

Moravian messenger



April 2013

Sr. Sue Selby writes about:

The Church Anniversary at Dukinfield

Sunday, 3rd March marked the 258th anniversary of the Moravian Church in Dukinfield and the 40th anniversary of the opening of the current church building. For the readers of this article who are not aware of the origins of the Yew Tree Lane church, let me explain that, after finding dry rot in the original church building on Old Road, the then-minister, Br Tom McQuillan (to be known henceforth as "Mr Mac") and the congregation made the decision to move to the new community on the Yew Tree Lane estate in Dukinfield where an off-shoot of the church already existed in an old army hut. Mr Mac and his faithful band of men and women then spent evenings, weekends and summer holidays for 5 long years building the church that we have today. On 3rd March 1973, the church was officially opened and dedicated by Bishop E W Porter with the words "Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will enter into them and praise the Lord".

Looking back to those days, we can now truly appreciate what a



remarkable feat and indeed miraculous achievement this building was, and totally worthy of remembering and celebrating and so our 2013 Anniversary service commenced with the singing of hymn No 334 "Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live".

This was followed with a reading by 9 year old Sam Weir, who read from the first book of Corinthians, chapter

12 and verses 14 to 27 which speaks of the body being made up of so many different parts and no part being more important or more worthy than the rest. Sr Margaret McQuillan, daughter of Mr Mac was invited to give the address and she spoke fondly of the times 40+ years ago when her father and men (and women) of the congregation worked hard and long to achieve the dream that is now our house of God.

A two-course lunch for 60 people was served, followed by the cutting of a special Anniversary cake. Time was then made available to view photographs, newspaper articles and other memorabilia on display. We were encouraged to recall our memories of that time and heard tales of a hammer being dropped onto a worker's head and red-hot bitumen being accidentally poured over one

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The Church Anniversary at Dukinfield continued

worker's hand. He had to wait until the bitumen had been used up before someone took him off to hospital. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was no such thing as the Health and Safety at Work Act! We were given to understand that Mr Mac, who was a serious pipe smoker, dropped his pipe down the cavity of a new wall and when he realised, proceeded in dismantling the wall until the said pipe was retrieved, only for him to build the wall up again. It was also very moving for those of us whose parents worked on the building to see them pictured so strong and industrious.

The day concluded with a service of Holy Communion taken by Br Peter Gubi, ably assisted by past ministers Br Richard Ingham and Br John Wilkinson.

All in all, a happy day, full of wonderful memories, a few tears but many smiles.



A word from the Editor

Silence is golden

The Book Group in Brockweir is currently reading "An Altar in the World" by Barbara Brown Taylor. It is a fascinating book by an Anglican priest who teaches spirituality at Columbia Theological Seminary and is Professor of Religion at Piedmont College in Georgia. Each month the group read a chapter of the book out loud and then comment on the insights they have gained. I do occasionally wonder if I am reading the same book as the experiences of each individual tends to colour the way the text is interpreted but it provides for interesting discussion and a growth in fellowship. Br. Thom Stapleton usually attends and keeps us on the 'straight and narrow' as our discussions range far and wide. We usually begin the evening with five minutes meditation and I've found I value this time more and more as it empties my head of all the internal clutter I carry with me.

One of the results of this quiet time is that Br. Stapleton is incorporating more periods of quiet prayer into his services and this is widely welcomed. Some people find silence intimidating but we've found that it helps us to focus and to listen to the still voice within

whether in church or at the beginning of a Church Committee meeting.

For the past six months a Prayer Group has been meeting at the home of Sr. Harris and although we use liturgy we also incorporate periods of silence when we can pray or share our thoughts with the rest of the group. Often we are busy in our everyday lives but this quiet time makes a difference to all of us and perhaps makes us more receptive to the needs of others.

The penultimate chapter of "An Altar in the World" is entitled The Practice of Being Present to God and concentrates on prayer. Barbara Brown Taylor is honest enough to admit that she is 'a failure at prayer.' This may seem to be a strange admission for a priest but what I think she is saying is that prayer - sometime seemingly a list of demands - is not the same as praying. She advocates being fully aware of the presence of God no matter where we are or what we are doing whether we are preparing food for others or sitting in silent contemplation. Prayer varies for each of us and the intensity of that prayer will sometimes depend upon whether we are prepared to listen as well as petition.

Pray until something happens

Prayer is an essential part of our lives as Christians and as a church but sometimes it slips in our lives and we need to be prompted to make it part of our everyday routines.

The Provincial Youth and Children's Committee have recently done a survey of all the churches and their engagement with children and young people. The results were interesting, some churches have flourishing work and others not quite so much. One of the questions was 'Are members of your church involved in active prayer for youth and children's work? This is something every member and church can be engaged in, regardless of how many children attend their church, but the answers varied from 'yes' to 'I hope so' and 'I think so' and this is an area the PYCC felt we could do better as a church and we would do what we could to encourage more prayer for the children and young people in our churches, communities and the world. As a committee we thought it would be good to include a prayer

on the 'Youth Zone' page of the Messenger as well as encouraging people to use the prayers for Tuesday in WatchWords.

