

Moravian messenger



October
2012

Br. David Howarth reflects upon

Harvest... a time of thanksgiving for ALL God's gifts



Traditionally, Harvest is a time to give thanks to God for his creation, and especially for the produce of the land, the toil of the farmer and grower, and those many other people who have played their part in bringing in the rich harvest he has provided. Many churches and schools have wonderful displays of such items; carrots and potatoes, broad beans and onions, apples and oranges, tins of spaghetti hoops and packets of dried pasta amongst a marvellous array of things that annually demonstrate in a very visible way the riches and diversity of creation, and the skill and dedication of the one with the seeding machine and the plough etc. And, of course, often one will find a piece of coal and a glass of water to further show the breadth of the harvest brought it.

It is good to set time aside each year to give thanks to God for all this and more, but as a trip to any local shop or supermarket will show, the availability of many of our seasonable fruit and vegetables transcend their usual harvesting season. From asparagus and broccoli to yams and zucchini (courgette - I was struggling to find another fruit or vegetable beginning with the letter Z), we can find them on our shelves almost all the year round. To some people this is wrong. Amongst other things they find the shipping of foodstuffs around the globe simply to satisfy peoples' desire to have exotic fruits and vegetables available to eat unpalatable. Think of the carbon footprint they may ask. And they have a point. Yet this does demonstrate a number of very important things for us to reflect

upon and acknowledge, not least the ingenuity of people and the advances in technology making this possible, and that because of this, many more people play their part in the bringing food to our tables. The scientist and engineer now often play as vital a role as the farmer. But, how fair is it for a country producing crops only for those crops to be exported while their people go hungry?

As I sit in my study, putting together pen and paper, or more accurately finger to keyboard, my thoughts are very much with the Olympics and the day's news as it is once more full of the amazing exploits of athletes from all around the world.

Team GB has surpassed all expectations, having already won more medals than at any single games in the last century. The country is on a

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Harvest... a time of thanksgiving for ALL God's gifts *continued*

high and basking in the achievements of not only our team but those of many others. This has been a time to stand in wonder at what humankind can achieve, and to give thanks for the dedication of thousands upon thousands of men and women, athlete and coach, physiotherapist and support team. And so, as we reflect on all that has happened, we must not forget that humankind is as much a part of God's harvest as any potato and apple.

Truly Harvest is a time to thank God for all his rich blessings and for how the many differing ways that we, as part of his creation, can influence the world around us; positively and negatively.

Sadly, there are people throughout our world who are unable to access the richness, the variety of products found in the world's harvest. There are people who suffer poverty, starvation and exploitation because of the inequalities of human demand, and we must acknowledge that they are just as much a part of God's rich harvest as we are. It makes us think - it makes us thankful for what we have - it makes us want to challenge this situation, possibly through prayer and through action.

The world is a wonderful place, it provides for our needs and our wants. But the world is also a fragile place and a place of great contrasts; the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. So when we thank God for this Harvest and for all his good gifts to us, as we sing those familiar songs and hymns, as we remember all those who have helped bring the harvest in, let us spend a little time to remember the fragility and the inequalities found within with in our world and, especially, to remember that we are all a part of God's rich harvest and have a great responsibility for it and ensuring that all peoples everywhere can share equally.

Provision of Ministry in the Province

The provision of ministry in the British Province Moravian Church has caused us much difficulty and heart searching over recent years. The way that PEC attempt to staff the Province is through the 'Call System'. In simple terms it means that the PEC look at the congregations in the Province and the available ministers and try to match ministers/students to congregations or congregation units.

In practice it is much more complex than that because ministers/students may not, for one reason or another, wish to consider a move. So in recent years, before Calls are issued, a discussion takes place between PEC and the individual concerned to discuss family situations and other factors that may be involved and, where possible, those concerns are factored in.

We are aware that we are a small Church in the British Isles and our room for manoeuvre is very limited. We cannot always accommodate the desires of ministers and their families and the needs of the rest of the Province. One move, however right it may seem on paper, may necessitate the move of several ministerial families with all the upset that that brings to congregations and families. Of course we also have the issue of the jobs of minister's husbands and wives and the real concern over loss of careers and pensions that may occur if a family is moved to a new area. In common with other Churches in recent years, we are also finding it more difficult to staff congregations in the north than in the south of England.

Because our ministers are in the forefront of this issue we have already asked all serving ministers to a consultation at Church House to discuss any possible ways forward. In the meantime we are deeply indebted to our ministers who staff the Province and accept 'Calls', often at personal and financial cost to themselves and their families.

PEC

volunteers hand out a food bank list to shoppers suggesting items that they might like to buy for donation.

Front line care professionals such as social workers, doctors, health visitors and the police identify people in crisis and issue them with a food bank voucher. The voucher is then taken to a food bank where it is redeemed for three days of nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food. The volunteers at the food bank centre can offer a listening ear over a cup of tea or a meal when clients are feeling vulnerable or close to despair. They can also direct people to other professional services to help tackle the root cause of their crisis.

