



Time for a Spring Clean

Br. Philip Cooper
writes a reflection
on Lent

I do not know what the weather will be like when you read this article, but spring will soon be here. The first day of spring is 20th March.

Spring is a wonderful time of year. It is a time when the darkness and death of winter gives way to light and new birth. It is also a season when the sun shines more brightly through the windows of our houses, showing up the dust that has accumulated in the nooks and crannies of our homes, telling us it is time for a good spring clean.

As you read his article we will be about to enter or may have already entered an important season in the church year - the season of Lent. This year the season begins on Wednesday, 5th March.

"Lent" is an old English word for spring. The season of Lent always begins on Ash Wednesday and is a period of spiritual discipline leading up to and in preparation for Easter. Among other things, it is a time for personal reflection and self examination. It is a time when we invite the light of Jesus Christ to shine on our lives and reveal to us those things that hinder our relationship with God, and which we need to get rid of. It is a kind of spiritual spring clean. It is a time for repentance - rebirth - a holy spring.

The Historical Background to Lent

Lent most probably began as the formal and final period of preparation for those who were to be baptised into membership of the church on Easter Sunday. It later also became a period of penance for those being disciplined by the church, and later still, a general period of penitential devotion for all Christians.

The season of Lent is said to last for forty

days, to correspond to the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness or desert, just before his baptism and before he began his ministry. The period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday is actually more than forty days. The figure of forty days is arrived at by omitting Sundays, which were traditionally considered to be feast days, and therefore days when the Lenten discipline of fasting was relaxed. Forty days can also be arrived at if one ends Lent on Palm Sunday.

Making the Most of Lent

The forty day period that Jesus spent in the wilderness can be understood as a time of personal reflection and self examination for Jesus. It was a time for Jesus to reflect on the ministry that God was calling him to carry out, and the sacrifices and personal cost involved. Lent is an opportunity for us to reflect on our own Christian discipleship, and the sacrifices and personal cost involved.

Traditionally, as part of their Lenten discipline, Christians would fast. Rather than fasting, Christians today often give something up for Lent. This may be a bad habit, which they want to give up for good. Alternatively, it may be something that is enjoyable, which they abstain from during Lent, in order to share in a small way in the sacrifice of Christ, and as an exercise in self-control.

Also, during Lent, a Christian may spend extra time reading the Bible, praying, attending a church bible study or prayer group, or helping other people.

Count Your Blessings

For a number of years now, during Lent, Christian Aid has produced a Lenten calendar entitled, "Count Your Blessings". Rather than giving something up for Lent, this calendar provides an opportunity to reflect each day on how

fortunate we are in this country, compared with people in many other countries, and then encourages us to put aside a little bit of money each day to give to Christian Aid.

Let me give you two examples of what I mean. For Monday, 10th March, the calendar says:-

Despite us having the technology and the knowledge that we need, a staggering 783 million people still do not have access to clean drinking water. Give 20p for every drink of water you have today.

Again, for Thursday, 27th March, the calendar says:-

In Kenya, over half of all births happen without a trained medical professional present. Give £1 if a midwife was present when you (or your) children were born.

There are versions of the calendar for all adults, for 16-25 year olds and children. All are free to download from the Christian Aid website - www.christianaid.org.uk/lent. There is also a free app available, containing forty reflections, suggestions and inspirational photographs.

Lent: Holy Spring

Lent is a wonderful season. It is an opportunity to invite the light of Jesus Christ to shine on our lives and illuminate those things that we really need to change or get rid of completely. It is a chance to reflect on our own discipleship. It is a season of rebirth, when the message of Jesus can be encouraged to grow and flourish even more abundantly in our lives.

Whatever you do this Lenten season, however you choose to keep this Lenten discipline, I hope it will be a time of spiritual blessing for you, a holy spring.



Over 18's Weekend in Bradford

page 27



Making a Difference

A group of local churches in London making it possible for homeless people to get their lives back

page 28

Unity Prayer Day

Br. Robert Hopcroft writes:

Each year, on the first Sunday in March, we set aside time to remember other parts of our Unity and to take up a special offering for Unity Prayer Day.

This year, offerings will go to support the work of the Moravian Church in the Suriname province; and in particular the work of the Church in the interior of Suriname, much of which is only accessible by air or boat. Attached is a list of prayer requests which have just arrived from the Suriname Province.

- Please continue to keep our sisters and brothers in the interior of Suriname in your prayers. May God send more people to us all with the courage, foresight and compassion to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have several vacant places and we will make a new start in Dymu on the Suriname river. The people are open for the Gospel and brother Michel Joonha will be in charge. Please remember him and his family in your prayer.
- Give thanks and praise for the success of the regional platform installed at the Upper Suriname River and in Brokopondo region, which means that representatives of the Medical Care, the Church, the school and the women's group are members of the board. Pray for their continuing work with the people, especially the women and children

- Pray for the development of a diaconal job in the school for the teenagers with their high rate of pregnancy.
- Pray for the work that is being done on the part of the social organisations and churches to overcome violence against women and children. That the abuse will stop.
- Pray for the economic situation in the interior, that money people earn in the gold digging is spent in a right way. They are already grateful that God is helping them to improve the situation.
- Pray for the many villages that are dealing with severe poverty. Many of our Moravian churches are in such villages, and our sisters and brothers deal daily with a lack of proper nourishment, housing, and other necessities of life. For those of us who live in luxury, may we be willing to give out of our abundance to mission groups who are trying to help in these areas as the Upper Suriname River, Upper Saramacca River and Upper Marowijne River.
- Pray for the congregation in the interior where there was a lot of activity, that it will come alive again.

