

Out of the Wardrobe

*Sr Sarah Groves celebrates one of the
Twentieth century's most influential
Christian writers*

The world didn't notice, when on 22 November 1963, an elderly academic and children's author died in Oxford. The news was understandably taken up with the assassination of US President JF Kennedy on the same day. Perhaps

the fiftieth anniversary of this academic's death will be overshadowed in the media again, but in Christian circles I am sure that the death of Clive Staples Lewis will be given much attention.

I grew up in Narnia, reading the books around the age of 10 and looking for the key that would take me there to meet Lucy, Edmund, Susan and Peter. The world beyond the wardrobe seemed as real and possible to me as any other. A love of Narnia and the image of the Lion, Aslan, has never left me and my respect for an author who could reset the Christian story in another time and place is undiminished. It was wonderful to watch children in Gracehill, at our summer holiday club this year, being captivated by this same story this summer as 'The Lion the Witch and

the Wardrobe' was read to them with simple props.

As a teenager I read 'Mere Christianity' with interest and respect and 'The Screwtape Letters' with great joy. In adulthood I watched 'Shadowlands' both as a television programme and film. Moving to Northern Ireland I read again 'Surprised by Joy' and was stunned by it, beginning to see the Northern Irish origins of this great man and understand more of his life and career.

He was born on 29th November 1898 into a comfortable middle-class family living in East Belfast. His father was a local solicitor and his mother, Flora, was one of the first women graduates from Queens University, Belfast. The family home was full of books and Jack, as Clive was known by his family, and his older brother Warren, had unfettered access to them all. He was very close to his brother, and together they invented an imaginary world called Boxen inhabited by talking animals, and took great delight in the landscape around them. Family trips took him to the Antrim coast, Donegal and the Mourne Mountains and gave him an abiding love of his homeland and a sense of



*'The searcher', East Belfast. The figure of
Digory Kirke is based on Lewis in 1919*

'northernness' which developed into a love of the ancient literature of Scandinavia.

His childhood security was ripped apart by the death of his mother when he was just nine. Shortly after this, he was sent to boarding school in England. Jack hated much of his time at school and it was finally arranged for him to be tutored in Surrey. This individual and intensive study suited Jack who then gained a scholarship to University College, Oxford.

He began his first term in Oxford in April 1917 and immediately joined the army, despite the objections of his father, who already had Warren in the army. Jack fought in the Battle of Arras and was injured by fire from an English shell.

During his term at Oxford he formed a deep friendship with Paddy Moore, a fellow Irishman who also enlisted in the army. They made a

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mutual pact that if either one of them did not survive the other would look after their families. Paddy was killed in action and so after the war Jack moved in with Mrs Moore and her daughter Maureen. The exact nature of their relationship has been speculated on by his biographers, but it is clear that it was one of deep affection and lasted until she died in 1952.

Jack's time at Oxford began again in January 1919 and he went on to gain a first class degree in Classics and English in 1923. In 1925 he was appointed to a fellowship in English Language and Literature in Magdalen College, Oxford. In 1954 he was awarded the Chair of Mediaeval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University. He retired through ill health in August 1963.

Jack's spiritual autobiography 'Surprised by Joy' details his journey from childhood spiritual awareness into a full-blown atheism by age 15. However his love of literature kept nudging him back towards some form of theism. This journey began with reading first George McDonald and then G.K. Chesterton, and he noted in 'Surprised by Joy' that 'a young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading'. It was further aided by his friendship with two Christians, J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson. In 1929 he moved from atheism to theism and, as he recorded in 'Surprised by Joy', 'You must picture me.. in that room at Magdalen, night after night, feeling ... the steady approach of Him, whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. In Trinity Term I gave in and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps that night the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England... The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men and His compulsion is our liberation.'

Further conversations with Tolkien and Dyson and correspondence with Bede Griffiths helped him define his beliefs further and his acceptance of belief in Christ occurred on 28 September 1931 whilst traveling in the side car of his brother's motor cycle in the way to Whipsnade Zoo!

It was for his Christian apologetics that C.S. Lewis became so well-known, not just in the United Kingdom but also particularly in the United States. His first Christian work was 'The Pilgrim's Regress' (1933), followed in the 1940's by the 'Problem of Pain', 'The Screwtape Letters', 'The Great Divorce', and others; and in 1952 'Mere Christianity' was published, followed in the 1960's by 'The Four Loves' and 'Letters to Malcolm'. He also wrote the Science Fiction novels 'Out of the Silent Planet', 'Perelandra' and 'That Hideous Strength'. His spiritual autobiography 'Surprised by Joy' was published in 1955.

His children's Narnia series began in 1950 with the publishing of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Reading 'Surprised by Joy' you can see how his childhood world of Boxen became Narnia, the exploring in his own home became exploring in Professor Kirke's house for the Pevensie children, and the landscape of Ulster becomes the kingdom of Narnia.

C.S. Lewis argued that these Narnia books were not allegories of the Christian faith but suggests that they 'answer the question of what sort of Incarnation and redemption would be appropriate in a world like Narnia'. Rowan Williams points out that 'we do Lewis no favours by pressing too hard on issues like this [exact theological comparisons]. The books must stand or fall, finally as stories.'