I know that many of you already pray for the younger generation, and I thank you for that, but to the rest of you I ask that you include prayer for young people and children every day and let us see what happens when we pray hard.

Dear Lord

Please help us to remember equality in our churches around the UK. Whether young or old help us to remember we are all important in your eyes. Lord protect our congregations and bless everyone who has attended summer camp. Amen

(Written by a young person as part of summer camp worship 2010)



Many Hats!



A weekend of training, fun and fellowship for members of the Moravian Church who work with children and young people in the church.

The weekend is 17-19th May from 5pm (or when you can get there) at Guy Chester House, Muswell Hill, London (directions to be found here)

http://www.chestercentre.org.uk/Groups/35671/Guy_Chester_Centre/About_us/How_to_get/How_to_get.aspx

Sessions will include:

Many Hats - what skills do we bring to our ministry to children and young people?

The Bible and Prayer - a new Core module

Enabling everyone - what do we need to do to integrate those children with additional need



Sharing games - an opportunity to share games and ideas and reflect on how they can be adapted to suit everyone

Chances to look at resources, talk to others about what they do, share what is happening in our congregations, laugh and learn together. We will be joining Hornsey for worship on Sunday Morning.

Cost £100 for accommodation and food for the weekend. Day places can be booked for £25.

Your congregations may be able to help with fees and travel expenses, please ask. Contact Joy for more help if needed.

Bookings must reach Joy Raynor by 3rd May as Guy Chester House need numbers by then.

Booking Form for 'Many Hats' - MORYAC weekend

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

E mail address:

Congregation:

Age group you usually work with:

Any special needs or dietary requirements:

Please reserve me a place at the MORYAC training weekend at Guy Chester House 17-19th May 2013. I enclose a cheque payable to 'Moravian Union Inc' to cover the fee (£100 weekend, £25 Saturday only). Contact Joy if other arrangements are being made for payment of the fee.

Signed

Date

Please return this form before **3rd May** to Joy Raynor, 25 Lynwood Avenue, Slough, SL3 7BJ or reserve your place by emailing the form to youth@moravian.org.uk

Joy can be contacted on 01753 553549 or 07713853184

Silent Springs

There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.

As I write this article the Earth lies under a blanket of snow and ice - the snow forming magical sculptures and patterns, as fleeting as they are beautiful. Those preferring warmer climes can take comfort in the promise that, as Rachel Carson asserts, Spring will follow Winter just as surely as dawn follows the night. But will it? Can we be certain that Spring, heralding the return of birdsong, green buds, spring flowers and blossoms and generating an irresistible energy and life-force, will return just as we envisage?

There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example - where had they gone? ...It was a spring without voices.

On the morning that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus...there was no sound: only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves

2012 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of Rachel Carson's ground-breaking book, *Silent Spring*, an event that many people credit with initiating the start of the modern environmental movement. In the above extract Rachel Carson paints a vivid, imaginary picture of a landscape silenced by unexplained ecological disasters, a grim spectre that she felt could very easily become a stark reality. *Silent Spring* was Carson's brave and scientifically rigorous attempt to explain the underlying causes of these problems.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1907 Carson inherited a life long love of the natural world from her mother and became not only a fine lyrical nature writer but combined this with a career as a marine biologist which resulted in her publishing three brilliant and popular books about the sea. It was through her research work as a Government Scientist that she reached her radical conclusions on the potential dangers of indiscriminate blanket spraying of chemical pesticides and herbicides. The publication of *Silent Spring* gave rise to a storm of controversy. It laid Carson open to vitriolic attacks from those in government and those with vested interests in the chemical industry who tried to suppress the book and portrayed her as being anti-chemicals and hence anti-progress. But in spite of these attacks, which in many cases were highly personal as well as professional,

Silent Spring became a best seller and having reached the desk of U.S. President John F Kennedy resulted in his setting up an enquiry by his Science Advisory Committee into pesticide misuse.

Rachel Carson had two main objectives. Firstly, to expose the devastating effects on both human health and the natural world by the indiscriminate use of synthetic, toxic chemicals, especially DDT which, having been developed for military purposes during the Second World War then became widely available for civilian use. Carson achieved considerable success in this endeavour and her work can be said to have significantly influenced subsequent policy on the use of pesticides: the domestic production of DDT being banned in the United States by 1972.

Her second, and far more challenging objective, was to transform the way we perceive our relationship with the natural world as she believed the human species to be totally interdependent and interconnected with the whole of nature. Looking back over the vast span of earthly time she argued that the habits of the earth's vegetation and animal life have, very largely, been moulded by the environment and only 'within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species - man - acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world.' The final paragraph of *Silent Spring* makes this powerful statement: 'The control of nature is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man.' Carson's insight was to understand that man's war against nature is inevitably a war against himself.

