



God spoke by the prophets...

(Hebrews 1:1)

I believe I've heard God speaking, but never directly. It always happened through people or circumstances.

Being a minister is the consequence of a calling. But the same is true for being a teacher, a driver, a baker, a listener, an encourager, a prayerful person.

Trying to listen to God can be comforting and reassuring, but at times it can also be disturbing.

The woodcut by the East German artist Hans Georg Anniès shows the characteristics of a prophet who cannot escape the voice of God. A prophet is first of all a listener.

The eyes of the prophet are wide open and full of anguish. His face is tense. One hand is pointing upwards to the source of the voice he is obviously hearing. The fingers of the other hand point into the same direction. The thumb behind the ear helps to listen even more carefully. The hands are almost like a diagonal line

through the picture, the prophet's body forms the other diagonal.

Does it mean God's word can well go against the grain of our lives? This can indeed be the case. The Bible and church history are full of life-stories that display a big change after people listened to God - just think of the Apostle Paul or of Jan Hus who paid with his life for speaking what he believed was the will of God. Readers may have themselves experienced life-changing encounters with God.

What may be God's message for us today? Years ago the ecumenical movement was often interpreted as a prophetic message: Work for peace, promote justice and care for God's creation. None of these elements can exist without the other two.

In a time of wars, grave injustices and climate change we will have to raise our voices again, but not without careful listening first.

Joachim Kreusel



More on the Poverty Conference

(page 3)



Ockbrook first ever Beer, Chilli and Jazz Festival

(page 11)

Happy
New Year!

Editing the Messenger

As we have had, and will have, a number of articles on Stewardship, the following is to explain one aspect of stewardship in a team, the planning and the process by which the Messenger is put together.

I think of putting together an issue is similar to music. Each section is 'played by different instruments', and the whole is meant to add up. That may sound pretentious, but it is good to be ambitious even when practice falls short!

My offer to edit was accepted in early 2013. From an initial meeting, six themes became apparent, and this was accepted at Synod 2014. Apart from 'Youth' (which covers anything from children's activities to the work of young professionals), the themes are: social responsibility, overseas work, art and culture, history, and practical theology. The intention is to average a page on each per month. There is a back page with prayers.

The themes, to my mind, surround the core of our work, prayer, and its public expression. The contents are meant to inform, entertain and be helpful for the preparation of sermons and Bible studies, or action for social justice. The attempt is to get a balance between reflection, creativity and information. For example, Art and Culture can include a commentary on a piece of music, or a new hymn or short story, while Overseas covers accounts of work in the Unity, or matters that require our special prayer and engagement. There is also meant to be something for everyone, so a range of tastes are considered. A page-long article with a picture, perhaps two, is the ideal, though shorter articles are accepted, and occasionally a longer one.

There is a focus to each edition. Sometimes this is seasonal (Easter,

Harvest), or is a special edition (Jan Hus, Science), and sometimes it is not explicit but serves to pull material together and try and make it balance.

At another level, there are series. Some are by the same person, as for example Kit Shorten's series on the First World War; while others, like the Commandments series have multiple authors. Sometimes the content fits with one of the overall themes, and sometimes two. There needs to be space for news of current events, like last year's earthquake in Nepal.

It is good to have a range of writers, male and female, of all ages and backgrounds. Some are accustomed to writing, while to others it is new. Some pieces are translated. Letters and book reviews are always welcome. With Reports and Congregation News, there is a queue for space, and shortening is done to include as many as possible. News of forthcoming events is included in the next available issue.

Pictures light up an issue. Please send - but not too many as the editor then doesn't know which are most relevant! If children are shown, was parental permission obtained?

Every article goes through the same editing process. It may be held until there is space, or to fit with a theme in a forthcoming issue. Grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation conventions are kept the same throughout. A piece may be pruned - often the shorter the more impact. If major changes are made, or if the article contains technical information, it goes back to the writer for approval. Tricky issues are referred to colleagues with relevant experience for advice.

By tradition the editor decides the front page content and the article titles. Similarly, the Editor writes. I sometimes cover a theme, often with a piece that has been edited elsewhere - which helps

as I am blind when proof-reading my own work!

I ask for material by the first week of the preceding month because all of this work happens before the edited material and the proposed page plan go to Dave Bull for layout. Then it comes back, so everything can be proof-read. Then Dave makes a clean copy and it goes to Graham Walkden for printing and distribution, and arrives at your church.

An unknown number read it online and 1650 copies are printed. A lot of work goes into it by a lot of people, as those who have given their time to writing will be aware. So don't throw away spare copies - use them for outreach, dentists' surgeries or other events!

The 'Messenger' is shorter than similar church papers, like the URC 'Reform' magazine or the Irish 'Methodist Newsletter', but unlike them comes out 12 times a year, carries no advertisements and is free. One of the heartening aspects has been the quality of the articles submitted.

Having edited before is a great help. The work takes three to four days a month, but in practice material comes in all the time. Am I paid? The agreement was an honorarium and expenses. Do I get flak? Sometimes, and also helpful critique, praise and encouragement.