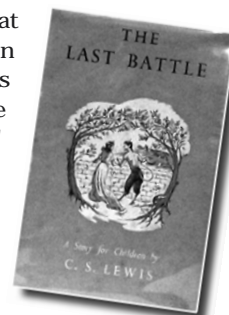
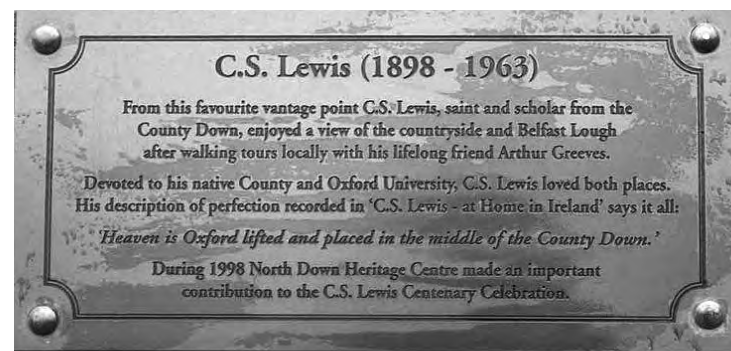
The final thread in Jack's personal life began with a correspondence, started in 1951, with Joy Gresham, an American writer. They first met in 1952 and she settled near Oxford in 1953. In 1956 Joy's application for a visa to stay in England was refused and Jack married her in a civil ceremony that allowed her to remain

and claim British citizenship. They married in April, and within two months Joy was diagnosed with cancer and by April the following year she was sent home from hospital to die. During this time the pragmatic marriage had developed into a deep love between husband and wife.

Following a miraculous remission Joy and Jack set off on a honeymoon to Ireland visiting Jack's relatives and travelling across the north. They travelled back to Ireland again in 1959 and to Greece in 1960. But Joy's cancer returned and she died on 13 July 1960. He was devastated and in the aftermath wrote 'A Grief Observed'. His own health had begun to suffer and he died at home on 22 November 1963.

So 50 years later, how are we to view this eccentric Christian academic whose life story seems so strange and remote? There has been resurgence of interest in C.S. Lewis's work since the hundredth anniversary of his birth, in 1998, and a growing appreciation of his literary work. His fertile imagination delighted in telling stories, in reimagining Christianity in other worlds and in communicating faith to ordinary men and women. He is now seen as one of the finest authors of fantasy literature standing alongside Lewis Carroll and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Perhaps the last word on C.S. Lewis' legacy could be by Rowan Williams, now Master of his old College at Cambridge in his book 'The Lion's World.; I confess to being repeatedly humbled and reconverted by Lewis in a way that is true of few other modern Christian writers... I am constantly struck by the richness of imagination and penetration ...He is someone you do not quickly come to the end of - as a complex personality and as a writer and thinker.



Moravial 2014

Moravial is a triennial event for young adults aged 18-25 from the British and Continental Provinces. It is an opportunity to build friendships across Europe as you have fun together, share your culture and grow your faith together. The next Moravial is planned for 16-24th August 2013 in Herrnhut. Places are limited and priority will be given to people who have not attended a Moravial before, although please apply if you have been before as we want to be able to fill all our places. The costs have not yet been announced but will be kept to the minimum. It is intended that flights will be booked to leave from a central point so the group can travel together.

More details will be published as they become available. To apply send an email to youth@moravian.org.uk stating which congregation you attend and why you would like to go to Moravial. We don't need an essay, just a few words will be fine.

Joy Raynor on behalf of PYCC

A word from the Editor

November has always been the month to remember the dead. It is the time suited to such memories. The land is resting after the harvest, the trees are losing their leaves, and, in normal times, the frosts of winter are starting.

In 1918, the morning of 11 November was the time when the guns finally fell silent after four years of slaughter. Churches will be marking this solemn commemoration and all the wars since, on Sunday 10 November. The young men and women who died during Britain's recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan will be remembered, as will the hundreds of thousands of people in those countries caught up in the wars.

Many of us will be not only remembering but praying for an end to the many conflicts in the world today, some, like Syria, that make headlines, and others, like those of central Africa, which are more or less forgotten by the rest of the world.

Then, on 17 November we have another memorial of death and suffering, World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. Many of us will recall those who lost their lives or were injured in this way, and all affected by road traffic accidents.

A happier remembrance is that 22 November is the fiftieth anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), the Christian writer whose works are still read and valued as much as ever. There is a strong link to Remembrance, for he was in the trenches as a teenager and wounded at the end of the First World War; and many of his works were influenced by the Second World War.

This issue of the November Messenger contains articles about his publications, fictional and non-fictional, which hopefully will introduce readers to works they have not yet read.

Are you over 18?...

....enthusiastic, keen to work with young people, have the endurance of the long distance runner, and are willing to give a week to serve, then you may be the person we are looking for. I currently have a list of people willing to be summer camp leaders but this needs updating and revising. If you would like to be considered please send your details, along with information about your skills, experience of working with 10-17 year olds, and what you think you could add to the summer camp experience for the young people. It is essential you are a regular attendee at a Moravian church and a committed Christian so please give information about which congregation you attend. Selected leaders will be required to have a police clearance (DBS or AccessNI). Anyone who has already asked to be considered needs to reapply, so the list can be completely updated. Gender and age mix of the leaders is important at camp so applications from the more mature is as welcome as those from younger adults.

Summer Camp is usually the first week of the English school summer holidays (last week in July/beginning of August).

Selection will be made by the camp leaders and appointment will be after approval by PYCC.

Information should be sent to me, Joy Raynor, at youth@moravian.org.uk

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

This widely-known prayer was not in fact written by Francis, though it reflects the spirituality of medieval Italian saint (c.1180-1226).

It was first published anonymously in French in 1911, in a short-lived devotional magazine. It was then translated into English anonymously. Many of us have learnt it in the musical setting composed by Sebastian Temple in 1967.