The funding will also use for training the different groups in the congregation and regular visiting those area where they are no ordained pastors. And for outboard motors that will be use as a transport from village to village.

Ravensbrück Prayer

This prayer is said to have been found after the liberation of Ravensbrück Nazi Concentration Camp, where women in particular were held. Some accounts say that the prayer was found beside the corpse of a child.

Among those who died in Ravensbrück, some after being subjected to 'medical' experiments, there were a number of Polish women who composed prayers of great depth. Another who died there was Betsie Ten Bloom, who, along with her sister Corrie, harboured Jews in occupied Holland, a story known to us through Corrie's autobiography, *The Hiding Place*.

No one knows who the author was, or in which language the prayer was first composed. It is known in English since the 1980's, and may be a digest of a longer prayer. For many, it has to come t- speak of the cost of discipleship.

Remember, Lord, not only the men and women of goodwill but also those of ill will. But do not only remember all the suffering they have inflicted on us, remember the fruits we bought, thanks to this suffering, our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this. And when they come to judgement let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

Letter

“ Dear Sr Editor

What a delight it was to receive my "Messenger" this month especially more so because it seems almost written "just for me". There is of course the usual news and events that I like but more, on Page 16 there is the article about Fulneck School followed by the article about Broadoaks, I then turned the page and see Brother Pat and Sister Gillian Wilson's article about their "Dream"

Now let me explain. I am an old pupil from Fulneck and also the daughter of Norman and Mary Driver so as you can see this edition was really - just for me.

Thank you so very much

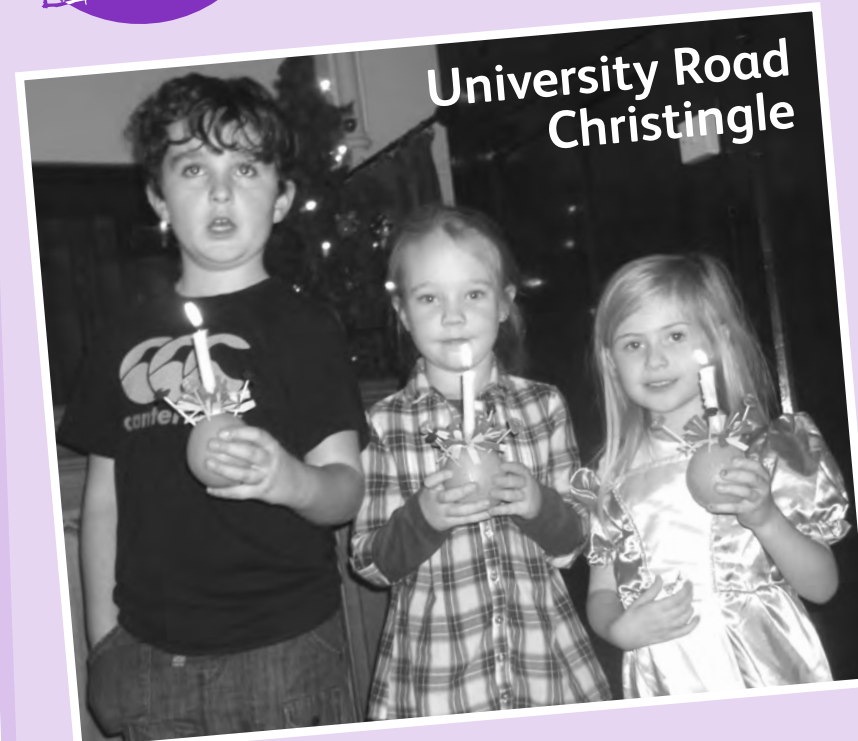
Ann Wigney (Driver).

Member at New Beginnings Moravian Church

Huntersville USA ”

YOUTH ZONE

Latest news from the Provincial Youth and Children's Office



Moravian SUMMER CAMP 2014

26:07:14 - 02:08:14

Fulneck School, Pudsey, Yorkshire
Cost £260

(£30 discount for early booking)

Ages 10-17

More details and forms available from Joy Raynor, your Minister or from the website: www.moravian.org.uk/index.php/youth-and-children-zone/summer-camp



Over 18's Weekend in Bradford

We started our meeting in Bradford by sharing fellowship and watching some videos prepared by Eleanor (Horton) about the Inn Churches project, which provides food and shelter to the homeless in winter. It was very insightful about the different people we would be working with on Saturday.

On Saturday morning we decided on going to Wakefield for a walk. We were lucky in missing the worst of the weather and enjoyed getting some fresh air.

That evening we went to the Inn Churches project and prepared a meal. Eleanor and Debs (Gracehill) worked away creating a

culinary masterpiece of bolognese and pasta, which received many compliments. Philip (Horton) and Peter (Fulneck) bravely attempted a homemade jam roly poly which received rave reviews. It was great to see the positive work being done by the project and be able to contribute something towards it.

On Sunday we headed down to join the Horton congregation where we received a warm welcome. We were also joined by Mark (Sparkhill) and Jane (Fulneck and Gomersal).

A fantastic weekend was had by all.

