

# Moravian messenger



December  
2012

## Advent: Expectation and Preparation

As December begins we have already entered the season of Advent, and children across the world have begun to count down the days until Christmas. Some of you who have smartphones may have installed a Christmas countdown app telling you exactly how many days, hours and minutes until the big day. Those who are more organised may have already done all the Christmas shopping and written all their cards. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Advent is an important period in its own right.

The Latin root of the word 'Advent' is a word that means 'coming'. Advent is preparation for the coming of Jesus to the world - both in the past and also in the present. Each Advent, we relive ancient Israel's yearning and hope, and each Christmas we celebrate the fulfilment of that yearning. This is expressed in an Advent hymn more than a thousand years old: "O come, O come, Immanuel" (New Hymn Book #41). The language is evocative and powerful. We are Israel - captive, mourning, lonely, in exile, longing for



*Advent at Fairfield. Photo: Karol Lees*

salvation. At the end of each verse, a joyful chorus confidently proclaims its fulfilment: "Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel." Advent is a season of expectant anticipation.

During Advent, the majority of the Old Testament lectionary readings are from the book of the prophet Isaiah. They speak of Israel's yearning and God's promise of a different kind of world, ruled by a king upon whom the Spirit will rest, where all will live in peace. The Gospel lectionary readings focus on John the Baptist and Mary the mother of Jesus. They also sound

this theme of expectant anticipation. John prepares the way for the one who is coming and will baptise with the Holy Spirit. In Mary, expectation becomes pregnancy. A new life is waiting to be born, a new dawn from on high.

Advent is also a season of repentant preparation for a future that is yet to come. The readings about John the Baptist highlight repentance. Many people think of repentance as primarily about being sincerely sorry for our sins and perhaps doing

penance, but the biblical meaning emphasizes change. To repent is to turn to God. In the Old Testament, the meaning of repentance is shaped by Israel's experience of exile: it means to return to the place of God's presence. "The way of the Lord" is the path of return from exile to God. The New Testament adds an additional nuance. The root of the Greek word translated as "repent" means entering into a new mind-set, a new way of seeing. To repent is to follow the way that leads out of our separation and estrangement, to see things differently and to reconnect with God.

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# Advent: Expectation and Preparation

During Advent it is easy to be overwhelmed by all the practical preparations for our church and family festivities. We must give time to preparing our hearts and minds, because on the personal level, Christmas is about light coming into the darkness of our individual lives, about our return from exile, about inner peace. Indeed, it is about the birth of Christ within us. And on the political level, the nativity stories raise challenging questions about our attitudes and actions. Are we actively seeking a world of justice and peace under the Lordship of the baby born in a stable? Are we like the Magi who follow the light wherever it leads us? Or are we among those in Herod's court who seek to thwart the coming of the true king and God's kingdom at any cost, rather than lose our power and status?

We are meant to be changed by Advent and Christmas. We all know that in order for change to be effective there must be time to prepare the ground, to clear out the old and make space for the new. That is why it is important not to rush straight to Christmas, but to make the most of Advent, the season of expectation and preparation, so that when we do celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ it will mean so much more.

*Michael Newman*

## A word from the Editor

Writing this editorial at the end of October whilst the trees are radiant and glowing in their autumn splendour makes thoughts of Christmas seem unduly hasty. Of course it's not, the clocks have been altered, the nights are drawing in and the commercial run up to Christmas probably began once the Olympics finished. As Christians we have Advent to prepare us to put everything back into focus.

Advent is a busy time in our church lives and leads inexorably to Christmas Day and God's wonderful gift to us all when "The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." It is a happy day and I love sharing it with my church family. Sr. Sue Groves usually wears outrageous earrings, Sr. Mary Harris will probably have a flashing reindeer brooch and Katie and Tom Groves will wear Santa hats or reindeer antlers. The children will also bring some of their presents along for us to admire. Although this may sound frivolous our worship is genuine and heartfelt and you can feel ripples of excitement breaking forth. It is a time for families to come together but this very happiness may exclude those in our midst who are alone or have been recently bereaved.

If it is difficult for those in our immediate circle, whom we care for, imagine how hard this time must be

## NOTICE BOARD

### Fairfield Tree Festival

Fairfield will be holding a Christmas Tree Festival on the 8 & 9 December 2012 titled 'Christmas around the World'. Opening times are 8 December 12noon to 6pm, 9 December 1pm to 5pm admission free light refreshments available.

*Janet Warr*

## Letter to Ed

*Dear Sisters and Brothers,  
I have been asked by one of the Sisters from the Eastern District:*

*'Does a a crochet pattern exist for the lamb and flag, which is the symbol of the Moravian Church?'*

*If you have a pattern or have an idea where a pattern can be found, can you please let me know.*

*You can contact me via email at  
Edwin.Quildan@Moravian.org.uk*

*or post*

*Fetter Lane Moravian Church  
Moravian Close, 381 Kings Road,  
Chelsea, London SW10 0LP*

*Every Blessing  
Edwin Quildan*

for those facing financial hardship, the homeless, prisoners, refugees and the unloved. Whilst we have so much, we must give freely our compassion, time and money to reach out to those in need. In doing so we are following the example of our Lord and Saviour. May the light of Jesus shine forth in our words and deeds.