Whoever wrote the prayer, it became known on the eve of the Great War, and has become for many an essential part of any Remembrance service.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Amen.

Mere Christianity?

Brother Richard Ingham looks at a C.S. Lewis work that influenced him – and many others.

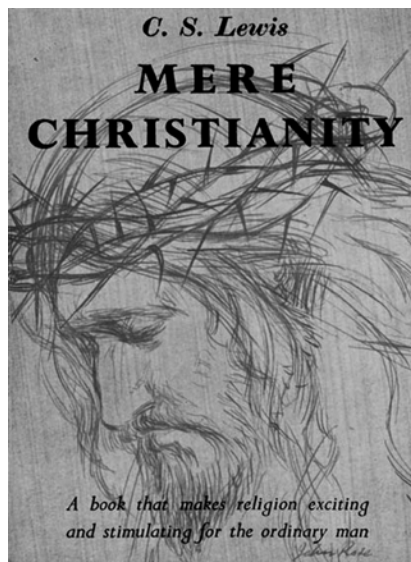
Mere Christianity made a deep and lasting impression on me. I bought a copy when I was 15, from a bookshop in Leeds, attracted by the simple title and striking pencil drawing of Christ on the front. I was not disappointed and what I saw is what I got, but as Lewis says, it is no use asking for a simple religion because real things might look simple but they are not. The table you are sitting at 'may look simple, but ask a scientist to tell you all about the atoms and how the light waves rebound from them and hit your eye and what they do to the optic nerve and you find that 'seeing a table' lands you in mysteries which you can hardly get to the end of'. If Christianity was something made up, we could make it easier, but since we are dealing with facts which are real, they are complicated and sometimes even, rather odd.

C. S. Lewis was an atheist for many years and describes his conversion in his autobiography: 'In the Trinity term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God and knelt and prayed: perhaps the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.' The contents of Mere Christianity were first given on the air, in wartime Britain, before being published in printed form. He says, 'ever since I became a Christian I have thought that the best, perhaps the only, service I could do for my unbelieving neighbours was to explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times'. He has been described as 'the ideal persuader for the half-convinced', those who would like to be a Christian but find their intellect getting in the way.

Lewis's frequent offer of liberty in non-essentials should appeal to Moravians. He ends a fascinating explanation of God's foreknowledge saying: 'This idea has helped me a good deal. If it does not help you, leave it alone. You can be a perfectly good Christian without accepting it, or indeed without thinking of the matter at all.' In a later chapter he suggests that whenever you find any statement in Christian writings which you can make nothing of, don't worry. 'Leave it alone. There will come a day,

perhaps years later, when you suddenly see what it meant'. Moravian readers should also appreciate his Christ-centred approach, aimed at getting to know him and ultimately becoming like him, rather than just believing certain facts about him.

Firstly Lewis paints a picture of things as they are now, of a good world that has gone wrong but still



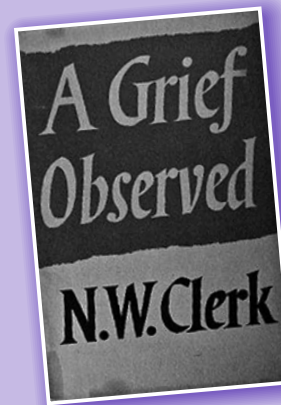
retains something of the memory of what it ought to have been. Man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement but a rebel who must lay down his arms. Why did God make a creature of such rotten stuff that it went wrong? Lewis replies that the better stuff a creature is made of - the cleverer and stronger and freer it is - then the better it will be if it goes right, but also the worse it will be if it goes wrong. What got into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could "be like gods" - could set up on their own as if they had created themselves - be their own masters - invent some sort of happiness for themselves apart from God. Out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history - the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy. It can't be done because God himself is 'the food our spirits were designed to feed on' and there is no other.

As a remedy God selected one

particular people and spent several centuries hammering into their heads the sort of God he was. Then comes the real shock. Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if he was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says he has always existed. He says he is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Unless the speaker is God these words would imply a silliness and conceit unrivalled by any other character in history, yet many people say: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God'. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. 'He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.'

Though Christianity seems at first to be all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue, it leads you beyond to the Source from which it comes. Christ did not come to preach any brand new morality. As soon as you look into the New Testament you find it constantly talking about his death and coming to life again. Christians have always thought that the main thing he came to do was to suffer and be killed. They met him again after they had seen him die and then, after they had been formed into a little society, they found God somehow inside them as well, directing them, making them able to do things they could not do before. Lewis's final sentence says, 'look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in'.

God became human for no other purpose and it is doubtful whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose. Please try and read this book. Written over sixty years ago, some of Lewis's language and allusions must inevitably be dated, but the concepts themselves are timeless and the implications eternal.



A Grief Observed

Grief is not easy, especially your own. No professional training can protect from its demands; no experience prepares you for its ravages. It can undermine the firmest faith and project doubt into unexpected corners. This was what C. S. Lewis explored in 'A Grief Observed', published under a pseudonym in 1961 after losing his wife Joy Davidman to cancer, but re-published under his own name after his own death 50 years ago. Three brief years of married happiness ended with her dying, and the book revealed a searching and questioning anger which challenged the author's most deeply held convictions.

Grief replaces shared life with a raw and hollow emptiness. Instead of the warm responses rooted in a shared relationship, it grates into a painful vulnerability which is relentless and unforgiving. There are those who seek to categorize it with polished definition, but grief has a life of its own and you have to let it grow. Lewis was angry at having to let this happen instead of enjoying the love he'd found; cruel circumstances had snatched it away using both physical pain and spiritual anguish.