Peter, Debbie, Eleanor and Philip

Making a Difference

Brother Edwin Quildan reflects on a group of local churches in London that are making it possible for homeless people in the area to get their lives back



The Chelsea Methodist Church at 155A Kings Road, home of the West London Churches Homeless Concern

You could easily miss the Methodist Church on the King's Road, sandwiched between coffee shops and boutiques. It doesn't look like a church. Yet within its unprepossessing exterior there is enough Christian commitment to make the grandest church proud. This is the headquarters of the West London Churches Homeless Concern (WLCHC). For the last 15 years WLCHC has provided food, shelter, counselling, companionship and care for those who have nowhere else to go. Through an inspiring example of interdenominational teamwork, churches from Chelsea, Kensington, Fulham, Hammersmith, Putney and Barnes take turns to provide overnight accommodation during the cold weather months from November to April.

The Fetter Lane congregation supports this Charity in many ways; by regular donations, and by providing parking for vehicles and storage space for food and resources.

Over the years the charity has grown, and now provides London's largest winter night shelter, as well as year-round daytime services including laundry, clothing, and washing facilities.

The WLCHC provides help to get people off the streets with a dedicated caseworker service - offering advice, advocacy, and information on support services to shelter guests. Caseworkers assist guests who find it impossible to get a national insurance number without a residential postal address. Without a national insurance number they cannot apply for a job and without a job, they cannot afford a place to live.

By allowing those in need to use the service for as long as necessary, the charity is able to build a level of trust with individuals who for a variety of reasons have tried and failed to interact with mainstream services in the past. For instance, unlike at many hostels and shelters, WLCHC guests sit and eat together with volunteers and staff. These meals provide a rare chance for homeless guests to feel welcomed, and as a guest wrote: 'Importantly they (the volunteers) listened to me, and made me feel valued.' During the day there is free food available, donated by generous local businesses. According to Steven Platts, Senior Project Manager, 'Our guests have often lived without routine or security and life on the street is chaotic. We aim to provide them with a stable place to come to, that feels like home.'



There is a sense of achievement when a former homeless person gets back into the mainstream. The casework team now includes a Polish speaker to cope with the growing numbers of Eastern Europeans who turn to the charity for help - is proud of its record of successfully helping homeless guests to navigate the complexities of recovering ID and accessing benefits and healthcare, and to find accommodation, work, employment. Neil Parkinson, Senior Project Manager, says, 'The hope is that we leave those who come to us in crisis in a stable, supported situation off the streets.'

Some of the letters sent from former homeless people reveal the depth of the charity's impact. A few examples from the files speak volumes:

'The volunteers are so caring. They make you feel like there are people who do care. I started to feel like I had an identity, that I could have a future.'

'This is a little note to thank you for all the help you gave me earlier this year. As I write this I have been sober for 101 days and can honestly say that your help, compassion and kindness were pivotal to my early sobriety.'

'I hope to settle down now, thanks to you all. I'm nearly 61 now and don't want to be on the road any longer.'

As the recession bites deeper into the economy, the numbers of homeless are at an all-time high, while services to help them are being cut and restrictions on who can access what help is available exclude many who then have no choice but sleep on the street. WLCHC's ethos is to accept all who turn to them. With up to 100 bed spaces per night from January to April, the charity provides at least two-thirds of London's open-access bed spaces. Moreover, as Steven says, 'Around 70% of people arriving at our shelters last year were entirely destitute, with no money at all - if we did not take them, they would certainly spend their days, and nights, on the street.'

The price of its open-access policy - a price the charity considers well worth paying - is that WLCHC gets no government funding and relies on the generous support of trusts, individuals, companies and churches. With fundraising becoming ever more difficult, in September 2013 this year the charity ran a sponsored sleepout in Duke of York Square. The event was a tremendous success, with 170 people sleeping on the concrete including 10 vicars from different churches - a great example of inter-denominational solidarity! Over £100,000 was raised in sponsorship - enough to fund the second hall the charity wants to operate each night from January to April to provide shelter for up to 100 people per night when the weather freezes.

WLCHC's shelters opened at the start of November and will run until April, including through the Christmas period. The charity is always in need of volunteers, donations (in cash and in kind) and support for events. For information about volunteering or donating, go to www.wlchc.org.



Sr Dorothy Moreton

From the address given by Br Fred Linyard at the funeral

Dorothy was born in Brockweir in 1933, the second of three daughters. Her parents had both served overseas before ministry in Britain. After education at Tytherton and Ockbrook, Dorothy trained and worked as a nurse but soon offered for mission service. The Provincial Board of the day wanted that service to be through nursing but Dorothy was convinced she was called to something different and so, at her own expense went to Mount Hermon Bible College.

Life here was very tough but Dorothy survived and offered again for mission service. This time she was accepted and in 1958 was called to work in Tanzania. Details of her work here are limited but we know that in the early years she wrote out her sermons in Swahili and learned them by heart. They seem to have made quite an impact on those who heard them.

Megan, working in Tabora with the Colonial Service, who became a lifelong friend to Dorothy, tells about the difficulties and quality of Dorothy's work there. She remembers "her competence, her spirituality, her endurance, loving kindness, and more." Living for a time in a small community outside Tabora, Megan writes, she would have had no transport except "a local, rather erratic bus to Tabora with its chickens, goats etc." (as well as people of course). "Her diet would have been maize flour and a few vegetables and a very occasional chicken. Supplies she got in town perhaps once a month."

By 1973 Dorothy's health was causing problems and she returned to England. After a break she continued in church service. She was ordained in 1975 and accepted a call to Leominster as non-stipendiary minister. The congregation got

a new lease of life and as Sister in the neighbouring cottage hospital she found many opportunities for extended ministry, and became a much loved and respected person in church and in town.