As Sr. Torkington encouraged us last month - service to others is a very practical way to get closer to Christ. If you would like to help or want to donate a few items on a regular basis, visit the Trussell Trust website: www.trusselltrust.org to find a food bank near you. Donating a few tins of food might not seem like a huge step to take to help someone in need, but food banks can prevent crime and family breakdown and allow individuals to start to put their lives back together.

YOUTH ZONE

Latest news from the Provincial Youth and Children's Office

Holiday Club at Gracehill

ON YOUR MARKS...

Monday 13th of August...plans had been made, leaders trained, hall was decorated and Roberta Thompson had made us coffee. Now all that remained was for the doors to be opened and the children to come to our first Holiday Bible Club at Gracehill, Scripture Union's "On Your Marks". None of us really knew what to expect; ten, twenty or thirty children would be a bonus...the clock ticked on as we waited eagerly for their arrival. And they came...forty four on the first day! We were so amazed! Every day we all (leaders included!!) participated in a warm up session, led very capably by our younger leaders and Debbie led us in some songs with accompanying actions.

As the Olympics had just taken place the theme of the week coincided really well as the message was all about how to become part of Jesus' team. The classes split into their age group sections to listen to a story, take part in a quiz and learn a memory verse. Stories included, Jesus choosing His original team, the twelve disciples, the healing of blind Bartimaeus, the Transfiguration, Jesus calming the storm and the parable of the sower. The focus was on sharing the Good



Senior Class knotted together

Medal presentations



Some 'Gracehill Olympians'



News about Jesus, His power and how He wants all," little 'uns "and "big 'uns" to follow Him and become part of His Kingdom.

Next on the agenda was completing some activities to reinforce the story and then either craft or games, alternated each day. The craft times were very sparkly and fun as the children decorated fish to remind them that Jesus said that He would make His disciples fishers of men, created their own football kit or little boat. The senior classes decorated masks and used them to complete an obstacle course, reminding them to walk by faith and not by sight, trusting in God's direction and also a rain gauge, which should come in handy with our climate! After the children left, the leaders had some time to debrief and enjoy delicious sandwiches provided by lovely ladies who

volunteered to make our lunch. A special thanks to you, I know the team all benefited from this time of fellowship after a busy morning of activities. On the last day of the Holiday Bible Club we broke with the pattern of the rest of the week and moved to the church. After story time, the children and young people went on a walk around the burial ground and were fascinated! To round off the special week there was an Olympic medal presentation for each class, every child received a medal and a little memento of the week and prizes were awarded to those who had memorized the Bible verses:

None of this would have happened without God leading us, being present with us every day, equipping us and giving us much needed energy during the week, so my thanks goes to Him. I think we all can say with certainty, "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." Psalm 107 v 1.

Rachel Hamilton

A word from the Editor

In the November 2011 edition of the 'Messenger', Sr. Shirley Ward wrote an article about 'Fighting Poverty at its point of need' explaining how churches in Bath had launched a food bank. Food banks are set up under the auspices of the Trussell Trust and are growing rapidly across the UK in response to the current economic climate. It is estimated that 13 million people live below the poverty line in the UK - a staggering number for a First World nation.

As we break bread today, many people are struggling to feed themselves and their families. This can be due to a whole host of reasons ranging from redundancy, illness, domestic violence, family breakdown, debt, benefit delay or facing an unexpected bill on a very low income. The project began humbly in a garden shed in Salisbury in 2000 but in 2011-2012, food banks fed over 128,000 people nationwide. There are presently over 250 food banks and the aim of the Trussell Trust is to have one in every town. They rely on the support of local communities as schools, churches, businesses and individuals donate non-perishable food to a food bank. Food is also collected at 'Supermarket Collections' where

Over 18s

The Irish district have planned a weekend for an over 18s in Belfast. The weekend is 23-25 November. All you need to pay for are the flights, which if booked soon could be as little as £40!

The general plan is to meet at University Road on Friday, do pizza, Nightreach, Werewolf etc. Saturday is the first day of the Belfast continental market which we can visit, then off to Kilwarlin for BBQ, campfire and the torch game (you are never too old!). Sunday will be a church service, lunch then off home.

For more details and to get your name down contact Lynsey Kernohan - easily done through the Moravian Youth UK Facebook page.

Irish District Youth Weekend - 5th to 7th October 2012

The Irish District Youth Weekend will be held at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Northern Ireland. For details please contact Paul Holdsworth.

Moravian Mouthpiece

Moravian Mouthpiece website (www.moravianmouthpiece.wordpress.com) is an outlet for theological reflection and comment mainly aimed at our younger members that has been running and appreciated by many for quite some time. It is hoped that these reflections and thoughts highlight many of the issues and concerns that our young people have and so help them to live out their call to live out their faith.

The current pool of contributors are seeking other like-minded people who feel that they have something to say. If this is you, or if you would like to know more, please contact either Br Paul Holdsworth or Br David Howarth.

The Last Word . . .



Br. Sam Mundy

For the past four years, you've been reading my monthly sporting reflections. I have been flattered by many kind comments received and to have been told that the Grandstand View has brought in new readers to the Messenger. I'm not naive enough to think that everyone has enjoyed the articles; but I do hope that readers have occasionally been challenged, and become better informed.