To return to the orchestra theme - there are plans and technical matters involved, but the content relies on what people send in, the quality of the 'musicians'. If the Spirit calls you to put pen to paper or better, fingers to keyboard, send it in. And if you enjoy reading the Messenger, please tell the editor, who will pass it on to the writers! Thank you to all who have commented so far!

There is a style sheet for writing, which is sent out on request. A revised version is on page 7.

Rosemary Power

More on the Poverty Conference at Ockbrook 31 October 2015

The day was arranged by the Mission and Society committee after a Synod 2014 proposal, proposed by Br Alan Holdsworth and unanimously carried.

After the speakers [see last edition of the Messenger] we split into five groups to discuss how we might tackle the issue locally, nationally, and denominationally. A plenary session was then held to present and share the ideas and opinions raised. The Moravian Church should lead in eradicating child poverty in the UK: by solving this issue other problems would cease to develop.



To move, this needs a resolution to Synod 2016. Meanwhile, lobbying letters should be sent to The Speaker of The House of Commons and sympathetic MPs; to push for a Private Members Bill.

Other groups said that if we are going to concentrate on this issue, a lot of research needs to be done. What is Child Poverty? What are the facts and figures? What is the Government policy at the current time? What are existing charities doing to address this problem? As a Church what can we do at Province level and in our local areas?

Another view was expressed by several groups: as Christians we should not concentrate on one issue giving the impression that we do not care about other social issues. Congregations are located in areas which have their own problems, and should do work relevant to their locality.



Can we do have both a national campaign and do a variety of local work? Concern was expressed about 'charity exhaustion', diluting efforts, spreading ourselves too thinly and starting something that we don't finish.

Other 'unjust structures' were named as important and possible focuses for the Moravian Church. These included Global finance, Poverty (shelter, clothing, food), Lack of opportunities, Housing, Relationships between children and fathers, Family breakdown, Mental health, Food waste.

Things that would be helpful are supporting congregations to find out what the needs are in their local area. Are there charities working to solve these problems? If yes, how can our members support this work? Should we help to set up new projects if no other charities are addressing them?

A regular feature sharing the work being done in congregations, will give others ideas, help forge links, and give a focus for prayer.

It was wonderful that so many took time to attend and participate in this day, and that all six districts were represented.

Mark Dixon (Chair, Mission and Society Committee),

Eleanor Hollingsworth

Summer
Camp
2016

30 July - 06 August

Tollymore Activity Centre,
Newcastle, Northern Ireland

For ages 10-17 (on 31 August 2016)

Cost £300 (£25 discount for early booking) forms available from ministers or Joy Raynor (joy.raynor@btconnect.com)

LIMITED PLACES
so book early to
secure one!

Summer camp 2016 - Call for interest in leadership

Joy Raynor writes

If you would like to be considered for the leadership team of summer camp 2016, 30 July - 06 August, please contact me as soon as possible. PYCC is keen to extend the number of people available and willing to take part in summer camp. You will need to complete a self-declaration form (<http://www.moravian.org.uk/index.php/members/safeguarding-people>), provide referees, and undergo a police check as well as being available for the 8 days of camp. Leaders are expected to join in the activities at camp, inspire and encourage the young people as well as build an appropriate friendship with them and the other leaders. Age is not a barrier although we do like our leaders to have had at least one year away from camp as a camper before coming as a leader. Energy and enthusiasm essential. Reasonable travel costs and the centre fees are paid for by the province. If you want to chat about it please give me a ring.

The Moravian Church as a Historic Peace Church

Craig Atwood

The Unitas Fratrum was the first peace church.¹ Our church was founded in 1457 during a period of intense religious conflict and persecution. Brother Gregory and his companions were frustrated that the State church had beautiful worship and sophisticated theology but had forgotten the weightier matters of Jesus' teaching. In a little village called Kunwald they tried to create a Christian community that followed the Law of Christ as presented in the Sermon on the Mount. Gregory drew heavily on the writings of Peter Chelvicky who insisted that Christ's commandment to love our neighbours and our enemies is central to our faith. Peter frequently pointed out that it is impossible to love someone while killing or maiming them. The original Brethren were uncomfortable with the way churches use the violence of the Old Testament to justify violence. Even though the ancient Israelites had engaged in warfare, that does not mean that Christians may violate the Commandments given by Jesus. It is the New Testament that should govern the lives of Christians.

Members of the Unitas Fratrum were forbidden to serve in the military or even to serve on juries since they might participate in the harming of others. This strict pacifism was threatening to rulers who expected the church to sanctify the violence of the State. As a result, hundreds of Moravians were harassed, arrested, tortured, exiled, or killed. As time passed, it grew harder for the Moravians to maintain such a strict pacifism and separation from the state. There were a few nobles who offered protection to the Church, but only if members were willing to assume the duties of citizenship, such as serving on juries. Gradually the elders moderated the original non-violence. Members were allowed to serve on juries, but they were to temper justice with mercy. Eventually, Brethren were allowed to serve in the military, but only if they were forced by the state. Brethren could not be professional soldiers, and members who were conscripted into the

army were instructed to seek out non-combat roles. If they had to fight they should try to wound rather than kill.