From Leominster she was called to Dukinfield and moved into stipendiary ministry, also serving Wheler Street and Moss Side congregations for a while. She had a gift for involving people in congregation life, making full use of their gifts.

Like most Moravian ministers, Dorothy did not just serve the congregation, she also served the Province. In 1981, she represented the Province as Deputy to Unity Synod in Herrnhut. She became Text Book editor and was elected Secretarius Fratrum. When she retired to Ockbrook in 1993, she continued to work in church and in the local community: volunteer at the McMillan Unit at Derby Infirmary, visitor for Borrowbrook Link (an organisation caring for older people,) was involved with the local Women's Refuge and kept in touch with many people living alone who were grateful for her friendship.

What a full life Dorothy lived! We were saddened to see her weakened by illness during her final years which took her further and further away from us. But we remember with affection and respect her service, her quiet humour, her faith, and we find strength in those memories.



Sr Margaret Connor

Margaret Lamorna Connor was born in Bedford on the 18th of September 1929. Her father was a Moravian minister serving the Pertenhall, Kimbolton and Risely congregations. In 1935 the family moved to the West Indies. Margaret had her sixth birthday on the ship which took them there.

Herbert had agreed to serve for 5 years in the West Indies but this became 14. His first congregation was in St John's in Antigua, and while there Margaret almost died from dysentery. In 1938 they moved to Trinidad, and to Barbados in 1942. The following year Herbert was consecrated as a bishop. They moved to St Kitts in 1946 but were only there nine months before moving back to England.

Margaret arrived back with hardly any qualifications. She went to night school classes and gained six 'O levels'. She then trained as a teacher of collage and needlework in Ripon. While working in Birmingham she travelled to Fulneck as often as possible to be with her ill father. He died in 1961, and Margaret then joined her mother in Fulneck, where they lived until Florrie died in 1986.

Margaret had many interests, one of which was her pioneering art work. In 1969 she wrote a book called 'Introducing Fabric Collage'. Her collages have travelled the country in exhibitions, and have been purchased for private and educational collections. The pulpit fall at Fulneck was made by Margaret in memory of her parents.

Margaret had a great interest in the history of the Moravian Church. She looked after the Fulneck archives for nearly twenty years, as well as catering for an increasing number of enquiries and visitors. Her work with the archives led to research on links

between the Brönte sisters and the Moravians, and her findings were published in 'Brönte Studies' between 1997 and 2003. Her last big project was a book on the Moravian artist Johann Valentin Haidt, published in 2012.

Margaret was involved in Fulneck Museum from when it began in 1969, and catalogued all the exhibits. She was a regular speaker at the Fulneck History Group, and was a member of the Pudsey Library Writing Group.

Margaret is perhaps best known for her poetry. She won various competitions and awards and has featured in a number of anthologies. A trilogy of books was published between 2009 and 2011 - 'Late Spring', 'Battle Cry of Angels' and 'A Present Fire'. In the last of these books she quoted Dylan Thomas: "These poems, with all their crudities, doubts and confusions, are written for the love of man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn fool if they weren't."

The 'International Who's Who in Poetry and Poets Encyclopedia described Margaret Connor as "collage artist, poet and writer." She was all those things but she was also a wonderful person, and a great friend to so many, always interested in her family and in other people. She will be greatly missed.

Michael Newman



Spotlight on the Dublin Fellowship

Although there are very few Moravians in Dublin today their history there goes back into the mid 18th century. However we still keep the flag flying as the Dublin Moravian Fellowship.

For over 200 years, premises in Bishop Street near Saint Patrick’s cathedral, were the congregation home, with a new frontage being erected on the Kevin Street side in 1917.

Due to falling numbers and high maintenance costs, the building was sold in 1959 but can still be seen, complete with its ‘Lamb and Flag’ roundel. The stained-glass portraits of Moravian historical figures can now be seen in Gracehill Moravian Church, and the organ was sold to the Blackrock College for £500 in 1957.

The congregation then had the use of the chapel in the Presbyterian Association premises at Stephen’s Green. These were sold in 1974 and the congregation moved to the Congregational Church, Kilmainham.

In 1960 the retired missionary Br Walter Asboe took charge of the congregation and it was at this time, 50 years ago, that I first got to know them. I was courting a Dublin girl (now my wife Marian) and, while visiting my future in-laws, I went with her to the 11am Easter Sunday service. On arrival, she was greeted by the organist, Sr Emma Lang, as Freda, which was her mother’s name. Marian’s mother had been taught by Miss Lang in Cootehill, Co Cavan; her father was the Moravian Minister and Marian’s grandfather was the Methodist minister.

By the mid 1960’s the congregation was formally linked with University Road, In 1972, Br John Berry offered to retire to Dublin with his wife, Joan. Both he and Sr Berry were also very active in their local community.

In 1980 Provincial Synod agreed to the request that the congregation be closed. Br John and Sr Joan still cared for the remnant, and also were made very welcome in Dundrum Methodist Church.

The remaining Moravians met together from time to time. In 1995 the last six members, Br Desmond & Sr Ann Monson, Sr Valda Boydell, Sr Nora O’Donnell, Br Robert McFadden and Sr Joan Berry, wrote to the Provincial Board about the upkeep the Graveyard. They said too how much they missed not having Moravian services. As a lay preacher I offered to conduct these occasionally. We agreed to try to have three services each year. For the first 15 years we held our services in the Lutheran Church: the Lutherans had been using our church in Belfast for many years.