Last month, I promised the last word to you, the readers who attended events at the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. So over to you (with apologies to contributors - I've had to wield the blue pencil quite liberally to keep to a word limits!)

First, **Stuart Brierley**, who seemed to get to more events than most.

The whole atmosphere, organisation and ethos was excellent.

The regeneration of part of East London extended beyond the Olympic facilities, and it was a pleasure to see the developments showing the area changing beyond almost all recognition.

Even though tickets were hard to get, I was astonished to see how when almost any nation's athletes were in with a medal chance, their supporters managed to turn out in force. Hundred's of Irish for women's boxing; Mongolian supporters in the judo, on the first morning of the decathlon, being surrounded by Solomon Islands supporters cheering on their only athlete at the games; the Dutch at many events with their obvious day-glow orange clothing.

My highlights were Jessica Ennis on the opening morning of the athletics with a world-best in the hurdles; the lack of antics by the women footballers (unlike some of their much better paid male colleagues); Lin Dan - the Chinese badminton player who is probably the finest badminton player ever; the most

physically brutal sport - not boxing or any other direct contact sport -but water polo, the aim of which seemed to be to drown your opponent, without the referee noticing; the beach volleyball for the superb location; the manner in which huge weightlifters were almost physically abused by their coaches prior to their lifts.

Anne Larkin writes of the family experiences at the Olympics:

Women's marathon - the great atmosphere around Trafalgar Sq; Volleyball at Earls Court: ending up watching Team GB lose but even so, great to see some of the team and coaching staff we knew, and then second match really showed the high standard; great organisation, went very smoothly including all travel arrangements. Football semi at Old Trafford...Brazil v S Korea. You forget what an amazing stadium Old Trafford is. Overall, whole event was fantastic.....

Sandy Mundy also shared a family experience at Olympics and Paralympics:

Paul and Sam watched the women's basketball semi-final and two games of hockey at the riverbank arena. Emma and I then joined them in Hyde park to watch the big screen and see Mo Farrah win gold. The atmosphere was brilliant and the roar of the crowd deafening!

The following day we watched the men's marathon.

We went to the Paralympics and watched the athletics, including Claire Williams winning bronze in the discus and Richard Whitehead winning gold in the 200m final. One highlight was during the men's 1500m heat, where all but one crossed the finish line in 3-4 minutes. Houssein omar Hassan, the only Paralympic participant from Djibouti, watched the others cross the finish line before he had completed even one lap. but rather than give up

he continued, determined to finish the race. As he passed each section of the stadium, at a jogging pace, everyone stood to applaud him. By the time he was approaching the finish line, some 7 minutes after the last man, the entire 80,000 spectators were on their feet, applauding. A standing ovation to a true champion, not for a winner, but for taking part with sheer determination. His will to finish was for me the highlight of the day, if not the games.

Andrew and Kate Newman went to several Paralympic events.

The blind footballers at the Paralympics were incredible. We saw the Brazilian team play twice; a 3-0 win in the group stages, and the 2-0 win in the final against France. Both times we were amazed by their ability; the players were dribbling and passing the ball, simply by listening to the bell in the ball, and calling to each other. Attempts on goal were directed by the guides standing behind the goal. It was amazing to see how these players were able to put together all this information into a mental image of the pitch, and craft goals which the premier league would be proud of.

Anne and Mel Wood are great fans of the Paralympics.

It would be hard to single out one event to select as our favourite as athletes and swimmers alike impressed. The blind runners, assisted by their sighted guides were perhaps the most moving in their demonstration of teamwork of the closest kind. The recognition of these guides with medals for the first time this year is also worthy of note. (If we were to choose one swimming event, it would probably be the second race we watched in the aquatic centre when Nyree Kindred achieved silver, twelve months after the birth of her daughter, Ella. Having watched Nyree and her husband, Sascha, who also achieved a silver medal, training hard during the past

eight years when we have been swimming in a leisurely fashion on holiday in Leominster, it was gratifying to see the fruits of such dedication. Trainers, who so selflessly give of their time, should be awarded medals too! (Everybody talks about the 'legacy' of the games. We felt that the atmosphere and goodwill surrounding the Games were it to continue, would be the greatest legacy of all.

And **Jackie Morten** was swept along with the Paralympic enthusiasm:

To someone with little interest in sport, the Paralympics were a revelation. Although I had been to the Munich and Montreal Olympics, they were as nothing compared to these Paralympics.

I had a session of athletics with a GB Gold in the men's 100m wheelchair race, the final of the men's amputee high jump with a winning height of 1.78m and a number of other field events, a day pass to the Excel Centre where I saw sitting volleyball, Boccia (for the most severely disabled athletes) and table tennis and, finally a session of swimming where we stood and cheered the GB team to their silver medal in the women's 100m medley.

Attitudes were challenged - did I stand and cheer the last man (and guide) home in the visually impaired men's 5000m because he was outclassed in that race? No - it was because he had the perseverance and stamina to run and complete his race (I'm sure I've read about that somewhere).

London changed during the two competitions for the better - I hope and pray the legacy will be that this optimism and cheerfulness continue.

Thank you.....