A Prayer for Christmas under difficult circumstances

*In me there is darkness,*

*But with you there is light;*

*I am lonely, but you do not leave me;*

*I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;*

*I am restless, but with you there is peace.*

*In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;*

*I do not understand your ways,*

*But you know the way for me.□*

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer - Tegel Prison 1943*

I wish you all a peaceful and happy Christmas.



## Cultra 2012 - Northern Ireland

The first weekend of October 2012 was the Irish District's annual Youth Event, held within the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Northern Ireland. Where regularly the event would have two separate camps for juniors and seniors, this year it was decided to incorporate both camps into one giving us a great chance to share fellowship among all ages. Friday night was spent meeting friends (old and new) and playing the legendary Torch Game! Saturday got off to a great start as we were able to share breakfast with a Girls' Brigade group who were staying in the residential centre at the same time and they even joined us in saying the Adam's Family grace. Throughout the rest of the day we played team games, visited 'Ye Olde Sweet Shoppe' and prepared our worship for the following morning as well as participating in some craft activities, lead by Sr. Patsy Holdsworth. That evening we were treated to a BBQ (with a great selection of deserts!) thanks to Br. & Sr. Hoey after which we exercised our vocal chords singing/shouting camp fire songs. Finally we took a very spooky ghost walk around the museum grounds...! Another great year was enjoyed by all thanks to all the helpers, leaders and kids that attended!

*Philip Battelle*

## FUTURE EVENTS

### MORYAC 17-19th May 2013

*At: Guy Chester Centre, Muswell Hill*

*Cost: £100 for the weekend, or £25 for day attendees*

*For: all those working with children and young people in the Moravian Church*

*Topics: to be decided, if you have any ideas of what you would like to cover please contact Joy Raynor*

Getting up at quarter to four in the morning most definitely not what two teenagers do most Friday mornings! Friday the 5th of October was special though, just the thought of being reunited with my Northern Irish buddies quickly got me up. After a big frappe for Jamie at Starbucks Manchester airport we were ready to roll! It was Jamie's first time flying so I thought I'd be looking after him - no chance! Being scared wasn't a problem because the excitement took over so much and Jamie's never scared (so I've been told).

Arriving down to Belfast international airport after a nice flight, we had a warm welcome from Patsy Holdsworth and after a little trip round Belfast, Pizza and a trip round Tesco with Roberta and Paul, 10am had soon turned to 6pm when everyone arrived Cultra.

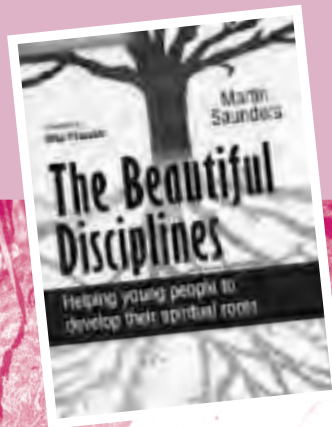
Big hugs from past friends and getting to know you games soon created our special Northern Irish family for that weekend: Out of all the residential I've been on Cultra most definitely had the most comfy bunk beds! Most of the girls stayed up chatting but waking up at that time in the morning took it's affects that night for me.

Waking up to smiling faces and warm toast we were ready for the next day's adventures. As usual Moravian Youth leaders kept us all entertained and happy but this most definitely shows when we play our legendary games! If you ask anyone who has been to a Moravian youth event like me they will rabbit on about the torch game which was amazingly spectacular this year!

In the evening we all went for a walk down the woods to be greeted by a glowing campfire. Just like the fire, all our faces lit up with smiles; singing songs with Andrea and eating marshmallows definitely made my day!

The hardest part about these trips is that they are so amazing and the friendships created are just so special you never want to leave! As mine and my friends eye's filled up with tears we looked very silly and parted for a bumpy flight home which I most definitely fell asleep in! - Bring on next year!

*Hannah Dunn*



## The Beautiful Disciplines

- Martin Saunders

Helping young people to develop their spiritual roots

This book has 11 sessions to examine different spiritual disciplines with young people, including an introductory 'audit' session. The remaining 10 sessions take a single discipline, explain what it is and give a chance to practise it through a variety of activities. This would make an excellent 10 week course for a group meeting weekly as there could be time at the beginning of each session to reflect on the previous week. Martin Saunders has defined the disciplines as -Prayer, Study (mainly of the Bible), Fasting, Meditation, Simplicity, Solitude,

Submission, Service, Worship and Celebration. Each session has options to adapt the programme to your own group of young people, with material for discussion and follow-on activities as well as the meeting plan and good notes for the leader of the group with background information about the discipline. This material could easily be used for an adult group wishing to explore spiritual discipline with a little adaptation.