During the Protestant Reformation, the Unitas Fratrum established ties with the Calvinists in Geneva, and they drifted further away from their original peace witness. In 1618, some of the prominent members of the Unity participated in the rebellion against the Habsburg rulers. During the ensuing Thirty Years War (1618 - 1648) the Unitas Fratrum was destroyed by religion persecution and violence. Thousands of Moravians went into permanent exile; others tried to keep the faith alive in secret in their homeland.

The greatest Moravian scholar in history, John Amos Comenius, lived during this violent era. He is most famous for his books on education reform, but Comenius also dedicated himself to the cause of peace. Toward the end of his life he wrote: 'Mankind has had enough of folly and war, and it is to be hoped that the time will come when all men are exhausted with wars and return to peace.'²

Comenius revived the waning peace witness of the Unitas Fratrum and made it central to his theology, teaching, and ethics. Violence is contrary to the nature of Christ and should be banished from the church. He urged his readers: 'Whenever you encounter one of your neighbours, regard him as yourself in another form (which he is), or indeed as God in another form, for he is the image of God, and God will be watching to see how reverently you treat him.'³

Comenius tried to preserve the witness of the Unitas Fratrum through his writings, and he lived in hope for a better day when those who profess Christ would live as Christ commanded. Decades after his death, a new generation of Moravians chose to go into exile so that they could live according to the teachings of the New Testament. Under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf, they formed a covenant community called Herrnhut in Germany. The Brotherly Agreement they signed in 1727 stipulated that they would

seek to live in peace with all people. Disputes were to be settled through conversation rather than violence.

Although the Moravians did not condemn the military per se (and had many friends in the military) members of the Moravian Church were not allowed to enlist. Those who did so were generally removed from membership in the church. Moravians also did not participate in capital punishment, although they did not protest the state's authority to try capital cases. It is not surprising that Moravians settled in the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania.

During the American Civil War, there were Moravians in both the Federal and Confederate armies. It is sadly illuminating that the first war that Moravians fully endorsed was one in which brother fought against brother. By 1865 the Moravians had largely forgotten their four-hundred-year history of pacifism. Some even denied that the Unitas Fratrum had ever been a peace church.

Moravians on both sides of the Atlantic fought in World Wars I and II, thinking that their fight was just. During the peace movement of the 1960s, some Moravians tried to claim the church was a peace church, but it was hard to convince the federal government of that since the church also had military chaplains. By 1969 the question of peace and war divided Moravians, and it remains a point of contention.

Still, the fact remains that the Unitas Fratrum was the first peace church. For four hundred years the Moravian Church maintained a fairly consistent peace witness, but this was largely forgotten during the titanic conflicts of the past two centuries. The question we face in the 21st century is whether the Moravian Church should reclaim this identity and become a peace church again. This is not a question of history, but of faith, love, and hope. How will this generation respond to the Law of Christ?

1 This is explored in my book *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (Penn State University Press, 2009).

2 John Amos Comenius, *Panorthosia or Universal Reform*, ch. 1-18 and 27, trans. A. M. O. Dobbie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 57.

3 *Ibid.* 197-198.

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Rev. Dr. Craig Atwood is Charles D Couch Associate Professor of Church History at Moravian Theological Seminary. Material in this article appeared in *The Moravian Magazine* and is reprinted with the author's permission.

The Seventh Commandment



Please forgive a personal note to begin with. Arising from the advice to writers by Dan Mannix In 'Memoirs of a Sword Swallower' to 'Write about what you know about'; I hope that our Editor did not think of me as a practised adulterer, when she commissioned me to contribute this piece, nor a victim of the same. I am not in a position to follow Mannix's excellent advice, and have no first-hand knowledge of adultery either as victim or as predator. 'Pastoral Observer' is as near to the subject as I ever came, so I do hope that that is close enough.

Adultery as Betrayal

'Adultery hurts', one victim told me, and that just about sums up the responses of all those who find themselves so betrayed. That strong word is justified because of the awful destructive force that is released by the discovery of the breach of trust implied by adultery. So treacherous is the offence that adultery was for a long time the only behaviour that was held to justify severing the bonds of marriage; viz Matthew 19:9 'And I say to you; whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.' Of course we only hear from the victim on this. Perhaps some brave 'Jack the Lad' will enlighten us all on the feelings from the other side of the coin.

In the meantime I must say that if morality is to do with what is good for people (and it is), then adultery, being devastatingly hurtful, is immoral.

Adultery and Marriage

Christians have long held the view that a lawful marriage is the right and proper framework for couples living together, but whether from within a legal framework or not, an unfaithful

partner betrays the trust upon which relationships depend, and counts as an adulterer. By the same token, where a marriage has failed, the bonds severed by mistreatment or neglect; for a partner to er, er 'make other arrangements' as a free agent, is surely legitimate.

Adultery and the Bible

The Book of Hosea is perhaps the touchstone of Biblical attitudes to adultery. The anguish and despair of the prophet from the adultery of his wife Gomer, are moving in the extreme, and we come close to understanding his dismay. Only the consciousness of God's grace can match up to the devastation Hosea suffers from Gomer's betrayal.

