassment to the Union, and as such she had to be removed.

But to avoid any major protests from women there were other channels opening up for them to serve the Methodist church, and I shall look at these next time.

Joyce Pipet

Prayer from The Methodist prayer Handbook 2021 – 2022
‘A Place for All’

God of all, whose love welcomes each person, in a world where many feel they have no place, help us to remember that you offer a place for all, that no one is excluded from your love and that each has a home in your kingdom of justice and peace. When we are tempted to think ourselves more important than others, remind us of the special place you hold for people who are poor, weary and dispossessed, and for those who are neglected, reviled or unjustly treated. Help us to share in your righteous anger against all that harms our sister and brothers, to rejoice in your all-encompassing love and to see in our neighbour the face of Christ, who makes us one. Amen

Jonathan Pye, Bristol District Chair

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

LINK DIARY

Date & Time	Location	Event
Weekly		
Wednesday 10.00am	Zoom	<u>Link Bible Study – Hebrews</u> Meeting ID: 842 8627 4955 Passcode: 358753
Thursday 11.00am	Zoom	<u>Link Coffee Morning</u> Meeting ID: 854 3680 5731 Passcode: 419002
October		
10 th 10.30am	Brean	Harvest Festival
21 st 7.00pm	Zoom	Circuit Safeguarding Officers
November		
17 th All day	Tesco Burnham	Foodbank Christmas Collection
20 th 10.30am	East Brent	Christmas Fair
20 th 2.30pm	Burnham	Local Preacher Accreditation Service for Rosemary Krull
21 st 6.00pm	Burnham	Circuit Service (Rev Dr Jonathan Pye)
December		
2 nd 7.30	Zoom	Circuit Meeting
8 th 7.00pm	Burnham	Weston Hospice Memorial Service
17 th 7.00pm	East Brent	Carol Service
19 th 6.00pm	Burnham	Carol Service