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ISBN 978-0-85721-055-5 □ £12.99 □  
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# How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!

On that first Christmas Eve, I imagine that the "little town of Bethlehem" was raucous with noise. No doubt, its narrow streets were heaving with people, thanks to the Emperor's edict that "all should be enrolled." Inns were fully booked and every guest room occupied. Merchant stalls lined crowded byways, displaying anything and everything you could want, need, or imagine, with every vendor shouting, "on offer here ... cheap as chips!" Animals and people and soldiers all roamed about intermingled and everywhere was the deafening clamour of barking and braying, chatting and shouting, singing and moaning.

Was that first Christmas Eve in Bethlehem really that much different to our high streets, city centres, and malls in these weeks of the so-called "run-up to Christmas"? This has to be the busiest time of the year! What a frenzy of activity with so much to do, so many preparations to make - entertaining, spending, eating, and waiting in queues. And the noise - the cries of shopkeepers in the precinct, the drone of cars and buses in the streets, the hubbub of shoppers making their selections, and "colleague announcements" on loudspeakers, interrupting a cacophony of carols played with a beat. I've even found myself opening the door to children carolling in the neighbourhood and standing there like Scrooge, clutching my 10p's and hoping they'll forget the second verse and fall silent so I can pay them to go away that much sooner.

We live in a noisy world, but not all the noise of the world or of this season comes to us from the outside. Towards the end of the 1970's, Wayne Oates published a book titled "Nurturing Silence in a Noisy Heart," pointing

out that a good deal of the "noise" we experience in life comes, not from the outside, but from within our own hearts.

There is the noise of busyness, of being preoccupied with activities, responsibilities, comings and goings, and goings on. There are noises within which sometimes cause deep unrest, troubled emotions, mental exhaustion, and spiritual fatigue. And the great paradox of our modern day is that, while claiming to desire inner peace, we actually thrive on noise. We don't want to be left out or left behind. We want to be where the action is, for there is a comfort in the cheer of the crowd and the drone of polite conversation.

And just when the noise all round and the noise within was as loud as anyone could possibly stand without going completely mad, ever so softly, almost completely unheard, like a whisper nearly lost in the din and the roar, God spoke a quiet word and the Messiah was born.

God speaks a quiet word of peace to us again this Christmas. In all the noise of our day and the noise of our own lives and the noise of our own hearts, God speaks a quiet word of peace to us.

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.*

*No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

Thom Stapleton

# The Ulster Covenant 1912

*A continuing lesson from history is that things never turn out as intended.*

In 1911 it was clear that a 'Home Rule for Ireland' bill would be presented to the British Parliament by the Liberal Prime Minister HH Asquith (briefly educated at Fulneck School). In 1912 the bill started making its way through Parliament. However, there was huge opposition to this from the unionists in Ireland led by an Anglican from Dublin, Sir Edward Carson the well-known barrister, Member of Parliament and Privy Councillor.

Carson began mobilising against Home rule in Ulster and in the autumn of 1911 he spoke to a crowd of over 50,000 unionists. In the spring of 1912 there was another mass protest rally with 200,000 attending and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh offered prayers at the rally.

To show the depth of opposition to Home Rule it was decided to make a declaration that unionists could sign. This would take the form of a covenant, built on the tradition of covenanting in the Scottish Presbyterian Church. It was drawn up and submitted to the Churches for approval.

## The Covenant - for men stated

BEING CONVINCED in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V., humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant, throughout this our time of threatened calamity, to stand by one another in defending, for ourselves and our children, our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognize its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right, we hereto subscribe our names.

## The Declaration - for women stated

We, whose names are underwritten, women of Ulster, and loyal subjects of our gracious King, being firmly persuaded that Home Rule would be disastrous to our Country, desire to associate ourselves with the men of Ulster in their uncompromising opposition to the Home

Rule Bill now before Parliament, whereby it is proposed to drive Ulster out of her cherished place in the Constitution of the United Kingdom, and to place her under the domination and control of a Parliament in Ireland.

Praying that from this calamity God will save Ireland, we here to subscribe our names.

On Saturday 28th September, work ceased and in many places congregations met for worship before going on to sign the Covenant. The first to sign was Sir Edward Carson followed by Lord Londonderry and then Church representatives. The Covenant and aligned Declaration was signed across Ulster, in Churches, Orange Halls and School buildings.

In Gracehill it was signed in 'The Academy' and it is clear from the records that many Gracehill people signed. However there is no mention of the issue in the Gracehill Diary of the time and the minister of Gracehill did not sign the Covenant.