Even that great hero David is revealed as all too fallible over his fling with Bathsheba and the sly killing of Uriah.

As we see from right early, in Exodus 20:14, through the prophets to the New Testament, The Biblical view of adultery is wholly negative, a view not altered by one of the very best stories in the whole Bible, now sadly threatened by the scholars (who think it may have been added later), John 8:3-11, 'The woman taken in adultery'. Although Jesus refuses to condemn her, he does not condone the adultery, rather he challenges the hypocrisy of her accusers, and does not pursue the issue of her partner. Instead he exerts the authority of God's grace. We are thus reminded that His mercy may extend even to the most treacherous adulterer, should he try to be more faithful to those who have trusted him (or her).

John Wilkinson

WCC and Refugees

The Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the global ecumenical body The World Council of Churches, has issued its call to member churches to remember the refugees. "According to the annual report of UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, the number of human beings forcibly displaced from their homes is at least 59.5 million, up from 51.2 million in mid-2014 and 37.5 million just a decade ago. These daunting figures represent tens of millions of women like Mary, men like Joseph and children like the infant Jesus..."

"In a recent communiqué on the refugee crisis, church leaders in Europe made

these observations: 'As Christians we share the belief that we see in the other the image of Christ himself (Matthew 25:31-46) ... The experience of migration and crossing of borders is known to the Church of Christ. The Holy Family were refugees; the very Incarnation of Our Lord is a crossing of the border between the Human and the Divine.' The same religious representatives concluded, in part, 'As churches this is an opportunity to share more widely experience and expertise in offering spiritual and pastoral support, ecumenical and interfaith cooperation and building bridges between diverse

communities.'

"At this time of the Christian year, we remember God's great love for the world in the gift of Jesus Christ. And we read once again of the flight of his family in search of a safer place than home. We also remember the Master's later teaching, as recorded in Matthew 25:40: 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me'."

The WCC has also made a short video to accompany the Christmas message.

Source: Praxis Newsletter.

The Moravian Mission to the Jews

The German Pietist movement from which the Moravians emerged was much occupied with the significance the Jewish people held for Christianity. In Romans Chapter 11 verses 25-26 St Paul tells us that after the full number of Gentiles have come to Christ the hearts of Israel will no longer be hardened and they too will be saved.

There were two Pietist interpretations of these verses: some thought that the conversion of Jews would not take place until the second coming, others that missionaries should be sent forthwith to the Jews. This preoccupation gave the Pietists a greater respect for Jews than was otherwise common in Germany. Spener, Zinzendorf's godfather and one of the founders of Pietism, wrote that the remembrance of the origin of the Jewish people should make it fitting that Jews should be shown more love than others.

From his teenage years Zinzendorf had been concerned with the fate of the Jewish people and with how they might be convinced that Jesus Christ was the Messiah promised in their scriptures. He shared the general respect Pietists had for the Jewish people and was on friendly terms with a number of Jewish families. His sympathy with them may be gleaned from a fictitious dialogue he wrote in 1739 between a Moravian traveller and an innkeeper who considered himself cheated by Nathan, a Jewish merchant. (The conversations were among several intended to teach Moravians how to proselytize.)

The traveller defends Nathan before the innkeeper by pointing out that a Jew may well charge more because his choice of occupations is restricted by law and he is therefore unable to expand into wider areas of business. He also pays higher taxes than a Gentile and the belief that all Jews are rich is mistaken since many are destitute. They have, he continues, a sense of honour towards God which most Christians lack and there are many reasons to hold them in the highest esteem and show them our respect.

These words should be seen in the context of Germany at the time. A special tax was demanded of a Jew when he travelled, married or became a father.

Jewish emancipation would have to wait another hundred years. Saxony, Zinzendorf's state, had aimed since the Reformation to exclude Jews from its territory. In 1777 a hundred were driven out of Dresden, the capital. To the north, the King of Prussia referred to them as 'locusts bringing ruin to Christians' and in 1737 expelled 140 Jewish families from Berlin. In these circumstances Zinzendorf's Pietist approach is all the more creditable.



The Great Synagogue, Amsterdam

Zinzendorf was counted among those Pietists who considered a mission to the Jews a necessity. He had his own distinctive views on the part they were to play in the spread of Christianity. In a talk before Moravians in London in 1743 he related his 'plan for the whole affair of the heathen': 'It is believed in our Church,' he told his audience 'that the conversion of the Jews and of all Israel must take place before the proper conversion of the heathen can proceed and we look upon all that we have done to date among the heathen as first fruits only'. Thus only when the Jews were converted would the true harvest of heathen be brought in.

For a Jew to abandon his religion was seen as a betrayal of history, family and community. Zinzendorf seemed aware of this point and incorporated it into his plans. A group of Jewish converts (a 'first fruit' to prepare for the conversion of all Jews) would be set up within the Moravian community which would retain Jewish traditions and Mosaic Law, thus enabling a link to be kept with their

unconverted brethren. In 1746 he allowed two Moravians of Jewish background to marry in a ceremony that included Jewish rites and with hymns sung in a mix of German and Hebrew. He also added a petition for Israel (i.e. Jewish people) to the litany, the first time a Western Church had made a prayer for Israel a regular part of its liturgy.