An element of doubt intruded into Lewis's thinking which almost became despair. He looked back on the fulfilment of his love for Joy in the companionship they'd shared in marriage, and wondered if the fulfilment of faith was equally transient. Was it all, he wondered, merely a house of cards? Was faith any more substantial? Lewis committed these reactions to notebooks which he later revised into what became his reflections in the published work.

Lewis's dilemma was partly resolved by his realisation that putting his immediate experience at a distance was actually helpful. He had wanted to keep a strong hold on a love that had been so meaningful, and yet it hurt to do so. Being able to take a step away from it drew a new perspective, which began his slow move towards consolation.

It's one of the sad truths of love that it involves suffering; the worlds of literature, drama, poetry and opera thrive on

exploring this contradiction. An unlikely success grew out of Lewis's anguish: the very moving and popular Shadowlands. The story was first told in a book by Brian Shipley, which was then adapted as a film for BBC television in 1985 starring Joss Ackland and Claire Bloom. This consequently developed into a West End stage play by William Nicholson, the cast of which included Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Lapotaire. In 1993 David Attenborough made a film of it, starring Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger. What had begun as a wretched cry of anguish became a popular best-seller which must have brought meaning to so many who have experienced similar paths.

My own recent experience came with the loss of my wife just days before last Christmas. This was not easy. But I found such consolation in words remembered from a Christmas Eve edition of Radio 4's Daily Service a few years ago. The Dean of King's College Cambridge, the Very Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, was sharing a few moments with those in the queue for the regular broadcast of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, due that afternoon. He referred to Christmas as "the very point of history in which death was given meaning". In his poem 'Journey of the Magi' T. S. Eliot wrote: "I had seen birth and death, but had thought they were different". Each involves a move to a different sphere of existence which engages a different awareness and, presumably, appreciation. Through this piece of writing Lewis came to a redefinition of what he understood as "God", and could begin to live again.

This is an important consequence for today of what had begun as an anguished search for meaning brought about by the intrusion of death into a deeply loving relationship. No-one finds grief easy to deal with, and the world of popular entertainment is an unlikely source of consolation, especially in the hands of a Christian academic. Like the ancient words of Psalm 130, it proves that the love of God is universal and can be found in the most unlikely places.

David Bunney



Spotlight on Lower Wyke



Through the Wardrobe

Sr Jane Dunlop reports on how the C.S. Lewis stories and the scriptures came alive again for one group of young people last summer

Lower Wyke is situated at the extreme southern part of Bradford, West Yorkshire and borders the Metropolitan Areas of Kirklees (Huddersfield) and Calderdale (Halifax). The road that runs along the side of the settlement, originally a Pack Horse Road, still today enjoys picturesque views over towards the Pennine Hills. It has been described by a past minister, the Rev. A. J. Lewis, as "little heaven".

The congregation was "settled", in April 1755 although the first church building had been erected in 1753. So began the work of witness at Lower Wyke, a task which was integrated into a pattern of preaching activities throughout the whole area.

It is recorded that John Wesley preached in the church in 1759.

After only twenty years, the initial building had become too small for the congregation, was pulled down and was completely rebuilt in 1775. The new building was a fine example of early Moravian ecclesiastical architecture in which the congregation was seated along the length of the building instead of across its width.

Having taken into "care" several local preaching houses that had been set up by Benjamin Ingham, the work of the congregation progressed steadily over the next few years until a time of further expansion commenced.

In August 1782 the foundation stone for the Single Sister's House was laid, and the following year the sisters were in residence. In 1782 a Boarding School for girls was opened but eleven years later this was transferred to the Sister's House, the sisters having moved to Fulneck because they found it hard to make a living out of selling their needlework - their only form of income.



The Sisters' House

Work with the children was a prime concern of the congregation, although the Sunday School was not officially opened until 1802 and a Sunday School building was completed in 1881. The Men's Institute was added to the Sunday School building in 1908.

The Moravians were also involved with the education of children in the village of Wyke. In 1818 a school had been built with money raised from the residents but had been arranged by the Moravian minister at the time Rev H Lauten. The school was used as a day School during the week and a Sunday school, run by the Moravians, on Sundays.



Café Church and Sunday School prizes 2013

In 1759 an organ was installed in the church, built by Snitzler, the most famous organ builder in England at that time. This was replaced by the present organ in 1795.

Alterations to the inside of the church have been carried out from time to time, hopefully for the benefit of the congregation. An additional gallery was installed along with porches by the doors, hopefully to curtail the cold draughts complained of during the winter months. Finally the inside of the building was "turned round", with the congregation facing south, the organ moved to the north and central heating installed. These alterations were complete in the 1890's.

Today the church is at the centre of the little hamlet of Lower Wyke and serves the local community in a vibrant and caring manner. Weekly Worship Services are held in the church with Holy Communion being held on the first Sunday of the month. On the third Sunday in the month, Café Church is held in the Sunday School. This is an informal time of worship and fellowship for all the family. The children and young people meet for Sunday School at the same time as Adult Worship during the rest of the month.

There is a membership of 43 but many friends are attracted to the numerous social events that take place in the church building and surrounding church grounds. These include an annual Spring Festival and Art Exhibition, Proms in the Paddock, Strawberry Fair, Hog Roast, Craft Fair and Christmas Gathering.