David Newman



Love Weston Café

The Love Weston café is open every Friday from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm and is held in the Moravian Church hall which has good level access and a car park. The hall is transformed every Friday into a café with tables with colourful table cloths, bunting and a children's area complete with a large play house.

The Love Weston Café is a place to:

- Meet your neighbours
- Enjoy food and drink at reasonable prices
- Find a welcome and friendship and a listening ear
- Find out what is going on and information on a number of subjects
- Play with your friends, read the papers, buy second hand books and knit

Lunches are £1

Home-made soup and a roll
Jacket potato with various fillings
Salads

Bacon rolls

Teas and coffees 50p and Home-made cake 50p

The café is used by mothers with young children, older people and those at work coming in their lunch hour. The children enjoy talking to the older people and they in turn love to watch them play. Many people come for coffee and then stay for lunch and say they look forward to Fridays to come to the café. People have met up with old friends and neighbours and have also made new friendships.

Information is available on many subjects, a local councillor is available at the café each week and a local GP



The Love Weston café opened in October 2011 following months of planning by representatives of the local churches Anglican, Methodist and Moravian. The café is run by people from all the local churches working together for the local community. We successfully applied for several grants and were therefore able to buy all the equipment we needed.

We are now serving 60 to 70 lunches as well as drinks and cakes throughout the day. We decided that the café should be there for everyone in the community and therefore the prices are kept very low.

holds a drop in surgery every other week on the premises. Beth our Minister is also available for support or advice each week.

Many volunteers from the local churches as well as volunteers from the community who are now working with us give their time each week in the kitchen, serving the food, making the cakes and soup at home, playing the piano and making sure everyone is welcome. The Love Weston café a community base for Weston where all are welcome.

Shirley Ward
(Bath, Weston)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Moravian Daily Texts



Illustration by Natalie Riess

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian and member of the German resistance against the Nazi regime during World War II. Throughout the Nazi era, Bonhoeffer stood in opposition to Hitler and his policies and was executed for his beliefs shortly before the end of the war.

Those who have read Eberhard Bethge's biography of Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage* (reissued in 2000 as *Bonhoeffer: A Biography*) or *Bonhoeffer's Letters and Papers from Prison* (edited by Bethge and others) know of the strong influence the Daily Texts of the Moravian Church had on Bonhoeffer.

Bethge was among Bonhoeffer's students at the seminary at Finkenwalde, Germany, during the Nazi era of the 1930s and 1940s. This was a seminary of the Confessing Church organized by Protestants seeking to resist efforts by the Nazi government to control the church. Bethge points out that Bonhoeffer's mother in her youth had spent months at Herrnhut and had adopted the ideals of the Moravians with youthful enthusiasm. He also mentions that Maria Horn, the beloved family governess from 1906-1923, was a follower of the Moravians and, because of her "attractive and serene personality," became practically a member of the family.

The Moravian influence upon Bonhoeffer is seen most clearly in his use of the Daily Texts. Whereas today the Daily Texts are often quickly read to start the day, and then put aside and forgotten, Bonhoeffer was in tune with their original intention, meditating upon their meaning for his life in its present circumstances.

At the seminary Bonhoeffer introduced his students to the practice of meditation on the Daily Texts. In later years he would sometimes call their attention to the texts, as in

his Christmas letter of 1937, which consisted of his reflections on the texts from Christmas Eve until New Year's Eve.

On June 20, 1939, Bonhoeffer declined an offer of employment from the Federal Council of Churches in the U.S. Recording his meditation on the text for the day, 1 Peter 1:17, "If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile": "Today's Losung [watchword text] is terribly hard about God's incorruptible judgment.

He certainly sees how personal a matter today's decision is, and how full of anxiety, however brave it may appear.... At the end of the day I can only ask that God may judge this day, and all the decisions, mercifully. It is in his hands now." The following day, he writes, "Again today's Losung has such hard words: 'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver' (Mal. 3:3).... He [God] knows what he is about, and in the end all our doings will be clear and pure."

On the voyage back to Germany, Bonhoeffer wrote, "Since I have been on board, the inward disharmony about the future has ceased, and I can think without any reproaches about the shortened time in America." He then refers to the text for the day, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn your statutes" (Psalm 119:71), and adds, "One of my favorite passages from my favorite psalm."

In April 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested and imprisoned. He mentions the Daily Texts frequently in his writings from prison. John W. de Gruchy, editor of an English edition of *Bonhoeffer's Letters and Papers from Prison*, comments that these texts helped him to discern meaning and purpose in what was happening around him as well as to him.

On August 24, 1943, for example, Bonhoeffer writes to his parents, "From my upper-story cell and the window, which is lowered completely during alarms, one sees the dreadful fireworks toward the south of the city very clearly, and without the slightest feeling of personal anxiety one becomes overwhelmingly conscious in such moments of the utter absurdity of my present situation of waiting inactively. Then early this morning the Moravian Daily Text moved me strangely: 'And I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one shall make you afraid' (Lev. 26:6a)."