To conclude that Carson was totally opposed to the use of chemicals is to misunderstand her message. As her biographer, Linda Lear, wrote in her Afterword to the Penguin edition of *Silent Spring* what Carson correctly feared was: 'the results of an unimpeded technology that initiates an action before fully knowing the consequences, and a culture that demands a quick fix for every problem'. We can only speculate on what she would make of today's technological advances: the

The Sense of Wonder, Rachel Carson: Harper Collins 1956 pp 8 -10
Silent Spring, Rachel Carson: Penguin Classics 2000 p 22
Silent Spring, p 23
Silent Spring, p 257
Silent Spring, p 264
The Sense of Wonder, pp 8-10, 88-89

development and patenting of genetically modified organisms by powerful corporations, the proliferation of genetically altered foods, and our continued dependence on antibiotics and ever stronger pesticides which can have the unintended consequence of producing increasingly resistant super bugs. But equally, I am sure there is much that she would have applauded as new medicines and technologies have undoubtedly improved the quality of life in very many ways. However, there can be no room for complacency as we are constantly reminded of the crises affecting our insect populations, especially the plight of bees, and the devastating effect this is having on our ecology as we continue to pollute the environment. Linda Lear assures us that in raising public environmental consciousness and making us look at what we do to life in the name of progress Rachel Carson had no other motive than her immense love of the living world and a belief that if the public were aware of the wonder and mystery of life, they would have less appetite to destroy it.

So let us leave Rachel Carson reflecting on the wonder and beauty of the natural world. She tells us that a child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement, it is only as we grow into adulthood that this clear-eyed vision becomes dimmed and even lost. Carson wishes that if she could bestow a gift on all children at their Christening it would be the gift of a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life. She asks: 'What is the value of preserving and strengthening this sense of awe and wonder, this recognition of something beyond the boundaries of human existence?' For Rachel Carson, who died of cancer at the age of 56, the answer was that, whatever the vexations or concerns of their personal lives, those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life, their thoughts can find paths that lead to inner contentment and to renewed excitement in living and they will find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

Heather Armstrong

New Life for the Old Shop



Photograph left to right pictured in Gracehill Church
 The Mayor Ald. PJ McAvooy representing Ballymena District Council, Br Raymond Kitson Gracehill Church Committee, Sr Roberta Thompson a GhOST trustee, and The Permanent Secretary, Department of Environment Mr Leo O'Reilly.

Wednesday 13th February 2013 was an important day for Gracehill. The permanent secretary at the Department of the Environment, Mr Leo O'Reilly visited the historic village, Northern Ireland's first designated Conservation area.

The local building regeneration charity, Gracehill Old School Trust or "GhOST" have already brought the villages historic old school building back to life in a very successful project that was given the Royal seal of approval in 2011 when the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited. The building is now home to an after school club, an award winning Restaurant, several small businesses, community space and an exhibition area detailing the unique history of the village and the international connections as well as a restored eighteenth century classroom that is proving popular with visitors.

GhOST now plan to turn their attention to the Old Village Shop which is a purpose built shop constructed for the settlement in 1787. The building is two storey with attics and basement and the layout is much as it was when originally constructed. The central shop area still contains many original features including shelving built into the walls and counters. The storage areas and living accommodation are constructed around the shop and also contain many original features including an unusual large wooden winch wheel for drawing stores up to the attic.

The building has not functioned as a shop for approximately 30 years and has been uninhabited for several years following the death of its owners.

In response to the community's desire to retain the

village's strong architectural heritage and enhance the potential of the conservation area, GhOST have developed a scheme to regenerate this unique building in a meaningful, viable and sustainable manner. The shop will be restored to something like it may have been in the eighteenth century and the remainder of the building will be converted to holiday accommodation in conjunction with the Irish Landmark Trust.

The first step however was to secure ownership of the building and now thanks to funding provided by Ballymena Borough Council and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency this has been achieved. Mr O'Reilly presented the keys of the Old Shop as ownership symbolically transferred to the charity.

Speaking after the event, David Johnston, chairman of GhOST said,

"This important and historic building could so easily have been lost. The physical, psychological and social benefits in terms of community spirit, regeneration, job creation and tourism, of conservation projects such as this are self-evident. Such is the power and potential of our built heritage. We are grateful to everyone for their support thus far and to the Department of the Environment and Ballymena Borough Council for funding us."

Mr O'Reilly also toured the village and visited the restored Old School building and Gracehill Moravian Church which had also benefitted from a grant during the recent restoration.

David Johnston

In Remembrance

Br. John Dennis Monger 1926 - 2013

Br. Dennis Monger died peacefully in his sleep on Monday 4th March. As usual he'd taken two services the day before and although he was becoming a little frailer he continued to inspire those he met with his boundless optimism and faith. Br. Monger was a very modest man and he made it clear he didn't want a eulogy or praise at his funeral service but two Brockweir 'girls' write about their former minister.