The church welcomes many visitors during Heritage Weekend. The MWA meet monthly and there is a weekly Prayer Meeting and Bible Study. Other weekly meetings include Women's and Men's Fellowship who meet to play table tennis and snooker, a group who play Belleplates, and the Adventurers youth group. A local Beavers and Cubs group meet on Mondays and once a month a Greenfingers Plant Swap morning proves extremely popular with mostly local residents attending.

Lower Wyke remains "little heaven" to its' members and the local community who enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this small part of Yorkshire. Being well rooted in the past, may it long continue to reach out to the future and to pass on the peace of God to future generations.

Peter Walker and Diane Thornton

Over forty children aged between four and twelve discovered the mysterious and exciting world of Narnia, when they participated in Gracehill's Holiday Bible Club 'The Lion the Witch & The Wardrobe' in August 2013.

This year's organisers felt it appropriate to look at the story of Narnia and its clever parallels with the Bible, since November 2013 would see the 50th Anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis, who created the characters of Lucy, Peter, Susan, Edmond and Aslan. This proved to be a wonderful week of fun and blessing for the participating children, leaders and volunteers alike!

Starting each morning with familiarisation time in their individual age groups, the boys and girls then came together to enjoy a series of choruses - favourites including I'm in the Lords Army & Cast Your Burdens unto Jesus! Boys and girls then ventured daily through the 'wardrobe door' into a specially decorated room which represented the mysterious world of Narnia.

There they listened to The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe story being narrated and brought to life by a storyteller. The children were captivated by the story of how Lucy stumbled into Narnia and met the lovely Mr Tumnus; how Edmond also stumbled into Narnia and met the not-so-lovely White Witch; how Edmond went on to betray his brother and sisters to the White Witch in return for Turkish delight and how Aslan redeemed Edmond from his betrayal by offering himself as a blood sacrifice in exchange for Edmond's life. Aslan was then resurrected, and the children defeated the White Witch in a final battle, when the Lucy, Susan and Peter used their special gifts from Father Christmas.

The story was used each day as a springboard to look at a series of biblical themes which included 'I am special', 'Betrayal', 'Spiritual Gifts', 'Forgiveness' and 'Death & Resurrection'. Every boy and girl used an age-appropriate workbook to carry out activities which looked at these themes and prompted teaching and conversation between the children and leaders about these topics, and what Gods says about each in the Bible.

On the final day, boys and girls learned about Ephesians 6 'The Full Armour of God' when they were knighted and crowned with the crowns and shields they'd made during craft time earlier that week. This ended as a very special morning when some of the children volunteered to share personal prayers they'd written - and of course, one last joyous sing song of 'Cast your Burdens' for the parents!

Such an uplifting week of fun and fellowship, which used the tools of a wonderful story, crafts and sport to share God's love to all our young people in Gracehill. Thanks are reiterated to the many members of Gracehill congregation who made this Holiday Bible Club so memorable and successful.

A Present Aid in Times of Trouble

(Psalm 46:1)

Rosslyn Johnston from Christian Aid Ireland suggests ways we can respond to the coming of Jesus in the world today

As Christmas approaches we are reminded of when God walked the earth in human form. When Jesus came he arrived, not as a ruler in a palace, but as a child born in an animal shelter because there was nowhere else to go, born into a family soon forced to flee to Egypt in fear of their lives.

In our world there are still many infants born without a real home or place to stay, and many more families forced to flee to safety. In Syria, since the conflict began in March 2011, the UNHCR estimates that more than 2 million people have fled their homes.

Many of these people are now living in cramped and overcrowded makeshift camps in Iraq and Lebanon, or have been displaced to other parts of and Syria. Conditions in these camps are difficult, with many struggling to afford enough food and other basic necessities, and winter brings with it fresh concerns. The average day temperature is now between 5 and 10oC; for those still living in canvas tents, a cold Christmas awaits.

26-year-old Sawsan arrived at one of Iraq's makeshift refugee camps heavily pregnant and with three young children, after fleeing bombing in her village in Syria:

'I was very tired on the journey. It was very difficult. At times I fainted and they put water on me. The weather was very cold and some days we didn't eat at all.'

Not long after they arrived Sawsan safely gave birth to a son, but the family does not have a permanent home. With no work and relying on aid they are, understandably, anxious as to what the future will hold. 'The way we live here is very difficult' says Rafat, Sawsan's husband, 'Before the situation in Syria was good; we were okay, we were happy...Now winter will come and it will be cold.'

Theologian Nicholas Sagovsky suggests that the experience of being a refugee can be likened to being trapped in Sheol, "the twilight land in which one neither lives nor dies". Refugees live in one country, yet are faced with never truly feeling as if they belong there; they are trapped between two states, neither one thing nor the other. Throughout the book of Psalms we see the experience of Sheol described in the context of the Lord's salvation (see Psalm 18:4-5,