The following Christmas Eve he wrote to his friend Bethge and Bethge's wife Renate, a niece of Bonhoeffer, "One of the greatest joys for me this Christmas was that even this year we could exchange the Daily Texts with each other. I had sometimes thought and hoped for this but no longer considered it to be possible. Now this book, which has been so important to me especially in these past months, will accompany us through the coming year as well, and when we read it in the morning, we will particularly think of one another. Thank you so much!"

January 18, 1944, he wrote to Bethge, "The Daily Texts are a joy to me every day," and on May 9 to the couple, "I know you will be thinking of me every morning when you read the Daily Texts, as I do of you, and I'm very glad that now you'll be able to read from the Bible together again morning and evening."

Later that month Bonhoeffer writes a series of meditations on the Daily Texts for Pentecost and the two days that follow that festival, sending these meditations to the Bethges. On the 6th of June, D-Day, Bonhoeffer recorded that "the news did not come as a surprise to me, and yet things turn out differently from what we expect. The Daily Text and the interpretative verse [Ps. 38:5 [4]: 'For my iniquities have gone over my head; they weigh like a burden too heavy for me.' Eph. 1:7: 'In [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,' call us to the centre of the gospel - 'redemption' is the word around which everything turns. In faith, during the coming weeks, and with great assurance to meet our common future, let us confidently commit your path and all our paths to God."

Listening to the radio in the sick bay July 21, 1944, Bonhoeffer heard of the failed assassination attempt on Hitler the previous day. He wrote, "To be sure, theological thoughts do preoccupy me incessantly, but then there are hours, too, when one is content with the ongoing processes of life and faith without reflecting on them. Then the Daily Texts simply make you happy, as I found especially to be the case with yesterday's [Ps. 20:7: 'Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses, but our pride is in the name of the Lord our God'; and Rom. 8:31: 'If God is for us, who is against us?'] and today's, [Ps. 23:1: 'The Lord is my

shepherd, I shall not want'; and John 10:14: 'I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.')] for example."

Looking ahead to Bethge's birthday on August 28, Bonhoeffer writes on the 14th, "The Daily Texts for the twenty-eighth are beautiful. When I think of you the morning of that day, I will hold fast to them. The question 'Is the Lord's hand...?' Num. 11:23 [NRSV: 'Is the Lord's power limited?'] might bring to mind some unfulfilled wishes and hopes. But on the other hand, 2 Cor. 1:20 holds true: '[For in him every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.' For this reason it is through him that we say 'Amen,' to the glory of God.] God does not fulfill all our wishes but does keep all his promises."

A week later, he mentions the coming birthday and that he has looked again at these texts and meditated on them. "I think everything depends on the words 'in Him.' Everything we may with some good reason expect or beg of God is to be found in Jesus Christ. What we imagine a God could and should do the God of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with all that. We must immerse ourselves again and again, for a long time and quite calmly, in Jesus's life, his sayings, actions, suffering and dying in order to recognize what God promises and fulfills."

In February 1945, Bonhoeffer was moved from imprisonment in Berlin to the Buchenwald concentration camp. In April he was again transferred, this time to Schönberg in the forests of Bavaria. There, on the Second Sunday of Easter, April 8, 1945, he led a service for his fellow prisoners, expounding on the Daily Texts for the day, Isaiah 53:5, "And with his stripes we are healed," and 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Shortly after the service was concluded, Bonhoeffer was taken from the room and moved to the concentration camp at Flossingburg, where, on the following day, he was executed.

Today, Dietrich Bonhoeffer is remembered and commemorated as a theologian and martyr by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church. His life as a pastor and theologian who lived as he preached, stood up for his beliefs and died opposing the Nazi regime have inspired Christians around the world. And his use of the Daily Texts as an inspiration and comfort during his troubled time sheds another powerful light on the power and promise of the Moravian Daily Texts.

This article first appeared in 'The Moravian' - the official journal of the Moravian Church in North America, Northern and Southern Provinces.

The piece was written by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Graham H. Rights, a bishop in the Southern Province.



Bishop's Diary Summer 2012

This has been a very strange and unusual "summer" for me in that I have not been able to do many of the things that had been planned.... Those plans had to change because my wife, Beth, who has read what I have written and has given permission for it to be printed became ill suffering in the depth of depression. I suppose it came about quite slowly with no apparent cause or reason and it was beginning even before April.

It was then that we had a lovely visit with our family in Eire when our grand children were baptized and I was privileged to be invited by the priest to participate actively in the service. This was quite remarkable and unexpected but very much appreciated.

In May we did manage to get to Scotland (and had some fine weather!) but this was done on condition that I would be able to drive back home if and whenever Beth needed to be home. We managed it and stayed in Oban, Fort William and Pitlochry and felt

fortunate we had had a bit of holiday.

By now Beth's condition had deteriorated so much that she did not feel comfortable alone in the house and she was ready to see if the doctor could help with any medication. Unfortunately the first set of tablets seemed to make matters worse and then there was some reluctance to accept that the new tablets could possibly be helpful. We also started making arrangements for Beth to have a course of NHS counselling.

Synod was approaching and almost before we could think what we should do a friend very kindly offered to come and stay with Beth so that I could be at Synod where you may recall I was elected to serve as President.