In 1738 Zinzendorf sent the missionary Leonard Dober to Amsterdam, a city with a large Jewish population, to spend a year in the Jewish quarter. Dober met with little success and in 1739 Samuel Lieberkühn, a competent theologian, arrived in his stead. Lieberkühn immersed himself in the Jewish way of life and religion. He acquired a rabbi as teacher and a thorough knowledge of doctrinal and historical writings, liturgy and the Hebrew language. He attended synagogue twice a day, gained access to private meetings and religious societies and was accepted into Jewish homes. So popular did he become that he was named Rabbi Shmuel (Samuel) by his Jewish friends.

A paper submitted by Lieberkühn to Synod in 1764 gives an interesting insight into the difficulties he faced which were, of course, of a quite different order to those encountered by missionaries to the 'heathen'. It was hopeless, Lieberkühn wrote, to attempt to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah based on Old Testament prophecies for this simply resulted in endless controversies of textual interpretation based on rabbinic glosses. If instead he tried to give proof of Jesus's Messiahship by his admission to the High Priest and by God's action in raising Him from the dead this simply provoked further disputation: had he seen Jesus and could 'Jesus be God' if God had raised Him from the dead? To avoid becoming lost in an even deeper maze of doctrinal arguments Lieberkühn added that the Trinity was out of bounds as it was difficult enough for a Christian to understand, let alone a Jew. Lieberkühn saw the approach of experience to be of far greater value than explanations of Christian doctrine. As he put it: 'None can believe the Deity of Jesus but such as have experienced grace, pardon and deliverance from sin.'

Lieberkühn's 30 years of mission to the Jews brought little success. While few were converted many, he wrote, were brought to reflect seriously on his message. That brought an end to any formal Moravian 'mission to the Jews' and Zinzendorf's Jewish community was never realised. Towards the end of his life Zinzendorf accepted that the time for the conversion of the Jews had not yet come. A month before his death he told the Brethren to show concern and love for the Jews and not to forget them before the throne of God's grace.

Interested Jews were still approached and in certain situations, for example the Jerusalem Leper Home, proselytizing certainly continued, although played down in published accounts of the home. Jewish converts to the Moravian Church remained sufficiently rare for notices of the occasion to appear in Periodical Accounts. What Lieberkühn did achieve was to improve relations and understanding between the two faiths. Moravian tolerance and ecumenism retains that attitude to those of the Jewish faith, several of whom have been employed at the Ramallah Home.

Adrian Wilsdon

Guidelines for writing for the Moravian Messenger

Please submit in Word (any version) or Open Office (not in pdf, Publisher etc.), and without layout. This makes it easier to edit and then to lay out.

Congregational News is ideally up to 250 words plus two relevant photos. It is helpful to send photos separately.

If you have notice of a forthcoming event, please mark it so it can go in the next issue. If you send a poster, please also send the plain text.

Letters are welcome, but may be shortened.

Book reviews are also welcome. Please ensure that the title, author, publisher, place of publication and date are included, and ideally also the ISBN. If you have a picture of the front cover, that is helpful.

Normal length for a full-page article is approximately 900 words with a picture. Shorter articles are welcome. Some longer ones are accepted: please contact the Editor.

Relevant photographs are welcome, but please make sure you have the owner's permission.

Use U.K. spellings, punctuation and grammar.

Give Dates in this form: 10 December 2015.

Give all numerals under 10 in words.

Give titles of books etc. in italics.

In the text, give the title and sub-titles in bold, sentence case.

For quotes use single inverted commas (except for quotes within quotes, where double are used).

Your submission is appreciated. It will be edited, though if major changes are suggested it will be returned for your agreement. If so, please retain all house-style changes with regard to hyphenation, capitalisation, paragraph breaks and so on; and mark any further changes you wish to make in red or through 'track changes'.

Your article may not be published immediately, as this depends on how much is received and how your piece balances a particular issue.

Thank you and enjoy writing!

Noticeboard

Br Peter Vogt writes of his new book *Von Goethe bis Grass - Herrnhuter in der Literatur* ('From Goethe to Grass - Moravians in Literature'). It is an anthology of literary texts that include references to Herrnhut and the Moravian Church. The volume covers 230 years from the time of Goethe to the present. It documents the significant cultural impact of Herrnhut and the Moravian Church, as well as the phenomenon of how a religious group has been observed and described in literature. If you believe you could review this book, please contact the Editor.

Addresses

Br Livingstone Thompson is now at: 5 Mill Mews, Culcavy Road, Hillsborough BT26 6JD. 02892682322.

Sr Rosemary Power is to be found at rosemary.power@moravian.org.uk and rosemary_power@eircom.net, 0777 6220 285.