In Ulster 228,991 women signed the Declaration and 218,206 men signed the Covenant. The Covenant was a clear threat of civil disobedience or even rebellion by the men signing it and the Declaration a clear signal of support for the men signing the Covenant from the unionist women of Ulster.

Despite the opposition from unionists in Ulster, Asquith was still working to get the Home Rule bill through the Commons in 1912 and 1913. However, by 1914 war had broken out in Europe and a compromise in Parliament was agreed that the Bill would pass into law but its effects be postponed until peace came.

In Ulster, the Ulster Unionist Council decided to take resistance further and in 1913 they formed the Ulster Volunteer Force, who were given training in firearms. In 1914, gunrunning brought in 20,000 rifles and huge quantities of ammunition for the volunteers. In the south of Ireland a nationalist force called the National Volunteers was formed. In 1916 a group called the Irish Volunteers took over the General Post Office in Dublin and the Irish Rising started.

Some say that Northern Ireland was Carson's creation and that the Covenant was its birth certificate. By 1920 what Carson had fought against came to pass, Ireland had been partitioned into North and South, the North with a form of Home Rule and the South becoming the Free State which would ultimately leave even the Commonwealth.

Sarah Groves (PEC)

# Lay Preaching

## ...privilege and pleasure

There is no doubt in my mind that it is a huge privilege to be a lay preacher, but it can be a lonely privilege if you're based in Birmingham! Here I'm many miles from the nearest Moravian Church and therefore do most of my preaching on the local URC circuit. This is rewarding but sometimes I need to be reminded of and refreshed by our Moravian heritage.

So the recent lay preachers weekend at Shallowford was valuable both as a training session but also for sharing with other Moravian lay preachers from all over the province.



We arrived in the evening of Friday, 12 October and having checked into our rooms gathered together for dinner. For many of us it was a chance to renew old acquaintances and catch-up with what was going on in other congregations. This was followed by our first full session which was led by the relatively new head of Northern College, Rev Dr Rosalind Selby. The session was thought-provoking and prompted a lot of discussion.

The next two busy days saw us concentrating firstly on "Sermon Preparation" led by Sister Woolford and then two sessions on "Visual Aids" with Brother Kreusel. These were practical sessions aimed at improving our skills but, though ably led, we were constantly encouraged to share our own good practice and ideas. Needless to say, I think that the churches in which we preach over the next few months will see some new ideas from some old faces. The

weekend finished with a Cup of Covenant where the service was led by our brothers and sisters from Northern Ireland. Gathered in the beautiful setting of the Shallowford Chapel this was both moving and thoughtful.

Gillian Taylor, the board member responsible for organising this weekend, told us that it was a "thank you" for the work that we do on behalf of the church. I gained the impression that my fellow lay preachers share my opinion that we get as much out of our lay preaching as do any of the congregations which we serve. I began this little piece by saying that it was a huge privilege to be a lay preacher, and it is. It is also a great pleasure.

Reflecting back on the weekend I was struck not only at the faithfulness of those around me but the sense of fun that we all seem to share. Laughter was abundant, especially in the bar late at night! (And the Northern

Ireland crowd are very generous!). We left after a good Sunday lunch feeling full, physically and spiritually.

This all made me think. I am sure that there are people in our congregations who could be lay preachers but don't know what it involves, what training is needed, how to get started. Are you one of those people? Do you know one of those people? Then now is the time to act. Talk to one of your local lay preachers, ask your minister, write to the Board. The province needs to be able to look forward to the future with confidence in the preachers available and that means replacing those of us who are rapidly growing older! From over 25 years of experience I can tell you that lay preaching opens new doors, introduces you to new people, and never stops challenging and deepening your faith.

*Blair Kessler*

*Sr. Diane Thornton also enjoyed the weekend and writes:*

Thank you Sr Taylor, P.E.C., and the Church Service Advisory Board for once more organising a weekend when the Lay Preachers of the Province could meet together for "in service training". This sounds quite formal but it was very much appreciated and allowed us to deepen our knowledge, acquire new skills, share ideas, to spend time in personal reflection and group discussion and also enjoy fellowship, fun and laughter.

The peaceful comfortable setting of Shallowford House provided the back drop for study sessions on sermon preparation and children's talks. Thank you Sr Kathryn and Br Joachim for presenting these and spending time with us. The study passage for our weekend (Mark Ch 10 v 35 - 45) was introduced on Friday evening by the Principal of Northern College Rosalind Selby. Her stimulating and interesting ideas led us to deeper thought processes the following day and after time preparing a sermon/service on this passage it was amazing to realise how many different themes could be drawn out of 10 short verses.

Morning and evening prayer were led by individual members and the closing Cup of Covenant Service was led by our Northern Ireland brothers and sisters - a wonderful ending to an inspirational weekend.

The idea of contentment came into worship at the beginning (Philippians Ch 4 v 11) and end (1 Timothy Ch 6 v 6) of our time together and I am sure I speak of everyone when I say that 17 "more than contented" Moravians left for home on Sunday afternoon. We are hopeful to return in 2 years time to further develop our skills of service to the Moravians Church in the British Province and through the church our service to God.