I had to get back from Synod to take Beth to see the NHS Counsellor but sadly none of that worked out at all. However I did find in my Synod papers details about a group of Counsellors who help church servants and this has been helpful to Beth as she has benefitted from a series of appointments.

Beth was prescribed several types of medication including sleeping

tablets as the almost continuous panic attacks continued day and night but gradually the doses were reduced. We did not feel able to join the booked coach holiday in Cornwall at the beginning of July. But we are grateful for the loving support and prayers that have been offered by many friends which have encouraged and helped us tremendously.

Beth is not completely better yet - she has not resumed her prison visiting or driving the car and does need support when walking out. But she has been well enough to welcome our new born grandson, which at one time she thought would not happen as she did not expect to live through this time of depression.

We thank God that she is improving day by day and we have managed to start getting back to church services. I have been able to get to the supermarket for essential supplies without having to call a neighbour to Beth-sit. I have even taken a few services. We would urge readers to remember in prayer all who suffer from depression. It is a dreadful form of illness.

John McOwat Ep. Fra.

Notice Board

Calendars of Nepal 2013

Sr. Maureen Colbert has had a calendar produced using photographs taken during her time in Nepal. If you've been reading her articles you will know what a fascinating year she has had and all profits will be going to the International Kindergarten.

The calendars cost £6 each but Sr. Colbert is "happy to accept more." **You can obtain them from Sr. Colbert at: 213 Smith House Lane, Lightcliffe, Halifax HX3 8UP.**

The calendars make superb Christmas gifts so please try to support the school.

Moravian Settlements - 2013 Calendar

Fairfield congregation have produced a calendar featuring Moravian Settlements in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. There are three photographs from each of the four settlements at Gracehill, Fulneck, Ockbrook and Fairfield. The congregation wanted to include them in the calendar as many Moravians have not had the opportunity to visit all of these beautiful and historic sites.

The calendars cost £5.99 each (plus £2.20 p&p).

Please contact:

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Open Book

ESTHER (An Old Testament book, between Nehemiah and Job, before The Psalms.)

In 586 BC, the southern kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonian army. The Jews were taken into captivity. "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down, and there we wept when we remembered Zion." (Psalm 137) A generation later, Cyrus, king of Persia conquered Babylon, which was absorbed into his empire. Cyrus issued an edict allowing the Jews to return home to Jerusalem. Some, however, decided to stay in the country where they were brought up. Individuals of good character and ability had risen to eminent positions of trust and responsibility: Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer, Daniel, prophet.

The story of Esther is set in the reign of Artaxerxes. (Xerxes in some translations: Ahasuerus in the Hebrew Bible and AV Bible.) In the third year of his reign, Xerxes invited all his nobles and military generals to meet. It went on for 180 days; possibly because it was the conference to see what they could do to conquer Greece. To impress his guests, Xerxes displayed the vast wealth and glory of his kingdom (chap. 1 vv 4-8). The final week was all banquet and wine. Queen Vashti held a separate party for the women in another part of the palace. On the last day, Xerxes, who was "in high spirits from wine," (1 v 10) ordered his servants to fetch the queen, wearing the royal robes and crown, to display her beauty to the menfolk, "because she was lovely to look at." (v 11) Vashti refuses to obey the king's command, and he is furious. It was unheard of in that male-dominated kingdom and culture. To go unpunished, it would set an example to other women, and there "would be no end of disrespect and discord." (1 vv 18-end) Vashti is banished for ever from the royal presence.

Chapter 2. When his anger subsided, Xerxes knew he needed a queen. A beauty contest was arranged between all the beautiful, young virgins in the realm. In Susa, (AV Shushan) not far from the palace lived a young Jewish girl. Her name was Hadassah in Hebrew, but in Persian she was called Esther (a star.) She was lovely " in form and features." (v 7) Esther's parent's had died, and she was brought up by her older cousin, Mordecai, who regarded her as his own daughter. Esther joins the girls in the beauty contest, advised by Mordecai not to reveal her nationality or family background. The king favours Esther. She is crowned queen of Persia and moves into the palace. Mordecai is never far away. He spends time with the guards in the gatehouse. While there, he hears two of the king's officials conspiring to assassinate the king. Mordecai informs Esther who tells it to the king, adding the news had come from Mordecai. Enquiries reveal the identity of the conspirators, who are hanged. A detailed report of the incident is written in the palace records.

Chapter 3. An unsavoury character appears in the person of Haman, whose ancestry had a long history of enmity to the Jews. King Xerxes promoted this individual to the highest position in the realm, apart from the king. All the nobles and officials have to bow before Haman as he passes by or speaks to them. All defer to Haman, except Mordecai the Jew. Haman in his anger towards Mordecai, devises a plot of ethnic-cleansing. Haman fixes a day when all Jews in the realm are to be put to death on the 13th day of the 12th month. Haman goes to the king for his signature, with a list of all the ways in which Jews are different to the Persians. The king is persuaded and signs the death warrant for all Jews. Xerxes and Haman then have a drink together.