Sr. Sue Groves writes:

Even though he would probably have spurned the epithet, to many people Rev Monger was simply 'the saint of Brockweir'. Not only did his willingness to oversee the church at Brockweir prevent its closure in 1961, but his Christian witness has influenced and inspired and encouraged all who came into contact with him.

Rev Monger's association with Brockweir has lasted over 50 years and for many of us he has simply 'always been there' and indeed has been present at many of our major life events. He was a deeply spiritual man with strong beliefs, yet was open to new ideas and prepared to change if he thought it was the right thing to do. He was extremely knowledgeable about theology, and biblical history and his sermons were always interesting and thought provoking.

One of his strong points was his ability to connect with people; he had a wonderful rapport with both young and old. He always had time to chat and enquire how families were getting on. The high regard in which he was held by members of the church and the local community is echoed in some of the comments that have been made by local residents:

"He was the most lovely genuine man you could ever meet".

"The best person to argue about the Bible with, we had many discussions over the years".

"A lovely, lovely man who will be missed by many".

"A godly man who was greatly respected and who will be very much missed".

Sr. Sarah Groves writes:

On Sir Christopher Wren's memorial in St Paul's Cathedral it reads - 'Reader if you seek his monument - look around you'. And the same is true for Br Dennis Monger - his grave might be marked with a stone in due course but his real monument is in the Church at Brockweir and in the other Chapels and Churches he served in the Welsh English borderlands including Leominster and in all the hearts and lives he touched. His ministry was never to the big and famous, the large churches and the glamorous places but faithfully lived out in the midst of the rural communities of an isolated part of the country.

John Dennis Monger was born in Gloucester and served during the war as a Bevin Boy in the coal fields of the South Wales Valleys. At the end of the war he went to Cardiff Baptist College to train for the Baptist ministry and was

called in 1949 to be Student Pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Magor. In 1951 he was ordained and remained at Magor until 1957. He then moved to Monmouth Baptist Church and was also responsible for Norton and Whitebrook Baptist Churches and from 1964 onwards for Llandogo and Talycoed Baptist Churches as well.

In 1956 the decision had been taken to close the Church at Brockweir because of its remoteness and the cost of maintaining a minister there so Rev Cyril Edwards - a dear and godly man himself, was to be the last minister in the village. Valuers came and looked at the property for sale, the local Anglicans and the Pentecostals were approached but no one wanted to take on the church and maintain worship here. However Br Edwards had written, in those dark days, in the Church diary that 'Faith would win the day'.

In 1961 Br Edwards was called to leave Brockweir in July and the Church would then finally be closed. But faith did win the day - at the last moment! An approach was made to a certain young Baptist Minister in Monmouth on 14th July and Mr Monger acted immediately coming to visit Br Edwards before he left and contacting both the Moravian authorities and the Baptist Union. Both Churches responded with a wonderful ecumenical spirit and pastoral oversight passed to Mr Monger upon the departure of Br Cyril later that month.

Two years of talks brought a wonderful union between the two denominations and in 1963, with all the discussions completed the Church was filled for a Service of Union to establish the united witness of the Baptist and Moravian denominations in Brockweir. So much work had to be done here - new roofs, and complete renovations - and from 1965 until 1970 Mr and Mrs Monger lived in the Brockweir manse and ran a small conference centre there. It was during these years that the congregation got to know his Dorothy, his beloved wife and Terry their son. In 1970 the family had to move back to Monmouth because of the needs of that larger congregation.

Brockweir was a full part of this local grouping of Baptist Churches and the congregation gained so much from them. Sharing in the local Scripture exams and the wonderful band of Baptist Lay Preachers who would faithfully help fill the pulpit on the weeks when Mr Monger was not here. This whole group was held together by Mr Monger's example and preaching and by his wonderful Church newsletter - 'The Record'. It was the only way to keep track of where he was week by week. He hated taking on any engagements during the last week of each month because that was when he typed it all, duplicated it and with volunteer help collated and photocopied it. It was often illustrated by his charming sketches of the local churches.

Mr Monger's preaching was so appreciated, learned and passionate. He was so gentle as a pastoral visitor and every pastoral visit would end, as it should, with a prayer. There wasn't a hospital he wouldn't or couldn't visit and he had the knack of just dropping in for a short while but making



every moment count. His commitment as Pastor to his flock was such that he would never go far away for his holidays, it had to be somewhere with a phone so that he could be reached if he was needed and return quickly.

He truly was a scholarly pastor too who never stopped studying and sharing the benefits of his study with others. He kept up with all the issues in theology and society and used to say he had two ears to listen and only one mouth to speak. He wrote the history of our Church 'Like a Tree Planted' and he was a very popular contributor to the Moravian Messenger - in fact the last on Sunday 3rd March carried his overview of the Third Epistle of John - and he was called home on the next day - the last words of that article ends with 'the hope of meeting face to face' - and now Dennis is face to face with the God who made him and loves him.