Sawsan and her children

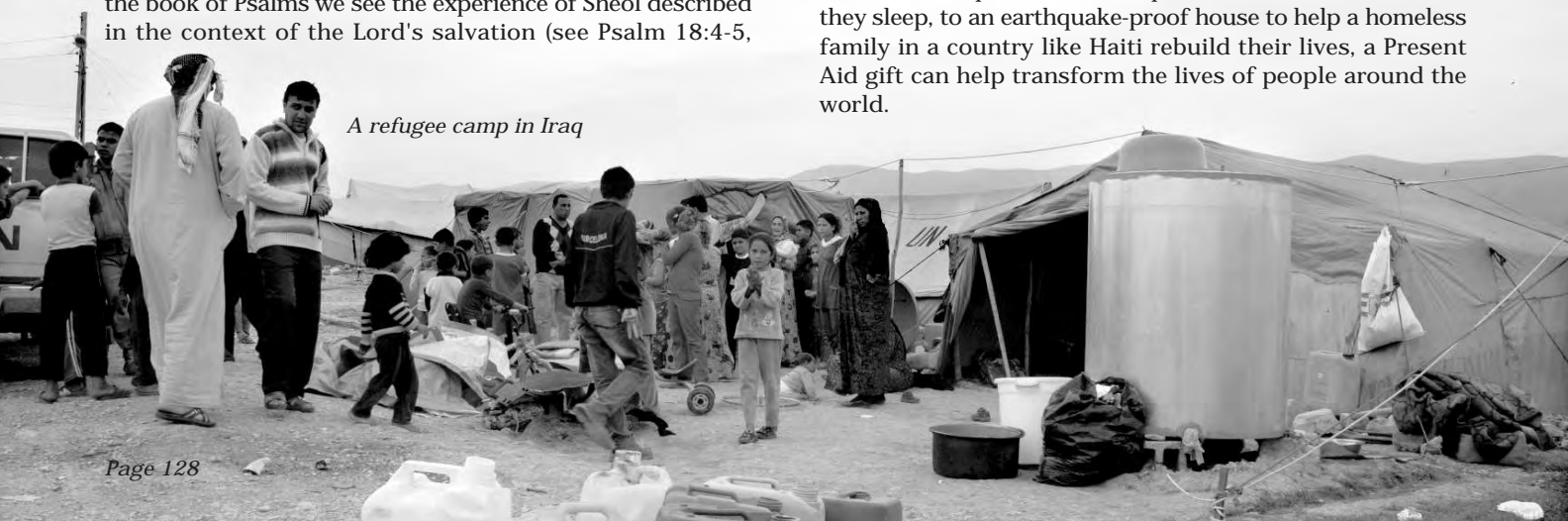
116:3, 139:8). Christians are thus called to walk alongside those who 'walk through the shadow of the valley of death' (Psalm 23:4).

The treatment of the alienated and marginalised also overlaps with the Biblical mandate for justice. God shows a special concern for the weak, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow (Deuteronomy 14:29) which we must strive to uphold. Yet, more than this, justice requires that the factors which bring about these displacements are also addressed. Therefore Christians have a responsibility not only to care for refugees or displaced people, but to also take an interest in the issues causing them to flee in the first place.

There are many ways you can support Syria's refugees, whether it is through prayer, by petitioning governments to call for peace talks, or by making a donation.

If you wish to provide financial support then one way you can help, whilst also buying a gift for someone you care about, is through Present Aid, Christian Aid's ethical charity gifts. By supporting Present Aid you can help Christian Aid's partners on the ground bring warmth and comfort to people forced to flee and leave everything behind. Our partners across the region provide essentials such as food, cooking equipment and emergency shelters, as well as psychosocial support for those suffering as a result of the conflict. With your support they will be able to reach even more people in desperate need. Just £13 could buy warm blankets to help families through the cold nights under canvas.

As Christmas approaches this year, please consider giving a gift which helps make life that bit brighter for someone in one of the world's poorest countries. A gift purchased through Present Aid supports Christian Aid's work around the world fighting poverty, and there are many other ideas available online at www.presentaid.org From £5 for a mosquito net to keep a vulnerable child safe as they sleep, to an earthquake-proof house to help a homeless family in a country like Haiti rebuild their lives, a Present Aid gift can help transform the lives of people around the world.



A refugee camp in Iraq

HABAKKUK

The book of Habakkuk is worth reading alongside the book of Job, because both of them deal with the same problem. In the case of Job, it is God's dealing with the individual that is being examined, whereas in the case of Habakkuk, it is God's dealing with the nation that he is trying to understand. He comes to his conclusion in three chapters, in contrast to the book of Job, which is considerably longer.

Almost nothing is known about Habakkuk and there is no further mention of him in the Scriptures although he is quoted in at least three letters in the New Testament (Romans one, 17, Galatians three, 11 and Hebrews ten, 38). Because so little is known about him, various legends have grown up round his name, none of which have any historical value. The name Habakkuk means 'embrace' and in days gone by, because of the meaning of the name, some rabbis connected him with the Shunamite woman, mentioned in 2 Kings, chapter four, verse 16 where she is told by Elisha, 'about this time next year, you shall embrace a son.' Other occurrences of the name are in one of the books of the Old Testament apocrypha. Another legend is that he is the sentry, standing at his watch post on the tower, who is mentioned in Isaiah chapter eight, verse 1, in the almost identical words of Habakkuk chapter two, verse 1.

The prophet's complaint is outlined in verse 4 of chapter one, in the words, 'the wicked surround the righteous so that justice is perverted.' He is referring to the fact that his nation is about to be invaded by the Chaldeans, or by the army of

Alexander the Great; in either case, a nation even more wicked than his own, and he can't see why God, who is 'of purer eyes than to see evil' (chapter one, verse 13) can allow this injustice to take place. Why does God stand idly by when the wicked swallow up those who are more righteous than they are? Just as in the book of Job, the narrative takes the form of question and answer, the prophet asking the questions and God giving the answers. God's reply to Habakkuk

'I will rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of my salvation'

in chapter two is that the invaders will eventually be punished for their wickedness and although this punishment may seem to be slow in coming, its coming is certain. Those who remain righteous will be rewarded for their faithfulness. The third and final chapter bears the title, 'The prayer of the prophet Habakkuk' and takes the form of a poem, or more correctly, a Psalm, since there are instructions to the musicians included and a dedication to 'the choirmaster with stringed instruments' at the end of it.