Our service to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the birth of Count Zinzendorf in 1700, was memorable. Due to a mistake regarding the church keys, we had an open-air service in the car park. We used the First Liturgy, which dates back to Zinzendorf’s day; we abandoned the planned Holy Communion part of the service; but sang Zinzendorf’s famous hymn, ‘Christian hearts in love united’.

In 2007 Br Livingstone organised a service in Centenary Methodist Church to celebrate the 550th Anniversary of the Moravian Church. Centenary was Marian’s home congregation and we were married in the old Stephen’s Green church. Bishop Beth Torkington preached, and greetings were brought by a number of dignitaries including the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, the Czech Ambassador and representatives of other denominations. A celebratory cake, decorated with the ‘Lamb and Flag’ was cut by Sr Joan Berry and Jordana Thompson, our oldest and youngest Moravians.

Br Livingstone Thompson and Sr Rosemary Power organised a Moravian Lenten Service on 17th February 2013 in a school used by a Methodist outreach in a large new estate in north Dublin.

Some of the original Fellowship members, Br Desmond Monson, who faithfully looked after the graveyard; Sr Valda Boydell, who had been a missionary in Tanzania; have died; while Sr Nora O’Donnell moved back to England.

In 2009 Sr Joan Berry died, aged 95, and as she had left her body to medical research there was no funeral. She had requested that any Thanksgiving Service for her life should be held as part of the Annual Christingle Service. The service opened with the Dublin Community Choir, of which Br and Sr Berry had been members, singing ‘Silent Night’, in English, Irish and German, and closed with Sr Joan’s request of ‘The Candlelight Carol’ by John Rutter

I have been greatly assisted in the planning and conducting of the services by Br Livingstone Thompson, Sr Rosemary Power, Br Mark Kernohan, Br Stephen Ferguson, and my long-suffering wife, Marian.

The Dublin Moravian Fellowship would not have survived since 1995 without the help and support of members of many different denominations. We are grateful to Canon Horace McKinley, whose Rectory overlooks the graveyard, for his dedication to the welfare of the graveyard and those who visit it.

Our Moravian Church motto is ‘Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow him’. We pray that the Moravians in Dublin will continue to follow where our Saviour leads and needs us.

Derick Woods

The Dublin Burial Ground

Sr Rosemary Power has written a booklet, published by the Moravian Book Room, giving a brief history of the Dublin Congregation and of a number of the people interned in the Burial Ground. It also includes a brief account of the Moravian Church and text boxes explaining Moravian customs.

Burials include well-known Moravian names such as John Töltzschig, members of the LaTrobe family, Walter Asboe and Lorenzo Taylor. Also included are vinaigrettes of ordinary members of the Congregation, like the Mondets, who had been involved in the founding of the congregation; the Verneys and their prodigal son; Emily Eberle who became a ‘lady doctor’ in 1887; and the Purser family who were brewers for the Guinness family.

You are never closer to history than when you are standing in a Burial Ground.

In Whitechurch, on the southern outskirts of Dublin is the Burial Ground of the Dublin Moravian Congregation, a beautiful and tranquil place of faith.

This booklet has been funded by the New Work Fund as a way of explaining to local people a bit about the Moravian Church and the faith and lives of the people who were Moravians in Dublin. We hope it will promote interest and reclaim an aspect of Church history that has been largely forgotten.

The Moravian Church is indebted to Canon Horace McKinley, the Church of Ireland Rector at Whitechurch who has shown so many visitors around the Burial Ground and explained the Moravian Church to them. Booklets are £3 plus pp from the Moravian Book Room or from me in Gracehill. Proceeds from the sale go into the New Work fund.

Sarah Groves

Renewal & Fellowship Weekend 9th to 11th May 2014

The Conference is organised by the Provincial Renewal Committee. The weekend is a time of great fellowship, inspiration and renewal.

Shallowford House is set in four acres of gardens in the rolling Staffordshire countryside the ideal setting for relaxation or for the more competitively inclined, croquet and other garden games are available. Shallowford House and has been a popular venue for many years. Up to 38 people can be accommodated. Places will be reserved on a first come first served basis.

Cost of the weekend £117 per person. Guest speaker **Rev. Phil Wall**

To reserve your place please complete this Booking Form and return to:
Paul Greenhough, 150, Hunsworth Lane, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire BD19 4DR
Tel: 01274 872633 E mail Paul.Greenhough@moravian.org.uk

FELLOWSHIP WEEKEND BOOKING FORM

Please reserve me places ☐ Single Room ☐ Twin Room (specify)

Please specify any special diet

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Congregation:

Signed:

Showing films in Church

Bob Vernon, a retired Anglican priest, reflects on the power of the moving image

Mainstream films tell us stories in a manner different to either novels or theatre; and impact on people's consciousness in profound ways.

Most explicitly 'religious' films are made to instruct rather than to entertain. Church people will watch them, often because they reinforce what they already believe. I would happily show *Jesus of Montreal*, a film that asks how the church of today would react to a truly Christ-like figure, rather than Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*.

Some films achieve 'cult status'. Many do so because they embody very popular but deplorable attitudes, promoting over-the-top masculinity and casting women as victims, normalizing soft pornography or promoting the superiority of might over right.

But the film industry also knows that many of their public have nobler convictions and aspirations. We are capable of understanding more subtle explorations of what it means to be human; and isn't that a central question of our 'incarnational' theology?

I first showed my last congregation *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore's prophetic lecture on the threat of climate change. A few years later, I showed Terrence Malik's film *The Tree of Life* because it seemed to me to be a most challenging contemporary spiritual work of art. I also showed film seasons during Advent and Lent, to illustrate the themes of 'Being Human' and 'Speaking Truth to Power'.