So many people have reason to be thankful to God for Dennis's ministry with children and young people, he had a youth fellowship in the manse in Brockweir and he was a passionate worker with the Scripture Exams, the Wyesham Free Church Sunday School, and with the Baptist Campaigners. He used to thump out hymns and choruses on the piano, usually playing by ear with a real roll and tinkle in the music.

Mr Monger's ministry covered so many events - the restoration of the Brockweir Church, his consecration as a Moravian Presbyter in 1975, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Brockweir Church in 1983. In 1982 he and Dorothy moved to the Baptist Pastorate at Ewyas Harold and Pandy Baptist Churches and kept on Brockweir and gained Leominster Moravian Church as well. At the time of his retirement in 1991 he had completed forty years of service at Brockweir.

But retirement did not stop his connection with Brockweir. In retirement he and Dorothy moved to Salem Chapel, Longtown, Herefordshire where he was Moderator of the Chapel until 2009. From there he would drive down

the rural roads back to Brockweir to take services. In latter years only in the summer months not in the deep of winter! His first service for 2013 was to have been for the Maundy Thursday Communion Service! For Brockweir people he was a saint, marrying so many folk here, baptising the children, burying the beloved dead - and sustaining his people in the breaking of the word and in the breaking of the bread for so many years. Yet as a retired minister he never interfered or disparaged the ministry and work of those who came after him in the Lord's vineyard but would always help and support.

Even though his ministry was so local to the Welsh English Marches he was loved and respected across the wider Moravian Church as a good man and an exemplar for ministry. He was elected to the highest honour our Church can give - the Advocatus Fratrum in Anglia and when he spoke at Synod - which he did sparingly it was always to a quiet hall who wanted to hear what he had to say.

In retirement not only did he continue to serve the Moravian and Baptist congregations but in the isolated Olchon Valley and rural Herefordshire he went on to serve the local Anglican Churches too. Man-made denominational boundaries could not limit his service to Christ.

There is a passage of scripture that means so much to us in the Moravian Church - it is used in our liturgy for Holy Communion and in our Funeral prayers - from Hebrews 12 verse 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Dennis ran the race Christ called him to - he ran it as a Preacher - opening scripture for his people and feeding them with the living word; he ran it as a Pastor - tending and serving his flock what ever the personal cost to him; he ran the race as a Priest - breaking the bread and sharing the wine for the scattered flock of the border valleys. Those of us who are priests, pastors and preachers should be inspired by his example to follow our Lord with renewed heart and commitment. But greatest of all Dennis was a Christian man who kept his eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith - he knew about the Cross and its pain - but following his Lord Dennis knew he was forgiven, accepted and would be called home to be with his Lord and he wanted nothing more than for others to know that love, forgiveness acceptance and fellowship in Christ. So for us the greatest tribute and thanks we can give, to this humble man who gave his flock so much, is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and share that faith and hope with those around us.

At a service in Brockweir some years ago Br. Monger confidently assured us that the language spoken in heaven is Welsh and we'll all have to learn it. I'm sure he's right - he usually was!

Judith Ashton

Open Book

THE SONG OF SONGS

This book is also known as 'The Song of Solomon' or as 'The Most Beautiful of Songs' or 'Canticles'. It is in fact a collection of love songs or poems and the connection with King Solomon is more traditional than factual. In the Authorised version of the Bible, the book is difficult to understand or the plot difficult to follow, but in more modern translations, some attempt has been made to divide the book into sections which are introduced by the words 'the man', 'the woman' and 'the women' in the Good News version. The New International version uses the headings of 'The Lover', 'The beloved' and 'Friends'. In the English Standard version the headings are 'He', 'She' and 'Others'. The Jerusalem Bible divides the work into 'The Bride', 'The Bridegroom' and 'The Chorus'. Some versions divide the book into five songs, some into six, while others do not attempt any such division.

Nowhere in the book is God mentioned, nor prayer, praise, prophecy, nor anything usually associated with things spiritual except love, and even then, this love is unashamedly erotic. That a book of this kind should be included in the Scriptures may seem unusual and in fact, it had a bit of a struggle finding its way into the Hebrew canon or Old Testament. Previous to its inclusion, it had traditionally been read at the festival of Passover, and this may have helped it to become a part of the Bible. In Judaism it has been given a spiritual interpretation and is said to represent the relationship between God and his people. Israel is described as God's wife in the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea. Christians have also interpreted the book in a spiritual way as representing the relationship between Christ and the church based on passages from several

New Testament books, particularly The Revelation. Some editions of the Authorised version introduce each chapter with a summary based on a spiritual interpretation. Chapter 1, for example, is introduced with the words, "The church's love to Christ. She confesses her deformity and prays to be directed to his flock. Christ directs her to the shepherds' tents and shewing his love to her, gives her gracious promises. The church and Christ congratulate each other." Modern versions do not interpret the book in any way.