In spite of its small size and its inclusion among the Minor Prophets, this virtually unknown book has been the source of inspiration to many writers and others. The quotations in the New Testament, mentioned above are, 'The just shall live by their faith' quoted by Paul and referred to,

but in not quite the same words, by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews. In chapter two, verse 14, the words, 'For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,' can be found in almost identical form in Isaiah chapter eleven, verse 9. They are probably more familiar to most people in Arthur Ainger's hymn, 'God is working his purpose out,' where each verse ends with those words.

Chapter two, verse 20 is familiar to churchgoers, who have heard many an act of worship begin with the words, 'God is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.' Chapter three, verse 17 has been immortalised by William Cowper in his hymn, 'Sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings.' The last verse contains the words 'Though vine nor fig tree neither their wonted fruit shall bear, though all the field should wither, nor flocks nor herds be there: Yet God the same abiding, His praise shall tune my voice; for, while in him confiding, I cannot but rejoice.' If Habakkuk could speak English, he couldn't have put it better himself. In the same chapter, verse 18, 'I will rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of my salvation' is repeated in many of the psalms and also in the 'Magnificat' in Luke chapter one, verse 47.

Habakkuk's prophecy may be virtually unknown, but it has been described as a 'profound little book' and is certainly worth reading and deserving of its place in the Scriptures.

Peter Gubi



Sr Brigitte Schloss

3 Oct 1927 - 20 Aug 2013

Born in the Moravian settlement of Gnadau (Germany), the youngest daughter of the minister Rev. Erwin Schloss, she had a happy and sheltered youth, shattered by the outbreak of Nazism.

Brigitte, when aged 21, contacted the British Province. She was sent to Labrador in 1950, and commenced her lifelong involvement with the Inuit-people. She was teacher, professor of education and then prison and hospital chaplain. She is remembered as a faithful friend and counsellor. She died in St. John's Newfoundland. As she wished, her ashes were buried in Nain, where her heart had found a home.

Heidi Gembicki

Noticeboard

Christmas events

If your congregation is planning something that may inspire other congregations, please let the editor know by 07 November.

Prayer for specific work

For those who wish to pray for specific work in the Unity through the Women's Desk (see July 2013 Messenger), there is an email list that can be sent to you each month. Contact Sr Patricia Garner, Unitywomen2011@gmail, or the website www.unitywomensdesk.org or ask someone online to download it and print it off for you. The list is circulated at the end of each month.

For those who read German...

...the Herrnhut Redaktion appears about the 25th of every month, and contains a summary of current work throughout the Unity. Contact info@herrnhuter-missionshilfe.de to go on the contact list. Short reports from this source will appear in future editions of the Messenger. The current Redaktion reminds us, among other matters, of the work at Star Mountain in Palestine, and the difficulties encountered by local staff and German volunteers; and the work of the Elim Home in South Africa, which was 50 years old this October.

Congregation News

Hornsey

Earlier this year, the refurbishment project at Hornsey resumed and Sunday services were held in the church hall. This location added another dimension - providing a rather cosy and informal setting.

In April, Br Ingo Gutsche, a Moravian youth worker from the European Continental province spent several weeks here to gain some insight into church life in the British province before returning to Germany for his ordination on July 7th.

The first of our Musical Meditation evenings took place in June with 30 minutes of organ music accompanied by a classically trained soprano. These events will occur every two months, replacing the evening service. The local residents are also invited to these events and we hope it will encourage them to get involved in other church activities.

In August, there were two Sunday school outings - the first to Southsea and the second to Bournemouth; both trips were enjoyed by youngsters and adults alike.

The highlight of the year, so far, occurred on Sunday 12th May. This service planned as a surprise for Br Joachim as a way of showing our gratitude for his 15 years of service and dedication: he is the longest serving minister at Hornsey. Thankfully, we managed to keep the secret right up to the last second - even printing a fake monitor for Br Joachim so that he wouldn't know that the order of service had changed.

Hymns and scripture readings had been carefully selected for him and musical items were performed by congregation members in his honour. Br Edwin Quildan led the service; Br Bob Hopcroft gave the address.

Lunch was then served where Br Bob announced that enough money had been collected to pay for Br Joachim to travel to the Moravian churches in South Asia. Br Joachim has just set off for a two and a half week visit. I'm sure he will have a blessed time there and no doubt we'll see many photos on his return!

Claudette Anthony

Harold Road

The inauguration service for our new minister Derrick Purnell took place at Harold Road on Sunday 16th June. It was conducted by Brs. Bob Hopcroft, Joachim Kreusel & Edwin Quildan. Members of the Bedford Congregation (where Br. Purnell will jointly minister) and representatives from all the London Moravian churches were present. We are very much looking forward to Br. Purnell's ministry and will do our very best to support him.

Michael O'Sullivan

Wellhouse

Pulling together

On Sunday 22nd September, Wellhouse Moravian Church hosted the Katie Philpott School of Dance Presentation of Awards Service.

Br. James Woolford spoke about how much stronger we become when we work together to achieve a common goal and how important each member is in the building up of the whole body.

The Church presented a cup for the most improved dancer of 2013 and awards for improvement in all the individual classes of dance were presented by Katie and her teachers.

This is the second of such award services and it is planned to be repeated annually. The Church Committee at Wellhouse felt that the awarding of a trophy would be a positive way of showing their support for the dance school by encouraging and rewarding progress and achievement.