I used films when training Clergy, helping them see the connections between film and faith, but started with volunteer youth leaders to see how the themes and values of some films could feed into youth programmes, especially when groups were away for the weekend and wanted to watch a video in the evening.

The 'teaching' intention did not need to be stated. As long as a film is entertaining, its message is likely to percolate. It is more important for young people coming under the influence of the church to internalize values consistent with our faith than it is to teach them how many disciples there were, to recite the books of the Bible, or the even the Ten Commandments.

For example, very few twelve-year-olds have difficulty resisting the temptation to covet their neighbour's wife. However, inculcating respectful attitudes to girls and womankind as early as possible is vitally important, especially in today's culture, inundated with misogyny and pornography. Boys need to know what it is like to be 'honourable' men. Girls also need to learn respect for themselves as well as expect it from others. There are plenty of films that treat females with contempt - even while appearing to value them - so let's make sure young people are exposed to more positive attitudes and roles. The recent *Hunger Games* series does so; but Jennifer Lawrence's previous film, *Winter's Bone*, provides a much more realistic and relevant heroine.

With youth leaders I would often use just a single clip to make a point. Early in the Peter Weir film *Witness*, a young boy is in a police station. He has seen a brutal killing and is being shown mug-shots of possible suspects. When the policeman in charge of the investigation, John Book, has to take a phone call the boy wanders off. While he is looking in a Trophy cabinet, the boy sees a photograph of the killer. He is a senior police officer. John Book notices a subtle change in the boy's physical attitude, and goes over to him. The boy wordlessly points at the photo. John Book quietly puts his hand over the boy's, curling the accusing finger back. He then gets the boy out of the



Police Station as fast as he can without arousing suspicion. This three-minute scene is pivotal to the plot, and a wonderful example of the detailed attention youth leaders need to pay to the young people they work with, their awareness of body language, and their willingness to believe what they are told. The whole film is also worth watching as it shows us the power of 'witness'. This young, vulnerable, naïve boy (a member of the Amish Community) bears witness to a great wrong committed by powerful, 'respectable' and utterly ruthless men. But in the end none of their strength, position or violence can defeat the power of this witness. There are many other less-obvious but important threads running through this film, in fact a whole Lent-Course worth. Among the many films that valorize power and revenge rather than proper vulnerability and justice, such examples as *Witness* are to be treasured.

Many films that promote and embody the virtues that St Paul extolled find an appreciative audience. Why show films in church? Because the skills of hundreds of people have been used - at enormous expense - to bring us great stories, told with good intent, sometimes celebrating, sometimes illuminating, sometimes challenging our Christian values. They are only coloured shadows thrown upon a wall, but in many ways they are the stained glass windows of our time.

More can be found on the author's blog, revbobsblog.blogspot

Open Book { Zechariah }

The name Zechariah appears over twenty times in the Old Testament and probably means 'God has remembered', or possibly, 'God is renowned'.

The prophecy of Zechariah has the reputation of being the most difficult book in the Bible to understand. It begins with a call to repentance in the first six verses of chapter one, which is hard to equal in any other book. Following that, until chapter six, verse 8, there is a series of visions about horses and horns, a measuring line, a flying scroll and a woman in a basket, among other things. All of them have to be interpreted by the reader, or the hearer, although some assistance is given by the angel who speaks with Zechariah. These visions are very much like those recorded in the book of the Revelation in the New Testament.

Zechariah prophesied for about two years at much the same time as the prophet Haggai (See Ezra five, 1 and six, 14.) Haggai was an old man by this time, while Zechariah was much younger. Presumably each appealed to his own generation. Both of them were concerned about the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, after the return from exile, and about preparations for the coming of the Messiah. In chapter one verse 1, the prophet is described as the grandson of Iddo, and Iddo is mentioned in the list of priests who returned from exile with Zerubbabel (Nehemiah twelve verse 4). If this is the same Iddo, then Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet, and as such he would have been accustomed to preaching from an early age.

The book was well known to New Testament writers who quoted from it to prove that Jesus was fulfilling what the Scriptures had foretold. The passage from chapter nine, verse 9, is quoted word for word in St. Matthew's gospel, at the beginning of chapter twenty-one; and also in St. John's gospel chapter twelve,

verse 15, in connection with the events of Palm Sunday. 'See, your king is coming to you, humble, and riding on a donkey, the foal of a donkey.' In chapter eleven, verse 12, there is mention of thirty pieces of silver in connection with wages paid. This has been associated by some commentators with the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas for his betrayal of Christ. (See Matthew chapter twenty-seven.) The words of chapter thirteen, verse 7 are quoted in Matthew twenty-six, verse 31 and Mark fourteen, verse 27, 'Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.' Another passage, 'They will look on him whom they have pierced', from chapter twelve, verse 10, is quoted in St. John's gospel chapter nineteen, verse 37.

Hymn writers, such as Richard Hayes Robinson, have also found inspiration in this obscure book. In one of his evening hymns, 'Holy Father, cheer our way', every verse ends with the words, 'Light at evening time', which is a quotation from chapter fourteen verse 7. It is thought that those words have their parallel in Isaiah chapter sixty, verse 19 and in Revelation chapter twenty-one, verse 23, both of which portray the glory of God as a light, in place of the sun and the moon.

The book can be divided into two parts, chapters one to eight and then chapters nine to fourteen. Both sections follow the same construction, a recalling of the past, a statement about the present and then a look into the future.