In the Middle East wedding celebrations went on for several days, during which the bride and bridegroom were treated as king and queen. Their praises were sung by individuals or groups of people from time to time and it is claimed by some scholars, that the Song of Songs is a collection of these choruses. This type of celebration is still

maintained in some countries. The story that Jesus told about the ten virgins (Matthew chapter 25) is based on this custom. It was an opportunity for people whose lives were normally characterised by hard work and common everyday tasks, to join together and have a good time for a week or so before reverting to type. If this is the case, then the king and queen mentioned in the book may not refer to actual royalty but to the bride and groom. The bride is described as a shepherdess who has been tanned by the sun as she worked in the vineyard (chapter 1 verse 5). Chapter 6 verse 8 appears to refer to King Solomon, where mention is made of sixty queens and eighty wives. His final tally according to 1 Kings, chapter 11, verse 3, was seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. If he is indeed the king, mentioned in this book, then the bride is one of the ladies in waiting.

Chapter 1 consists mainly of the bride's love for the king interspersed with comments from the bridegroom and also the group of friends. Most of chapter 2 is again spoken by the bride, in which she describes further, her love for the king. The first part of chapter 3 describes how the bride dreamed that she lost her lover and eventually found him.

Verses 6 to 11 are spoken by the friends and describe the arrival of King Solomon in a bridal procession, accompanied by sixty soldiers. There is also a description of his lavishly decorated throne. Most of chapter 4 is taken up with a description of the bride by the groom and ends with an invitation by the bride to enter her garden. In chapter 5 the bride has another dream in which she loses her lover. Apart from a verse spoken by the friends, the rest of the chapter is taken up with a further description by

the bride, of her love for the groom. Most of chapter 6 is taken up with the bridegroom's description of the bride as the most beautiful of women, a view which is shared by the other women. The chapter ends with the bride being invited to dance. The first nine verses of chapter 7 appear to be a description, by the groom, of the bride as she dances. The last chapter is spoken mainly by the bride and the friends, one verse (14), spoken by the groom.

The Song of Songs contains a number of 'difficult Hebrew texts' according to some commentaries and more than one interpretation is possible in some instances. A good short introduction to the book, as well as a list of the difficult texts may be found in the Contemporary English Version of the Bible, American Bible Society 1995.

Peter M Gubi

Nowhere in the book is God mentioned, nor prayer, praise, prophecy, nor anything usually associated with things spiritual except love, and even then, this love is unashamedly erotic.

Social responsibility

Physician-assisted suicide

Euthanasia, literally a good or easy death, is brought about by the specific action of another person, usually a doctor. Physician Assisted Suicide occurs when a doctor sets up the process, but the patient triggers the injection or swallows the lethal agent that causes death. While a few countries allow Physician-Assisted Suicide, it is illegal in the U.K.

Where a loving relative has responded to repeated requests to terminate a life, this is usually treated reverently by society and mercifully by the judiciary. However, cases taken by some terminally-ill people concerned that their loved ones may be prosecuted if they do this has triggered a debate about changing the law.

This was discussed by a Methodist Church in Ireland's Social Responsibility sub-committee, of which I was the non-medical member.

Members felt a crucial issue is the sanctity of life. It is a gift from God, rather than something we can dispose of. Yet the nature of life calls us to compassion, to alleviate suffering that God does not desire. Modern medicine can prolong life, but perhaps at unnecessary cost.

Yet, changing the law was opposed by the group. This was partly because not everyone can make a rational decision, and others might too easily make it for them. However strict the legal conditions, it was felt that here was a slippery slope.

One concern was for mentally ill people, who might request assisted suicide due to their condition. It would become hard to refuse. There was also the fear it would be used on people with dementia.

Another concern centred on people with disabilities, whose lives may be regarded as less valuable than those of others. There is a particular fear that subtle pressure will occur to encourage this attitude; especially where serious illness needs costly care.

There is also the effect on family. At present, if asked, a relative must say no. Offering the option will change this, placing heavy pressure on people to 'act for the best'. There is a fine line between allowing choice and imposing it. And who the relatives with the right to decide are is increasingly complex as marriage gets rarer.

The ill person themselves will also be under pressure, from pain, from fear of being a burden, to family and to society. Yet pain can usually be treated. And the expense is not that great.

Another concern was the impact on doctors, trained to save life; and on the way legislation would change their relations with patients.

The group opposed Physician-assisted suicide. As Christians we have the duty to support the vulnerable, 'the widow and the orphan'. The public debate continues.

Rosemary Power

Notice Board

Change of Address for Br. John and Sr. Beth McOwat

Our new Address from 1st May 2013 will be:
32, Victoria Court
Kirkstall Lane
Headingley
Leeds LS6

And for emails the new address :-
John.McOwat@gmail.com

A Provincial Day of Presentation and Consultation

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Provincial Board will be holding Provincial meetings throughout the Districts to which we would encourage as many members of the Church as possible to attend. This "Provincial Presentation" will include a discussion on the restructuring of the church, the Call system and the future of the Moravian Church.