Enquirers' Day Saturday 23rd January 2016

David Howarth writes: Do you sense God is calling you to ordained ministry? This is a big question and one that the Provincial Board would encourage anyone to explore. So, if your answer to the above question is YES, or even if you are unsure or would like to know more, why not come along to the ENQUIRERS' DAY. To register an interest, or to know more, please speak to either your minister or Br David Howarth (email: david.howarth@moravian.org.uk, telephone 020 8883 3409). The programme and venue will reflect those attending.

Fellowship Weekend 01-03 April

Join us at Shallowford House for a weekend of fun, activities and a chance to recharge your spiritual batteries.

£137 per person. Contact Sr. Elisabeth Hollindrake, 01274 579919 e.hollindrake@btinternet.com

Reserve a place: Br. Paul Greenhough 01274 872633 paulgreenhough150@btinternet.com

Y-Pray? An exciting weekend conference for young women, **29 April - 01 May 2016** at King's Park Centre, Northampton. £99. Contact Women's World Day of Prayer for further details. 01892 541411. office@wwdp.org.uk www.wwdp.org.uk.

The World Mission Committee

of the British Province has recently sent out its Newsletter. It is a pleasure to be able to send out the fourth in this series of occasional newsletters. We hope you make them available to those in your congregations who do not have access to the internet. If you know of anyone who would like to receive these letters, please ask them to send an email to wmc@moravian.org.uk to be added to the list of subscribers. We are indebted to the American Board of World Mission and the Herrnhuter Missionshilfe for allowing us to use their material. There will be more about this in the next issues of the *Messenger*.

A Minister Reflects Memorabilia for 1916

Kit Shorten's transcriptions of the Gomersal diary continue

Once more we review another year and to recall the events of the year which has passed. This brief record is in the hope that the recollection of past mercies may lead us to increased trust in our Heavenly Father's wisdom and love and to fuller consecration to his Service in the year we now commence.

We have lost some who were very closely connected with us.

The toll of war has claimed two young lives who had been brought up in our school under the influences of our Church Services. They were also brothers of one home, Tom and Fred Wright. Our hearts have gone out in very affectionate sympathy to our Sister Wright and her family in this great sorrow, a sorrow which has invaded thousands of homes in this our land. Let it bind us closer together, that we can each of us attend as occasion arises to the ministry of consolation and share with one another in the comfort of God.

The war has of course affected our services and not for the better. Many of our young men have gone to swell the national army. The following from Congregation and Sunday School have joined during the year: Arthur Brook, Harry Brook, John Willie Brook, Arthur Gore, James Otway, Ernest Sampson, Harry Wright, Percy Wilby, Clifford Kershaw, Harold Smithson, Leonard Wright, Illingworth Rycroft, Selwyn Crossley, Percy Holmes, Gilbert Stooke, Richard Naylor, Willie Brown, Fred Wright (killed). The complete list of members is 25. Of these, one has been discharged from service and two have been killed. I am glad to say that in letters many of these speak with affection of their association with the Congregation and Sunday School. To have a number like this (many of whom were in regular attendance) removed from the life and activity of the Congregation is a serious matter. We look forward, if God will, to their return, but meanwhile let us supply the energy and enthusiasm which we have found amongst them.

During the year 1915 the average attendance had dropped. During 1916 the same movement continued but not in the same ratio, and was caused by many absentees in the light warmer summer evenings and later in the dark moonless nights. If these are taken from the calculation we remain about the same. But still there is cause for grave concern. The attendance at morning worship has fallen of considerably. People are forming new habits of life, and that very quickly. It is not a good habit surely to loiter away a whole afternoon of the Lord's Day. Just now we are all aware of the extraordinary conditions amongst us. But is not that all the more reason why we as members of the Church of God should not do our best and wherever possible meet in his House to render Him an early sacrifice of thanksgiving and prayer? This and other matters of a similar import should be discussed in a brotherly and prayerful spirit at a Church meeting. These things are vital. They touch very closely the spiritual lives of us all. I commend this feature of our

Congregation life to your prayer and earnest consideration.

The Sunday School has suffered from the same complaint which has its symptom in a decreased morning attendance, both of teachers and scholars. In the afternoon the numbers keep up much as usual. The scholars have raised money to send parcels to our soldiers and have carried on the prize-giving contest as in former years, besides other social activities. At the beginning of the winter the elder boys expressed a wish for the Gymnasium to be resuscitated. An Instructor was found but lost again owing to increase of engagements which could not be refused. Now, the father of one of our scholars is training them and some of the elder girls in Swedish Drill.

The pressure of financial needs led the Congregation Council to determine upon a Sale of Work. As time went in interest grew, until the day in question. We enjoyed a successful time. It was a Young People's Bazaar, not that the work was monopolised by them, but they were invited to cooperate in it and to suggest. Thanks are due to all took part and the many that did so is a happy sign for the future. The Women's Guild worked with remarkable devotion and were rewarded by taking the largest amount of any individual stall. The Young Women and girls arranged a Garden Party in the Church Grounds which all enjoyed. The Congregation Service Party also did well, as always, and to all these we express our thanks. The heavy deficiency has been much reduced if not wiped out, and for this we are thankful. The Women's Guild met monthly in earlier part of the year for lectures and social gatherings. When it was decided to hold a Sale of Work they took up the matter with splendid enthusiasm and energy. They raised funds by means of a jumble sale, and then met weekly for sewing during the summer and this service in this way and at the Sale of Work is very gratefully remembered and appreciated. War conditions make these Guild meetings very difficult to continue, but we hope to maintain them, if at all possible.