The second year of Darius, mentioned in the opening verse of chapter one as the

date of the beginning of this prophecy, was the year 520 B.C. The only other date mentioned is two years later in chapter seven, verse 1.

The first section of the prophecy consists of eight night visions followed by a coronation scene, all of which appear to have taken place one after the other on the same occasion. The second section of the prophecy is written in a much more poetic style. This is found mainly in chapters nine and ten, in four verses in chapter eleven and another three verses in chapter thirteen. These verses of poetry are clearly emphasised in many modern translations but are not obvious in the Authorised version.

One unusual feature of the book is that although Zechariah uses the phrase, 'thus says the Lord' now and then like other prophets, he doesn't represent himself as speaking or listening directly to God. Instead, his prophecies are portrayed as a series of conversations with an angel who explains whatever the prophet finds difficult to understand.

One commentary describes the scope of Zechariah's vision and the profundity of his thought as being without parallel, and his book as the most Messianic of all the writings of the Old Testament. Others describe it as being beyond understanding. It is possible that Zechariah's word pictures were more suited to the age in which he lived, than to our own day.

Peter Gubi

See, your king is coming to you, humble, and riding on a donkey, the foal of a donkey.

Congregation News

Ockbrook

Our pipe organ has now been replaced by an electronic organ, paid for thanks to the generosity of members and friends.

Our Heritage Day was a success, with the weather quite kind, and local people enjoyed visiting the church and grounds with the music, bookstalls and refreshments. Tours of the Settlement and visits to the burial ground were popular. In the Lecture Hall were displays of documents and photos showing the history of the church, and of the beautiful garments made by Single Sisters long ago. It was a great day, to be repeated in 2014 when we hope to show the Settlement in the war years.

It is 60 years since Fred Linyard was ordained and we marked the occasion with a special lunch, with a cake showing a picture of a much younger Fred on the icing. Fred and Olive have served the Church well, both home and abroad. Countless people have been influenced

by their kindness and they are still some of the most active in the congregation.

We have shared several services with All Saints Church and the Settlement Singers put on an excellent concert. Our local group, Shine, led our service one Sunday.

This year the Christmas Celebration was held in the Manse with the usual good food and fun and we sang our carols in church before eating. Our thanks to David for hosting this event (and for washing up afterwards).

We attended a Christingle Service at Briar Close Care Home, and our own Christingle Service on Christmas Eve.

Sadly, we have lost three of our well-loved sisters this year: Sisters Corrinne Horobin, Dorothy Moreton and D Archer (who had just celebrated her 100th birthday). The church was full to capacity for each funeral showing our love and respect for them.

Marie Rose

University Road

The congregation is delighted to have received Sr Sandra Biggart and Br Ian Douglas into membership.

In March, a Whist Drive was held in the Church hall to raise funds for the visit of Srs Lynsey and Mandy Kernohan to Albania for the European Women's Conference. Delegates to the conference were asked to bring items such as baby clothes. The event raised £320. On their return, Sr Lynsey gave a very interesting report to the congregation.

Br Livingstone Thompson led the Church Anniversary Service. Jean-Marie and members of the family travelled from Dublin to be with us.

The Art and Craft Club, Bowls Club, Parents and Toddlers, and MWA have been meeting regularly. The Bowls Club continues to grow and have played matches against a team from Kilwarlin, playing for the Mortimore Cup, named after Br Wilfred Mortimore. Unfortunately, the team from University Road has yet to bring the Mortimore Cup home.

During 2013, the Garden Club held a number of meetings and members catered for a large number of visitors. The refreshments were greatly appreciated, as were the beautiful gardens and the fellowship.

Rev Scott Peddie was the guest speaker at the Harvest Service in October. The Harvest collection was sent to a school in India, which is in need of books.

On Saturday 30th November, University Road hosted a Christmas party for eleven-year-olds and under. Those present enjoyed the afternoon, especially the visit from Santa. Our Christingle service was held on 15th December. The children had worked very hard and they performed the Nativity play and a poem, 'A Christmas Window', beautifully. Thanks are due to the Sunday School teachers, the mums and dads, and especially the young people.

On Sunday 22nd December, following the service of Nine Lessons and Carols, the congregation and Sunday School enjoyed a Christmas party, and Santa was able to join them.

In what has become a tradition at University Road, a Cup of Covenant service was held on the last Sunday of the year. The service was conducted by the Lay Preachers, Srs Carol Ackah and Eunice Hoey, and Brn Charles Costley, Mark Kernohan and Derick Woods. Members found the service very moving and we thank the Lay Preachers for their hard work.

The congregation was delighted to hear two recent engagements. Greg Cunningham popped the question to Sr Lynsey Kernohan and they will be married in March 2015. Sr Tanya Costley did not hesitate to say yes when Simon Macartney proposed under the moonlight at Helen's Bay. We wish them all much happiness.

Helen McVeigh

Cliftonville

Christmas came early for the ladies when Marianne, Jean, June and Winnie, with assistance from Wearra, provided the food and lovely table settings for a meal of soup, turkey with all the trimmings and trifle on the 20th November. Bob, Jim, and Paul were competent waiters. Over £200 was raised for the YPMA. Ronnie Macartney, of the University Road congregation, provided entertainment, encouraged us to join in singing, and told amusing stories. Our thanks to all for such a lovely party.