Listed below are the proposed dates for each District. We appreciate that the date for your District may not be the most convenient but we, as a Provincial Board, have also had some difficulties in finding sufficient free Saturdays to be able to accommodate each District. We hope that at least two Provincial Board members will be present on each occasion.

27th April: □	Western District □	Sr Groves, Sr Taylor □	Kingswood
4 May: □	Irish District □	Sr Groves, Br Cooper, Sr Taylor □	Belfast
26 May: □	Eastern District □	Sr Taylor, Br Hopcroft □	Harold Road
8 June: □	Yorkshire District □	Br Cooper, Sr Groves, □□□□ Br Hopcroft, Sr Taylor □	Gomersal

In most cases the day will start, 10.30am and finish at, 4.00pm with attendees bringing a packed lunch and hopefully the host congregation could provide hot drinks.

Following the District Days a Provincial Consultation will then take place with the Serving Ministers, and others, on July 9th 2013 here at Church House.

Preparing the Daily Watchwords for the British Province

Many readers will know how, each year, the Watchwords are drawn by lot with some ceremony at Herrnhut. Some will have visited the room, seen the bowl and box of texts that have been used through the years. The European Continental Province then matches New Testament texts to the Old Testament chosen text, but what happens next?

The German originals are then distributed throughout the Unity for translation and arranging into the form that suits individual provinces. Rather than duplicate the work, we wait for the Americans to arrange for the translation and send it here, normally in early December each year.

The work then starts to anglicise the texts and to check the versions with the US equivalents as, interestingly, there are some textual differences between US and English versions of the same Bible translation.

Other material is assembled: the mid-week lectionary, the Sunday Lectionary, the phases of the moon, the prayer cycle and a list of memorial days and the pages are set up ready for distribution to a team of (mostly) willing volunteers who have agreed to prepare one month's texts.

Contributors are asked to reflect prayerfully on the texts and to use primarily Moravian sources for the hymn verse. They are free to write their own prayer or to choose an appropriate quotation for the second entry. Sometimes the main challenge is a practical one of fitting the material into the physical space available as some texts are much longer than others. In 2014 there will be one day when there are several verses of the genealogy in Matthew which leaves very little space for additions. There are also occasions when it is a challenge to find the connection between the Old Testament and New Testament verses; nevertheless our resourceful contributors do their best.

The astronomical chart giving the phases of the moon is purchased from the UK Hydrographic Office as, according to Moravian lore, people in Caribbean plant crops according to the phase of the moon. Whether or not this is so, I

cannot say but, quite recently, there was a question on Gardeners' Question Time concerning the value of planting according to the moon. None of the panel had a conclusive opinion on the matter!

The contributors are asked to return their contributions by the middle of March along with a list of sources which form the basis of the index. The material is given two proof readings and the Sunday Lectionary readings are checked by a senior minister. Yes, errors still get through but we're only human after all!

Once the whole year's material is prepared, copyright permission is sought for all verses under copyright, and the index is finalised.

Photographs are sourced for the colour plates and bookmark and texts are added to them. Br Dave Bull sets these out and also designs the book's cover. The Almanac is produced at Church House and the prayers at the front of the book are written by the Prayer Union Secretary! presently Br Fred Linyard. So all these elements come together in July when they are submitted to Graham Walkden who organises the technical side of things.

The completed books are delivered to Church House in October whence they are shipped around the world. The Jamaica Province still uses the UK Textbook and it's available in the Eastern West Indies to those who want it. Orders are also received from a number of bookshops and individuals in other parts of the world. Congregations in this province are also supplied with their orders.

Care is taken to achieve a reasonable balance of age, gender and District between the contributors each year. If anyone would like to join the pool of contributors, you need to be able to receive and submit the work online. Please contact me on jackiemorten@btinternet.com and I will be pleased to add your name to the list of potential contributors. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jackie Morten

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sr. Editor,

I am not against modern hymns or songs. Let us use them when appropriate. I am not even against the odd changing of Thou to You when it fits in, but how did we allow this mutilation of some of our most sacred old hymns, where every word was thought of prayerfully by the author? See the Daily Watchwords for Sunday 10th March which alters the verse by William Cowper:

*So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb* 304 [MHB 1969]

to make it say:

*So shall my walk be close with God,
My wanderings be forgiven;
So shall his light mark out the road
That leads at last to heaven.*

*Would we do the same to Shakespeare?
Gillian Ingham*

Dear Sr. Editor,

The start of the Fetter Lane Society in England was on the 1st May 1738. The 1st May 1738 is noted as the date that Peter Böhler assisted with the formation of the Fetter Lane Society.

I am writing to acknowledge the founding of the 'Fetter Lane Society' as a 'Moravian Style' fellowship group which included John Wesley. On the 1st May the Fetter Lane Society / congregation will have been in existence for 275 years.