## Provincial Committees

# Social Responsibility Committee

On the first Saturday of November the Social Responsibility Committee met at Ockbrook to welcome our new members and to discuss a number of matters of interest.

The major items of discussion were Child Poverty and poverty in the UK in general. This was prompted by the letter we had received from Brother Alan Holdsworth. Brother Holdsworth drew our attention to the growing problem of poverty and his determination to do something about it. He pointed out that in a world that can transplant living hearts, send probes to Mars poverty is a problem we should be able to solve.

Brother Holdsworth's suggestion was for the Moravian Church to call a conference of other churches to discuss the matter. After much discussion we decided that we could not support this mode of action. Instead we decided that we should draw the attention of all our churches to "Church Action on Poverty". CAP is an ecumenical organisation founded some 30 years ago to draw all the separate churches together in one campaigning organisation. It seems to us that it makes more sense for us to join an organisation that already exists than to try and create a new one.

We therefore recommend to all Moravian churches and individual Moravians that they seriously consider becoming part of CAP and join the campaign to make the UK a fairer place where the gap between the well off and the poor narrows rather than widens. Information about Child Action on Poverty can be found on their website ([www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)) where you will also find an instructive video about their current campaigns and successes.

Very much linked to poverty in the UK is homelessness which was

the other major subject of our discussions. The current financial position in the country is resulting in more people becoming homeless. We heard about a charity in Birmingham which works with young homeless people and has had a 32% increase in the number of 16 to 25-year-olds referred to them in the past year. An excellent paper from Northern Ireland was circulated to members of the committee and will be circulated.

We recognise that, ultimately, a just and compassionate society requires political action. The Christian Church must make its voice heard in pressing for such action. In the meantime, we believe that the best way that the church and individuals within the church can make a difference to the urgent and pressing problem of homelessness and poverty is by supporting local charities which are dealing with the situation in their own areas. In Northern Ireland there is the Simon Community, in Birmingham the Fireside Centre, St Basil's and Birmingham City Mission. London has Centrepoint which has branch organisations across the country and there are many other organisations, often with church links, which work in other areas. Many people support Shelter, a national organisation which seeks to advise, support and campaign on behalf of homeless people. Though fully supportive of the work that Shelter does, we thought it right to point out that it does not offer or provide accommodation to people in need.

Poverty and homelessness are scourges in our society and we are grateful to Brother Holdsworth for encouraging us to discuss them. Jesus said, "Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me". When we fail to do anything for the poor and homeless we fail our Lord.

*Blair Kessler*

## JOB

# Open Book

Described by many scholars as one of the greatest pieces of English literature, especially when read in the Authorised Version, the book of Job is nevertheless a part of the Hebrew Scriptures, where it is held in equally high regard. It is listed among the Writings and was not designed to be read in public worship, but rather to be used for private meditation. The setting is in the time of the patriarchs, which means that Job was not a Jew. The place in which he lived is also outside Israel and in the vicinity of Egypt. The subject with which the book deals and which, it seems, was designed to disprove, was commonly accepted in Hebrew thought. The generally held view was that God rewarded good people with prosperity and punished the wicked by afflicting them in some way, either with poverty or illness, or both. This belief is clearly held by Job's friends who come to console him during his time of suffering and who come to the conclusion that Job must not have been as good as he was made out to be and that God is punishing him for some wrong that no one knows about. Apart from the first two chapters and the closing verses of the last chapter, the book is written in poetic form. This is not obvious in the older translations but more recent versions of the Scriptures have sought to show this, even if some of the original meaning is at times sacrificed. It is probably a good idea to read it first in the Authorised Version and then in a modern translation.

In addition to poetry, there is also drama. The reader is let in on the circumstances behind the story in the opening chapters, where we learn that it is not only God who is involved in the events that unfold but also Satan, who is depicted as a being whose one aim is to cause trouble in the world. This knowledge is hidden from Job and his friends and they have to struggle for the answer to their problem without the information given to the reader. The book has often been described as an attempt to explain why the righteous have to suffer but in fact it doesn't answer that question. A more accurate description is that it shows the heights

to which human faith can rise even under the most terrible circumstances.

The proverbial patience of Job is nowhere demonstrated. He curses the day he was born and rages against the apparent injustice of God who is playing cat and mouse with him.

The Hebrews were not alone in wrestling with the problem of pain and suffering. There exists a very old Babylonian book on the same theme, entitled 'I Will Praise The God of Wisdom' in which a righteous man is afflicted with illness and laments the way in which the activities of the gods cannot be understood and that prayer and divination are ineffective. A much larger part of the Babylonian poem is taken up with the celebration of the sufferer's restoration to health, whereas in the book of Job, this occupies just a few verses in the last chapter.