We took part in a special Advent Service in Joanmount Methodist Church. The choir arranged a Carol service on 15th December, followed by mince pies. A service of Lessons and Carols was held on the 22nd, and the Christingle service at 4 p.m. The children presented a puppet show and a Nativity Play. Paul presided at the Christmas morning service and we appreciated a visit from Patsy on the 29th.



We again record our thanks for the help provided by Leonard Broadbent, Eunice Hoey, Carol Ackah, Derick Woods, Charles Costley, Terry Shawe and Mark Kernohan during 2013. Without their co-operation, it would be difficult to keep the services on two Sundays each month.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service has been held in Deanby Roman Catholic Church for a number of years, but on the 21st January it took place in Cliftonville. We welcomed a large group from all the local churches. Representatives took part in the service, as did the organist from Sacred Heart Church. The President of the Irish Methodist Conference, Rev. Heather Morris, was our speaker. She followed the theme 'Is Christ divided?'. Her address was very relevant to our past N. Ireland situation.

We welcome opportunities to share in worship with our Christian neighbours, and the good fellowship we enjoy in North Belfast was very evident during the refreshments and chat afterwards.

Edna Cooper

Congregational Register

Death

Harlesden

Hazel Louise Metcalfe

15th December 2013

aged 101 years old

Noticeboard March 2014

Foodbanks

The Joint Public Issues Committee, in collaboration with Church Action on Poverty and other Christian agencies, are working on increasing public awareness about food banks and food poverty. In response to the request for information and stories about churches' involvement, more than 70

churches responded, many telling in detail about the work they are doing and - in some cases - how they are integrating that into their worship. Three churches told how they bring forward food donated to be blessed at the morning service. They are still keen to hear stories: contact andrew.bradstock@urc.org.uk.

The Index for the Moravian Messenger 2013 is included in this issue.

Dates to remember

1
Mar

Founding of the
Brethren's Church in
1457

Unity Prayer Day

2
Mar

5
Mar

Ash Wednesday

7
Mar

Women's World Day of Prayer
www.wwdp-natcomm.org

3
Mar

9
Mar

Climate Week
www.climateweek.com

From Church House March

01

Midlands District Conference
Leominster - TBC

Lancashire District Conference
Dukinfield - TBC

**Western District Conference Bath
Weston** - TBC

04

Unitas Estates meeting, Gomersal -
Sr Taylor and Br Hopcroft

10/13

**Ministers and Church Workers
Retreat**, Sarum College, Salisbury

14/15

Churches Together in England
Enabling Group - Br Cooper

22

Irish District Conference
Kilwarlin - TBC

26/27

**PEC BMB and Estates property
Meeting** - The P.E.C.

Prayer Notes

2nd March [Transfiguration Sunday] - Matthew 17:1-9

God of Moses and Elijah, who revealed your glory in the face of Jesus Christ when Peter, James and John were with him and heard your voice on the mountain. Thank you for those moments when the paths of earth become the road to heaven; when sight gives way to insight and for those glimpses which bring us to our knees in wonder and praise. May we also by faith behold Christ's majesty and give him the obedience and reverence which is his due; and may our gaze so rest on his glory that our lives, however dull and hard they seem, may be transfigured into the glorious life of his kingdom, that we are able to minister to others in his power and in his name. Amen

5th March [Ash Wednesday] - Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Heavenly Father, you have given to us the true bread that comes down from heaven: your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that throughout this season of Lent our souls may so be fed by him that we may continually live in him and he in us. Save us from the false piety that parades itself in people's eyes but is not genuine in your sight. Help us to keep such a fast as he has chosen that, following our Lord's example, we may obey you with faithful hearts, and serve one another in holy love. Amen

9th March [Lent 1] - Matthew 4:1-11

Heavenly Father, whose holy and beloved Son chose to be born as we are born, to live as we live, to suffer as we suffer, and to be tempted in all points like as we are, and who can sympathise with our weakness. We have many temptations to conquer and many difficulties to overcome, and yet there is no time when you will fail us. By all the grace of those forty desert days, strengthen us both by his example and by his help; that in all our temptations we may be found like him: to be masters of ourselves that we may become the servants of others. Amen

16th March [Lent 2] - John 3:1-17

Son of Man, who for love of our fallen race humbly choose to take our nature, that we might be born again by your Spirit and restored in the image of God. You were lifted up on the cross so as to draw all people to yourself that they might have eternal life. Your resurrection is pointless if you are risen alone and your birth means nothing unless we are born again: help us to a true and living faith in you. Open yourself within us with all your holy nature, quickened and revived, led and governed by your Spirit; that from now on we might live as those who are partakers of your new creation and heirs of your everlasting salvation. Amen

23rd March [Lent 3] - John 4:5-42

Friend of sinners, who discarded the customs of the time that kept up barriers between Jew and Gentile, man and woman; making yourself known to the woman of Samaria and offering her living water. Continue to reveal yourself in our divided world today; that the barriers which separate people from each other and from you, might be removed; that they may know the One who gives water that springs up to eternal life, and by whom all may worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Amen

30th March [Lent 4] - John 9:1-41

Light of the world, who makes the sun to rise on the good and on the evil, enlighten the blindness of our minds with the sight of your truth, that in your light we may see light. Drive away from us all spiritual darkness that we might perceive you, the Sun of Righteousness. Enlighten the dimness of our vision with the brightness of your presence. As you restored sight to the blind man who sought your mercy, clear away the darkness of our hearts; that with true discernment we might begin to see ourselves as you see us and might never again be blind to your presence or to the truth that you have revealed. Amen

Richard Ingham

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