Sr. Lorraine Parson also reminds us:

It appears that the congregation did not mark the anniversaries on this occasion, perhaps because it was not strictly a Moravian society - some viewed it as a meeting of Anglicans who intended to become Moravian. Peter Böhler's presence at the meeting as a Moravian was only gained by his ship's unexpected late departure for America, so was at hand to offer guidance and a discussion of Moravian principles of fellowship.

It was not until 1741 that the Fetter Lane Society was reorganised on an official Moravian basis.

Can all congregations and readers join with the Fetter Lane Congregation at midday on Wednesday 1st May (wherever you are) to pray for Gods blessing on the Moravian Church.

*Every blessing
Edwin Quildan*

Congregation News

Fairfield

Always look on the bright side!

I don't know about you but I often find the renewed hope with which I welcomed the New Year soon dissipates into a feeling of dissatisfaction in the bleak winter weather; when I go to work in the dark and come home again in the dark- January and February seem to stretch into a slow mundane plod. I think back to the excitement and joy over the Christmas holiday; to the church looking so beautiful for the Christmas Tree Festival, the great enjoyment of the nativity with a difference (if you have never seen "Hosanna Rock" you are missing a treat), that so special time in our church family when we all feel so close to God.

Well as I said I don't really embrace the winter months, but then I arrived on Sunday 10th February for our Café Church in the college. It was lovely to see so many children

and young people there, many of them taking an active part in the service which was conducted very effectively by Sr Katey Pitchford- well done Katey it was lovely to watch your happy face and listen to you communicate such an important message so effectively and in such an upbeat manner.

We have also been told that Rev Kent has had his term with us extended and he will now be staying with us until August 2014. Fairfield is a busy congregation and we are grateful to have a minister available to us, added to that as he comes to us from the Methodist church we are learning new things about each others ways and traditions, all of which can be quite enlightening and helps guide us to better understanding of our faith as we see it from a different perspective.

Margery Sutcliffe

CONGREGATION REGISTERS

CONFIRMATION - 10th Feb. **Bethany Anthony** Gomersal

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Unity Prayer Day

Would the Treasurers of those congregations who held a special collection for Unity Prayer Day please send the money to Church House as soon as possible so that we can send it on to the democratic Republic of Congo to assist them with their project?

Church House will be closed on Friday March 29th and will re-open on Tuesday April 2nd.

The Provincial Board and all the staff at Church House would like to take this opportunity to Wish the readers of the Moravian Messenger a Blessed Easter as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Provincial Diary for April

April

13 MWA Day at Hall Green

16/17 PEC, BMB, ■■■■

Estates Property Meetings ■■■■
The PEC

20 Social responsibility ■■■■
Committee

27 Western District Provincial ■■■■
presentation 10.30am. ■■■■
Kingswood

30/1st PEC BMB and Estates ■■■■
property Meeting

PRAYER NOTES

April 7th - 1st Sunday after Easter

As Christians we ought not to fear, and yet often we are afraid and our faith is to be found only behind the closed doors of our own hearts. Come to us, Lord God, in the power of the risen Christ. Forgive us when we take so much convincing of the hope that you have given to the world. Take away our doubts and fears, and send us out with your message not only in our hearts but on our lips, that we may serve you in the world. In the name of Him whose death has conquered death and whose resurrection has opened the way to everlasting life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

April 14th - 2nd Sunday After Easter

Risen Lord, who at the first Easter drew near to your disciples as they travelled on the road, and at evening stopped with them in their village resting place; be our unseen companion along the daily journey of our life and at the end of the day come in and stay with us in our homes. We confess that we do not always find it easy to recognise you when you come to us. Our spirits are often discouraged and we have created an image of what we expect from you and fail to recognize you as you really are. Meet us in the breaking of bread. Open our eyes to the undiscovered treasures of your Word. Set our hearts on fire with love for you, and send us on our way rejoicing in your presence as our living Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen

April 21st - 3rd Sunday After Easter

Lord Jesus, one with the Father and possessing the gift of eternal life, grant that we may always hear your voice and follow you. Help us to be faithful and believing. As members of your flock may we never perish, nor ever be snatched from your hand. May we always hear your voice and be led by you, going in and out and finding pasture, gaining life in all its fulness, until we come to bless your name in the light of our resurrection in your kingdom which will have no end. We ask this in the name of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep. Amen

April 28th - 4th Sunday After Easter

Lord Jesus, altogether lovely, who was killed by hatred yet raised by love, showing love to the unlovely, grant that loving you with all our heart our love may be deepened for all your people. Keep the door of our heart that only love may enter and the door of our lips that only love may speak through them. By this may everyone know for certain that we are your disciples as they see love sown where there us hatred. Love that is patient and kind. Love for our neighbours as for ourselves. Love perfected with us in the name of Him who first loved us, whose very name is Love. Amen

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