The Men's Guild is not dead - but is waiting for the end of the war. The Sewing Meeting has met with its accustomed regularity and while not seeming to carry the quantity of goods that turned up at its stall at the Sale, demonstrated that good work had been done quietly behind the scenes. The Choir has been unable to meet with any regularity for practice but it leads us in singing, nonetheless.

War conditions are felt as much probably in our Choir membership as in any other by preventing contributions and regular work. For all services received, we are grateful.

We cannot think of the Old Year without thinking of the New Year. It may be that just now is sowing time and not reaping. Let us sow then some Truth by knowing the Truth, sow patience and love by unselfish and consecrated service. Sow abundantly and in the season we shall reap if we faint not.

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Congregation News

Fairfield

On 04 July we had a Stars and Stripes afternoon tea to raise money for Church Funds. It was a lovely opportunity to spend some social time together. On 05 July the brethren started their Festival Day with breakfast in the college. On 12 July our young people hosted a Youth Service. These are always very popular with the congregation. They baked cakes and raised £108 towards their New Year Trip to the theatre.

11 August turned out to be a fine day, much to the delight of Sr Joyce James who hosted a coffee afternoon with a Bring and Buy and a tombola at her home. She raised £333.50 for church funds.

Autumn leaves can be quite a problem on the Yorkshire stone flags so sweeping them up to ensure safe passage for our visitors was just one of the many tasks needed to open the Church, College and Museum for the Heritage Weekend on 12-13 September. It requires a lot of work for members and friends to ensure the church has beautiful floral decorations, people to do tours and offer information, others to play musical pieces and provide tea and coffee. Visitors often give donations and are charged for refreshments, so the weekend raised £1600 for church funds.

Whilst sometimes outsiders looking in may feel that churches can be inward looking, we are very aware of the needs of the



wider community. On 26 September Sr Lyn Dumbevand hosted a McMillan Coffee afternoon and raised over £500, and Br Reg Knighton and family did the Memory Walk in Heaton Park Stockport to support the Alzheimer's Society, and raised £1100.

As a congregation we support a local foodbank through weekly collection of food gifts: regrettably the need for this support seems to be growing.

We held a very successful Jumble sale on 20 October and on the 20 and 21 November we were entertained by a Youth show with participants from the Uniformed Groups, Sunday School and the Youth Club. A recipe for chaos you may think but actually it was a very enjoyable event.

28 November was the date of our Christmas Fair, another occasion that requires a lot of planning. The weather was not kind, however we raised £1663.45.

Margery Sutcliffe

Swindon

2015 was yet another very busy year, for we seem to have had a great deal going on in this part of the Lord's vineyard. As well as keeping up weekly worship there have also been extracurricular activities and various challenges that we have been rising up to in the last year.

We are indebted to all those who have led services at Swindon, especially when we were without a minister, including members of the congregation. We mostly meet in the church, but occasionally we gather in the small hall, with a cup of tea, and make a joyful noise to the Lord, which seems to work quite well.

We have maintained our involvement with the groups that use our church and halls, which include Beavers, Little Scamps and Rainbows. Both Beavers and Rainbows have long waiting lists. The new leader, who is referred to as 'Tiger' by the Rainbows, is trying his best to help out, and experienced

leaders are always at hand.

We have run several fund raising events, including Teddy Tombolas for Nepal. We helped to host Dasha and Luda, two girls from Belarus through the Chernobyl Children scheme and they enjoyed their time in Swindon and at our church events.

As well as raising money for the Shoe Box Appeal, we served as a collection centre as well. This year we created 500 boxes, and checked, along with extra volunteers, 4002 boxes before they were sent out to the Ukraine, Liberia and Albania. It is good to know that thousands of children will benefit from these efforts, with no hurdles to jump through and no political or religious points to be made.

We look forward to another busy year in 2016 and pray that we will reflect the Lord's light and love into the world around us.

Anna Grant

University Road

The congregation was saddened by the death of Br Hiram 'Herby' Speers on 03 July 2015, surrounded by his wife and family. He was 82. Herby and his wife Annie were about to celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary. They were supported during Herby's last months by their son Stephen and daughter-in-law Ann. Herby's elder son Johnny and daughter-in-law Kim were able to make the journey from Canada to see him. A few months before Herby was called home, his granddaughter Tara brought her baby daughter Abigail from Canada to see him.

Herby is sadly missed by his grandchildren in London, Bangor and Canada, and by all those who knew him. His funeral service took place at University Road Moravian Church on 07 July.

Helen McVeigh

Ockbrook

The Lecture Hall at Ockbrook Moravian Church hosted its first ever Beer, Chilli and Jazz Festival in November. It was such a success that we would like to do it again and augment it with a Summer barbeque and Beer Festival in July.