Chapter 4. Mordecai hears of the king's decree and is greatly distressed. Informed by her maids, Esther sends her servant

Hathach to meet Mordecai. Hathach returns with the news, a copy of the decree and a request to Esther to go to the king and appeal for her people. Esther says she can not enter the king's presence without an invitation. Mordecai's reply is so significant, with the words, "Who knows, but that you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther, "Get all the Jews to fast and pray for me, and after three days I will go to the king. If I perish, I perish."

Chapter 5. Esther waits in the courtyard opposite the open entrance to the throne room. The king sees her and extends the golden sceptre to say she may enter. Esther invites the king and Haman to a meal she has prepared that day. The king accepts, saying, "Bring Haman at once, so that we may do what Esther asks." After they had eaten, the king asks Esther, " What is your request? It will be given to you, even up to the half of my kingdom." Her reply appears strange, irrelevant and unexpected. All she asks is for the king and Haman to come again the next day for another meal . She will then make her request. The king agrees. Haman goes home "happy and in high spirits." (5 v 9) Haman is a bit deflated when he goes by the king's gate and sees Mordecai, who totally ignores Haman. At home, Haman calls

**EVENTS GO BEYOND
CO-INCIDENCE TO
DIVINE PROVIDENCE:
ESTHER, A JEWISH
ORPHAN BECOMES
QUEEN OF PERSIA.**

together his wife Zeresh and friends to tell of his good fortune adding, "all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate." His wife and friends suggest Haman has an extra high gallows erected, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. He can then go and enjoy the dinner with the king in the evening. This suggestion delights Haman, and he has the gallows built.

Chapter 6. "That night the king could not sleep." He sends for someone to read to him from the Chronicles. The page selected records how Mordecai had saved the king's life from assassination. Xerxes asks if Mordecai has ever been rewarded. The answer is "No." In the morning, the king asks Haman, " What should be done to the man the king delights

to honour?" Thinking it must be himself, Haman replies, " Bring the royal robe, a horse with the royal crest and get the most noble prince to lead him through the streets of the capital."

"Right," says the king, "you go and do that for Mordecai." After the procession, Haman rushes home, shattered. While he is telling his wife and friends, the king's messengers are at the door, calling him to Esther's banquet.

Chapter 7. This is the most dramatic scene in the book. Please read it.

Chapter 8. Esther pleads with the king to save the lives of her people, the Jews. The king can not alter a law of the Medes and Persians. (chapter 1v19) He sends a letter by first class post: couriers mounted on fast horses bred for the king (8 v 10) to all provinces, allowing the Jews to assemble and defend themselves.

Chapter 9. The tables are turned. The Jews get the upper hand over those who hated them.

Chapter 10 is dedicated to Mordecai, who rises to the position formerly held by Haman.

God is not mentioned in this Old Testament book, but that does not mean He is absent. Events go beyond co-incidence to Divine Providence: Esther, a Jewish orphan becomes queen of Persia. Mordecai is in the right place at the right time, and there was a night when the king could not sleep.

Dennis Monger

Congregation News



Wellhouse, West Yorkshire

The Queen's 60th Jubilee Street Party at Wellhouse took place as planned and was attended by 79 people including a good number of children. Members of the committee had adorned the church's private road with bunting and the weather remained fine. A few local ladies had joined our organising committee, helping with food and bringing family and friends with them.

We had face painting on offer, a bookstall, bric-a-brac and a royal memorabilia display. Girls from the Katie Philpot Dance School also entertained us. There was plenty of food, fun and laughter as well as provisions to take home. They left with sandwiches, cake, buns, crisps and a special Queen's Jubilee mug. The community responded well with one little boy asking if he could come to the Queen's Party next year!

Alan Holdsworth



Tytherton, Wiltshire

'Cream Tea on the Lawn' has become an annual event in recent years. This time it was decided to make it part of the village's Jubilee Celebrations. This was highly successful and a steady stream of locals and visitors enjoyed an excellent tea in a marquee just outside the church railings.

At the same time a Flower Festival was held in the church with arrangements prepared by various village organisations. It gave an opportunity for us to have a table showing a range of items of general and local Moravian interest including a text book and photographs of the former Girls' Boarding School. These display's were much appreciated by many visitors.

Tytherton Anniversary, normally held in May, this year took place on June 24th. It was well supported and, again, an excellent tea was enjoyed after the service.

The 'Cream Tea' raised £270 for Wiltshire Air Ambulance and, from the Anniversary collection, £210 was sent to the Y.P.M.A.

On a sad note we have to record the death of Sr. Julia England in her 90th year. Sr. Julia was a member here for many years who took an active part in the life of the congregation in earlier days. Poor health had made her visits to Tytherton rare recently but she maintained a lively interest to the end.

It is our custom to mark the birthdays of regular worshippers with a card. This summer we have had two special birthdays. In July Sr. John leatherwood was 90 and in August Sr. Betty Hussey was 95. Each received flowers as well as a card and both were greatly appreciated. Sr Betty is now housebound but was able to send us a lovely card of thanks.

Joyce Mellowes

Sparkhill, Birmingham

On July 15th 2012, after morning service, a church meeting was held in which Srs. Zoe Ferdinand and Julie Gumbs were elected as elders. We wish them well in their church service.