Katie and her teachers then had the un-enviable task of choosing from the 300+ pupils whom they felt deserved the awards for 2013, because the overall standard, talent and enthusiasm of the school is indeed very high.



The Wellhouse Moravian Church are proud to support these awards and to host this presentation service. It was a real pleasure to see these young people supported by their families attend this thanksgiving service and receive their awards; and it was pleasing and to their credit that all recipients for the awards were present.

It is pleasing to see the young people using dance along with other of their talents as a way of acknowledging the gifts of God and how these gifts can be used to praise and worship him.

Kenneth Evans

Tytherton

The past months have been a mixture of joyful and sad occasions. We have welcomed two new members and attendance at church has increased. The usual 'cream tea on the lawn' was held with village support and a flower festival took place in the church, with displays prepared by various local organisations.

We were shocked to hear of the sudden death at 93 of Sister Dorothy Mann, who was in church the week before. Having spent nearly all her life in the village, it was not surprising that a large congregation gathered for her funeral to give thanks. Her death came almost a year after Sr Joan Archard also died suddenly, not long after she and Gordon celebrated their diamond anniversary. Joan has also spent most of her life in the village and we greatly miss them.

Our harvest thanksgiving was led by Rev. Jim Scott, a retired Anglican vicar who grew up in Tytherton. This was well supported. The day was also memorable because tribute was paid to Brother Peter Gubi on his 60 years of ordained ministry. Br Brian Foster thanked Peter and told him how much his leadership and pastoral care are appreciated by the whole community.

Joyce Mellowes

CONGREGATION REGISTERS

BAPTISM

Kilwarlin	Jessica Ellen Law	5th May
Dukinfield	Elijah John Rumney	12th May
Hornsey	Shanayah-Rae Morgan	
	Mia Holder	11th August
Swindon	Benjamin Michael	
	Rhys Newman	25th August
Dukinfield	Archie Edward Clegg	8th September
Royton	Eliza Faith Gibson	15th September
Dukinfield	Archibald Andrew Barber	22nd September
Dukinfield	Luke Peter Grey	6th October
Dukinfield	Libby Tamira Grey	6th October

CONFIRMATION

Dukinfield	Maurice James Barber	22nd September
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DEATHS

Hornsey	Sylvester McCoy	12th June
Dukinfield	Ann Bogie, aged 95	9th September
Royton	Jean Holt	18th September

Dates to Remember

10 Nov Remembrance Sunday

13 Nov The Realisation of the Headship of Christ

17 Nov World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

www.worlddayofremembrance.org

17 Nov **23 Nov** Prisons Week
www.prisonsworld.org

1 Dec World Aids Day
www.izito.co.uk

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Provincial Diary for November

30th Oct – 8th Nov World Council of Churches Assembly, South Korea
Br Cooper and Br Howarth

2nd Western District Conference, Kingswood

Social Responsibility Committee, Fulneck - Sr Taylor

18th - 19th PEC, Mission Board and Estates Meeting, Church House - The PEC

November 3rd [4th Before Advent] Luke 19:1-10

Son of Man, who came to seek and to save the lost, we thank you for the salvation which came to the house of Zacchaeus as you were passing by. Like his forefather Abraham, he found his security not in circumstances but in obedience, by accepting your call. Help us to obey your revealed will today, grasping the opportunity you lay before us whilst still within our reach, that our day of grace might not be lost. Through our faith in you grant that we might become spiritual descendants of both Abraham and Zacchaeus, rejoicing to see your day and seeing it, be glad. Amen

November 10th [3rd Before Advent] Luke 20:27-38

Risen Lord, who after suffering showed yourself alive to the apostles by many proofs, speaking to them during forty days about the kingdom of God; fill us with joy and peace in believing. You are the resurrection and the life; you were dead and are alive for evermore. Speak to us who wait for you now; for the scriptures speak of you, the living Word; that our faith might not rest on schemes and arguments but on our living Lord; and that believing we may have life in your name. Amen

November 13th [Wednesday] Realisation of the Headship of Christ 1741

All self dependence is but vain, Christ doth our corner-stone remain,
Our rock that will unshaken stay, when heaven and earth are fled away.
Thou art and shalt remain our Lord, thou art our God by all adored;
The Day-star of thy pilgrim flock, thy body's Head, thy Church's Rock
[N.L.v Zinzendorf]

November 17th [2nd Before Advent] Luke 21:5-19

Head of the Church, fill the congregations which, without you, are empty shrines. Restore the lives which are lifeless and dead; kindle the hearts which are cold and dull; enlighten the minds which are dark and blind; that our lips may praise you and our lives glorify you. Make us aware of the great company past, present and to come, with whom we join to worship. Take from us the pride of heart which strives to impress our image on others and give us the desire only to see in them the reflection of you. Grant that, continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, we may be neither undermined by error nor shaken by any storm of the world. Let our pride be that we are members of Christ and our memorial that our names are written in heaven. Amen

November 24th [Sunday Before Advent] Luke 23:33-43

King of the Jews, cruelly lifted up on the cross by the hands of sinful men, rejected and defeated, whose kingdom was not of this world. You are the first-born from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth; granted an everlasting dominion and a kingship that will not pass away; the mystery of whose kingship illumines our lives. In your death was the victory that crowns the ages, and in your broken body the power that unites heaven and earth. Grant that rejecting the proud wisdoms of the world we might be given pardon at the sanctuary of your cross and worship the majesty of your mercy. Look upon us with those eyes with which you looked upon the dying thief, that with him we might confess our sin and humbly plead 'Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom' and by that same voice be comforted. Amen.

Richard Ingham

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