*'I was born with nothing and I will die with nothing. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May his name be praised!'*

The story opens with an account of Job's wealth and good character, then there is a meeting of the heavenly beings with Satan present among them. The Lord mentions how good and faithful Job is and Satan replies that Job wouldn't be so good if he wasn't getting some benefit out of it and would curse God if he lost everything. So Satan is given permission to divest Job of his possessions and family and a series of calamities takes place in a single day, robbing Job of everything. His response is, 'I was born with nothing and I will die with nothing. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May his name be praised!' The heavenly beings meet again and once more the Lord calls Satan's attention to the fact that Job remains faithful in spite of losing everything. Satan's reply is to the effect that if Job's body is hurt, he will curse

the Lord so Satan is given permission to afflict Job with painful sores and boils. Job's wife advises him to curse God and die, to which Job replies that we welcome good things when God sends them so why complain when trouble comes. Job's three friends arrive and are so horrified at the sight of him that they just sit there for a week saying nothing. Chapter 3 is Job's lament, wishing he had died at birth, when at least he would have been at peace. Chapters 4 and 5 consist of a speech by Eliphaz, the first friend, who insists that only the guilty suffer, and this is answered by Job in chapters 6 and 7 where he states that his friend's words have not been very helpful. In chapter 8, Bildad, the second friend, more or less agrees with the words of Eliphaz. Job replies in chapters 9 and 10 that he has heard it all before and then addresses his complaint to God. The third friend, Zophar, speaks in chapter 11, agreeing with the first two. Job's reply in chapters 12 to 14 begins on a sarcastic note and develops into an address to God in which he wishes that he had a chance to speak with him face to face. This cycle of speeches and answers continues until chapter 32 when a bystander, named Elihu, joins in and spends six chapters more or less repeating what has been said before. A storm breaks out in chapter 38 and out of it the Lord speaks to Job, recounting a number of things that have been done and which are difficult or impossible to understand. This takes up the next three chapters apart from a few words from Job in chapters 40 and 42 in which he apologises to God for questioning him.

In an age when little was written about life after death, except for the shadowy underworld of Sheol, it is interesting to come across a passage such as chapter 19 beginning at verse 25. 'For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh (or without my flesh) I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.'

All quotations are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

*P. Gubi*

## Could YOU be the new Editor of the Moravian Messenger?

### There is a great opportunity to the serve the Province as the new Editor of the Moravian Messenger

The Moravian Messenger is the monthly periodical of the British Province of the Moravian Church, distributed throughout the Province and beyond. It covers a variety of subjects, including news from the congregations, the Province, the Unity and the Christian church as a whole. It also includes interesting articles on a wide range of topics connected to the Christian church and the Christian faith.

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**Judith Ashton, our present Editor, explains the role...**

The Messenger is an important part of our Provincial life. It remains, hopefully, an effective means of communication and dissemination throughout the Province and beyond (the magazine is also published on the provincial web site and read around the world). Forward planning is the key to producing a magazine on a monthly basis and a lot of time is spent thinking about articles that will be of interest to the general reader and then finding individuals with a specialised knowledge to write them. Some articles are sent in independently and the editor is always grateful for these, as it's important to share good practice and news with other congregations.

The role of editor can be challenging at times but is always interesting and I've enjoyed especially finding out more about the mission field. Tact and diplomacy are skills that are sometimes called for but the editor has to have the final say, as he or she is ultimately responsible for the magazine. The time taken to produce a monthly magazine does vary each month depending upon the contributions received but as long as the deadline is born in mind it is rewarding to finish yet another magazine. **IT skills are essential in this role.** Most articles are received electronically and all copy is forwarded to the print designer in this mode.

I would like to conclude by thanking those who allowed me to edit the Messenger for 4 years. It will change and develop with the character of a new editor but that's inevitable and a good thing too.

*Judith Ashton*

## Congregation News

### Brockweir

It's been a painful year for Brockweir losing loved members of the congregation and in September, Br. Ivor Frank Ostler died after a short illness. At the funeral service Br. Thom Stapleton described him as a 'quiet and unassuming man' and he was, but he usually had a twinkle in his eye and he loved to dance! At the start of each service he always lit the peace candle and tolled the church bell, which Flora Klickman described somewhat uniquely as sounding like a hammer hitting a tin shovel. Br. Ostler cared deeply about environmental issues and like his Christian faith, he tried to put his principles into practice in every day life. Ivor will be sadly missed and our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Carol and his children Nigel and Patsy and their families.

At this time of year as we have the first frosts, our pipe organ begins to wheeze and shudder as the cold air affects the pipes and playing it, and singing with it, becomes a battle of wills - the organ usually wins! We are therefore extremely grateful to Mr and Mrs Keith Simcock for donating

an electric organ to the church, in memory of Br. Ivor Ostler. Mrs Beryl Simcock sometimes takes services in Brockweir and has a long association with the church as Ivor was her brother.