On Sunday 5th August, our usual service was cancelled in order that four local churches - Sparkhill United Reformed Church, Sparkhill Moravian, Hall Green Methodist and Trinity U.R.C. could come together to hold an outdoor service. The weather held up nicely in this unusual summer. It was a lovely time of fellowship and worship and after the service we stayed for a barbecue. It did indeed feel like an agape, a 'Lovefeast' and a continuation of the service which we all enjoyed.

Ashton McIntosh

Harold Road, London

We were recently privileged to welcome Br. Devon Anglin, minister of the Holy Cross Moravian Church at Santa Cruz in the District of St. Elizabeth in Jamaica, who led our worship for two weeks. His sheer enthusiasm, knowledge of Scripture, inspirational preaching, humour and modesty as well as singing ability left a deep impression on our congregation. His home visits were most welcome and touched all those concerned.

A number of the congregation have suffered ill health recently and we continue to pray for Srs. Louise Clarke, Audrey Gonsalves, Jane Joseph, Johannah Lake, Leontine Manners and Diane Thomas.

Michael O'Sullivan

CONGREGATION REGISTERS

BAPTISM

7th Jun. □ **Eliza Margaret Brundle** □ *Brockweir*
29th Jul. □ **Gracie Emily Gibson** □ *Royton*

DEATH

5th Feb. □ **Julia England** □ *Tytherton*
15th Aug. □ **Stanley Clarke** □ *Bath, Weston*
15th Sept. □ **Ivor Ostler** □ *Brockweir*

Provincial Diary for October

5/7	Irish District youth Weekend	Sr Taylor
6	Lancashire District Conference, 9.30am. Fairfield	Br Hopcroft
	Yorkshire District Conference, 9.00am. Gomersal	The PEC
8/9	PEC, BMB, Unitas Estates Meetings	The PEC
10	Serving Ministers' Consultation, Church House	The PEC
12/14	Lay preachers' Training Weekend, Shallowford House	Br Hopcroft
15	Ockbrook School Governors	Br Cooper
17	Faith and order and Inter Church relations Committee, Church House	Sr Groves
18	Finance Committee, Church House	The PEC
20	Irish District Conference, Cliftonville	Sr Taylor
	Midlands District Conference, Ockbrook	Br Hopcroft
23/25	CTE Forum	Br Cooper
31	Church Service Advisory Board, Church House	The PEC

PRAYER NOTES

4th October - St. Francis Day (Catholic Christian)

9th October - Simat Torah (Judaism)

16th - 23rd October - Navaratri (Hindu)

18th October - St. Luke, Apostle and Evangelist (Christian)

20th October - Installation of Scriptures as Gukru Granth (Sikh)

26th - 29th October - Eid al Adha (Islam)

28th October - Milvin Bridge Day

28th October - Reformation Day

31st October - All Hallows' Eve

All Hallows' Eve

"God, we thank you for life. We thank you for those who have lived with us and now because of your goodness live in a new way in a new place. This is a season of grief and remembrance and sadness. But because of the victory of Jesus over death, it is not a season for fear or despair. We have hope, because of Jesus' resurrection that we too will live forever. That fact of faith allows us to rest here and now and enjoy our moments with you here while we have them here. After all, we have forever to enjoy the rest! Remove fear of death in our lives and lead us to trust you for every moment. Thank you God for a Holy All Hallows Eve."

A Prayer to St. Francis for life

Gentle St. Francis, you were so devoted to the humanity of Christ. Your heart burst with appreciation toward God for taking on human life. You saw beauty and goodness in all living things - in birds that sing, the fish that fill our waters, and all that lives in nature. Help us to imitate your reverence for life wherever it may be.

A Prayer for Doctors to St. Luke

Good Saint Luke, we are told that before you met our dear Lord and became a follower of His and a writer of His Gospel, you were a doctor. We beg you this day to bless and help and protect our doctor. Obtain for him the graces he most needs to do his work well and serve God generously. Help him to be strong and gentle, prudent and charitable, understanding and self-sacrificing. Give him great skill in the care of our bodies, so that, blessed with physical strength and health, we may more faithfully perform our daily tasks. Help us all, good Saint Luke, to imitate very closely the life and virtues of our Blessed Mother Mary, about whom you wrote so beautifully, and of Him whom she bore into this world, Jesus Christ our Lord and our God, who lives and is King for ever and ever. Amen.

Reformation Day

Dear God, thank you that on this day so many years ago, you caused Martin Luther to post his 95 theses that launched the reformation which reclaimed the truth of your glorious gospel. Thank you for the gospel of your son Jesus Christ, revealed through scripture alone, which proclaims that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to your glory alone. Thank you for your gifts to your church through the ages - the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, whom you have given "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."

For the sake of your glory, and the glory of your son Jesus Christ, let your gospel be preached - let there be a new reformation, so that your name may be great among the nations, and that all may know that you are Lord. Let many sons be brought to glory. May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of his suffering! Amen!

THE MORAVIAN MESSENGER

Official Journal of the Moravian Church in the British Province. Published monthly by the authority of the Provincial Synod. Advertisements and all communications concerning distribution and supply should be sent to the Moravian Book Room, 5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ, and NOT to the Editor.



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