On Saturday 22nd September some of the congregation travelled to Carr's Lane to attend the Provincial Fellowship Day. The theme this year was 'Inside Out: The inclusion and exclusion of people in Biblical times and in our Church today.' We were challenged from the very beginning with the opening welcome from Sr. Jane Hutchings and we were made to consider through a series of group discussion sessions how we might ensure the congregations in the Province are inclusive to all. It was interesting to learn from one another in this manner.

At the beginning of September Br. Thom Stapleton took part in Vespers at Tintern Abbey and the preacher was the Archbishop of Cardiff, George Stack. Although the site is

*continue over...*

# Congregation News

## CONGREGATION REGISTERS

### FUNERAL

21st Nov. □ Geoffrey Tate □ Sparkhill  
 22nd Nov. □ Bernell Burroughs □ Sparkhill

## Brockweir *continued*

managed by Cadw (Welsh Government's historic environment service) a yearly service is held and it is remarkable how the peaceful ruin comes to life when hundreds of people join together in worship. Whilst the Cistercian monks left centuries ago following the Dissolution in 1536, it is not too hard to imagine the daily life and worship of the Abbey and a sense of that tranquility still remains.

Our Harvest Festival was held on September 23rd and saw the launch of the church as a collection point for Chepstow Food Bank. Instead of our usual Harvest Table of fruit and vegetables we had a wonderful display of tinned goods and dried foodstuffs - not a pumpkin in sight! We also had a Harvest of new members as 3 regular worshippers and 1 adherent decided to take the next step on their journey of faith and become members of the church. We are pleased to welcome Srs. Pauline Richards, Betty Hoskins, Christine Morgan and Heather Armstrong to the fold. As in recent years we combined our Harvest Supper with the

service and this gave a festive air to the reception of the members.

On Sunday 7th October we held an Animal Blessing Service to celebrate the Feast Day of St. Francis and 'all creatures great and small.' It was a fun day aimed at reaching out to the community, with activities for children and celebrating God's creation with a short service and individual blessings for the animals and their owners. Refreshments were provided and there were quizzes for young and old, mask painting sessions and even a 'Jackanory corner' with readings every half hour. Music was also provided with an animal theme including such classics as 'Who let the dogs out' and we had a talk about tortoises from our own resident vet Millie. A special thanks to Pat, Tony and Eileen for coming up with the idea and executing it so magnificently. The animals behaved extremely well and next year we are hoping a few more will turn up - it was such a brilliant day.

*Judith Ashton*

## Baildon

In the very wet month of June, we had Br Purnell's first two weddings, Jill-Marie Craven married Shaun David Shepherd on the 23rd and Rachel Marie Snowden married Christopher David Dillingham on the 30th. Both weddings were very happy and beautiful occasions and the couples were lucky enough to find a few gaps in the showers for photographs!

September brought the annual Scarecrow Festival. The Baildon Moravian Church produced 19 small and 2 large scarecrows portraying the areas around the world where the Moravian Church is working. These were artistically displayed in the Church and we are all very pleased to say, we won!!

Also in September we had the Harvest Festival. The Church was beautifully decorated, the service led by our own minister Derrick was very interesting, with lots of interaction and participation by the congregation. It was also lovely to dust off and sing the harvest hymns.

We were also pleased to welcome Br Peter Gubi to lead our Church Anniversary Service, and during the after service coffee, he was able to meet members and discuss the history of the Baildon Church with Sr. Winifred Warren.

A couple of our number joined Horton Church for their

'Tea at the Ritz', and had lots of fun dressing up in their 'best' and being waited on whilst eating tasty cakes and drinking lots of tea!



*Annual Scarecrow Festival*

This year the MWA ladies are again joining the Guides to fill shoe boxes for the Samaritans's Purse charity. Last year we enjoyed this evening very much and it turned into a very enjoyable social time of us all getting to know and finding out more about each other.

Baildon village has started to have a Farmer's Market, once a month. The first one was very well attended, and it has been decided to change the monthly coffee and bacon sandwich Saturday morning to coincide with this event to provide another venue for people to drop in for a drink and to encourage people to find us!

On November 24th we will be holding our Moravian Market with stalls, refreshments, raffle and the ever popular cake stall and the 'Chocolate Tombola!' After that we will all be preparing for Christmas with the annual question, 'who is going to trim all the candles for the Christingles!'

*Jennifer Baldwin*



*Lower Wyke Congregation Trip was to Bridlington*

## Lower Wyke

When you are part of a busy church time flies and it is a year since I submitted news of our congregation.

The ladies have been very active this year with the MWA Coffee Morning and Service and Ladies Weekend but the highlight was in April. Following the Easter resurrection celebrations our buildings certainly came alive with the arrival of just short of 200 sisters for the MWA Day. It was a busy but thoroughly enjoyable Day - thanks to all who helped and those who travelled to be with us.

Our Green Fingers group organised a Picnic in the Paddock to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee during which they planted several containers of red, white and blue flowers. They have bloomed resplendent throughout the summer enhancing our grounds for outdoor events like the annual Strawberry Fair and Hog Roast both of which attracted many visitors as usual. For the second time the Proms in the Paddock became Proms in the Church due to the atrocious weather. Somehow the closeness of being packed into the Church festooned with flags and bunting, added to the atmosphere especially during the flag-waving finale. This year the Congregation Trip was to Bridlington and it was good to see so many little ones paddling, digging and playing on the beach. It seems to be becoming a day out for grandparents and grandchildren while Mums and Dads have the day off!

We remain a strong member of the local ecumenical group of churches and in July hosted the United Service. Being part of a large congregation was certainly special and

further cemented friendships with other Christians in the area.

The bric-a-brac Bonanza in August amazed us by raising a good amount of money buying and selling each others' discarded items. The local charity shops also benefited!

September was a month of celebrations starting with the Heritage Weekend when visitors were welcomed to a good display of memorabilia and tours round the settlement.

The same weekend saw 30 people eating and drinking their way through a five-course meal travelling round the area on the Safari Supper.

all received Bibles this year at Sunday School Prize Giving and it is good to see them bringing them to Sunday school week by week. A "puds and spuds" lunch is a good way to follow a service - a choice of potato fillings and naughty but nice deserts! We welcomed the opportunity to see Br Gubi (junior) who was invited back to conduct the harvest and following that service we were all invited to a lunch to celebrate Br and Sr Greenhough's Golden Wedding. We thanked them for a delicious buffet and wished them well



*Br and Sr Greenhough celebrate their Golden Wedding*

for the next 50 years! It is hard to believe such an active, young at heart couple have reached such a significant milestone.

November will again be busy with the Craft Fair, Pantomime and Christmas activities to look forward to. Happy Christmas everyone!

*Diane Thornton*

## CHURCH HOUSE

Church House will close at lunch time on Friday 21st December 2012 until Wednesday 2nd January 2013

Christmas Greetings: The Provincial Board and all the staff at Church House take this opportunity to wish all readers of the Messenger every blessing for Christmas and the New Year. May the peace and light of this season touch all our hearts and so inspire our everyday lives that others may see the light of Christ in us.

Yours in Christ,

*Br Hopcroft*

## Provincial Diary for December

8<sup>th</sup> Ockbrook School Governors' Br Hopcroft

12<sup>th</sup> The Ordination of Br Peter Gubi, ■■■■■  
7.30pm at Dukinfield Moravian Church

19/20<sup>th</sup> PEC, BMB, Unitas Estates Meetings The PEC

## PRAYER NOTES

### Advent Sunday

*Eternal God, we live in a world forgetful of your truth and our watchfulness is easily dulled by the cares of life. Keep us alert and ready to look on your Son when he comes with power and glory. By faith in him make us ready to stand secure when his coming shakes the world. Through him whose day draws near and whose coming is certain, our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen*

### Second Sunday in Advent

*Eternal Word, in the mouth of the prophets and in the dream of Joseph, your promise is spoken. At last in the womb of the Virgin Mary your Word takes flesh. Teach us to welcome Jesus, the promised Emmanuel, and to embrace the good news of his coming, that we may know him as the source of our redemption and grace and be kept from turning aside to cleverly invented myths or from offering the incense of our prayers at vain shrines, to always worship you, through Him, in spirit and in truth. Amen*

### Third Sunday in Advent

*Who are we, Lord God, that you should come to us? Yet you have visited and redeemed your people. As poor men long ago came from watching in the fields to see you, a child in the manger, so we come today from our various walks of life. Bless the worship of your church and may our hearts be set on heavenly things so that, whilst we are placed among things that are passing away, we may hold fast to those which last forever, for Jesus sake, Amen.*

### Fourth Sunday in Advent

*Heavenly Father, guardian of our homes, when you entrusted your Son to the care of Mary and Joseph, you did not spare them the pains that touch the life of every family. Bind us together and deepen our faith, that like the holy family of Nazareth, we may grow in wisdom and help your church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven, for Jesus' sake, Amen.*

### Christmas Day

*Son of God, child of Mary, born in the stable at Bethlehem, be born in our hearts today. Eternal Word, yet child without speech let our lips speak out your praise. Son of God robed in glory, yet wrapped in infant clothes, clothe us in your righteousness. May each heart be a manger and each home a Bethlehem. For your name's sake, Amen.*

### First Sunday after Christmas

*Eternal God, you have made us creatures of time, so that when time is over, we may attain your blessed eternity. Grant that as the years change, we may find rest in your eternal changelessness. May we meet the New Year bravely, sure in the faith that, while people come and go, and life alters around us, you are ever the same, guiding us with your wisdom, and protecting us with your love. Through Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen.*

## THE MORAVIAN MESSENGER

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