It was great to see young couples and their children enjoy the atmosphere that was created by great food, drink and live jazz music. Some of the jazz artists featured were young musicians from Ockbrook School and further afield. Many locals supported the Festival and the Lecture Hall was filled to near capacity from opening time until closing time - 12 Noon - 6 pm.

The Lecture Hall first started out as a brewhouse for the Inn which is attached to it. So, it was nice to see it being used for its original purpose once again. There were four breweries featured at the Festival: Draycott Brewing Company (owned by Brother Greg Maskalick),

Amber Ales, Shardlow Brewery and Full Mash Brewery. There were several types of chillis on offer all made by Sister Maskalick and served out of the

Lecture Hall kitchen.

Please visit Ockbrook Moravian Church on Facebook and you can rest assured that you will be informed about the next festival and other events.

Greg Maskalick

Leominster

Our oldest member, Joy Owen's aunt, Nesta Radnor, died on 09 October. She fell and broke both lower legs on her 98th birthday, 12 September, after living in the care home, West Eaton for 8 years.

Dilys Howard

Congregational Register

Baptisms

	Gracehill
Frankie Davenport	15th February
Cathreine Taylor	13th September
Eva Mewha	18th October
Matthew McCord	25th October

Baptisms

	Fairfield
Lewis Michael George Haldane	18th October
Ray Daniel Owen	22nd November

Marriages

	Gracehill
Elizabeth Mewha and Jamie Corsby	30th July
Geraldine McFarland and James Brennan	11th September

Received into Membership

	Royton
Tom Turner	4th October

Deaths

	Fulneck
Joyce Jones	16th September

	Gracehill
Robert Paisley	1st July
Barbara Small	22nd September

	Fairfield
Alan Kelshaw	13th October
Harry Bradley	16th October
Douglas Atkinson	28th October

Dates to remember

17
Jan

World Religion Day
www.worldreligionday.org

18 25
Jan Jan

Week of Prayer for
Christian Unity
www.ctbi.org.uk

24
Jan

Homelessness Sunday
[www.housingjustice.org.uk/
pages/homeless_sunday.html](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/homeless_sunday.html)

24
Jan

Education Sunday
[http://www.cte.org.uk/
Groups/234838/Home/
Resources/Education_Sunday/
Education_Sunday.aspx](http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234838/Home/Resources/Education_Sunday/Education_Sunday.aspx)

27
Jan

Holocaust Memorial Day
[www.holocaustmemorialday.
gov.uk](http://www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk)

31
Jan

World Leprosy Day
www.leprosymission.org.uk

Prayer Notes

Richard Ingham

January 3rd [Second Sunday after Christmas] John 1: (1-9) 10-18

Eternal Word, the same yesterday, today and forever, with whom a thousand years are but as yesterday: lift our eyes above the narrow horizons of this present world, that we may consider the things eternal in the heavens, where an inheritance that is imperishable and unfading is kept for us. Sanctify the life which you have given us; so that, living with you in this passing world, we may live with you and in you, to all eternity. Give us faith to rest in your sure keeping; confident that you will sustain us to the end, until your love and your likeness is perfected in us. Amen

January 6th [Epiphany] Matthew 2:1-12

Father of Lights, dispel all clouds of doubt and darkness surrounding our earthly course; that in your light we may see light and come to know you as we are known, and to love as we are loved. You gave to wise men of old a glorious star to lead them to Christ: grant that we, who have been given a yet more glorious sign, even his holy Cross, may follow and be led by it the whole way to our salvation and your heaven. Amen

January 10th [First Sunday after Epiphany] Luke 3:15-17;21-22

Christ, who humbled yourself to take the baptism of sinners, and was immediately declared to be the Son of God: grant that we who have been baptized into you may rejoice to be children of God and servants of all for your Name's sake. Grant that the brightness of your presence may shine in our hearts, and your glory be revealed in our lives. As John the Baptist was sent to be the forerunner, calling people to repentance and preparing your way: make us to follow his doctrine, holy life and patient suffering in such a way, that we may turn to you with all our hearts, and be made ready for that day when your glory shall be revealed and all humanity shall see it together. Amen

January 17th [Second Sunday after Epiphany] John 2:1-11

Jesus, who by your first miracle manifested your glory, so that your disciples believed in you and by your presence at Cana sanctified the holy estate of matrimony. Bless our homes with your presence - a fountain of life, springing up within us, which can make all things new. May your divine instructions be so received that no resistance of ours may hinder your working a similar miracle within us. As you changed the water into wine, change the poverty of our nature into the riches of your grace; that by the transformation of our lives your glory may be revealed. Amen.

January 24th [Third Sunday after Epiphany] Luke 4:14-21

Son of David, who choose Israel to be your inheritance: look upon your ancient people and take away the blindness which has fallen on them. Grant that they may see and confess you to be their true Messiah and that, believing, they may have life through your Name. Bless those who labour to bring them to the knowledge of your truth and hasten the time when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in and all Israel shall be saved. Amen

January 31st [Fourth Sunday after Epiphany] Luke 4:21 - 30

Son of Joseph, who taught that no prophet is acceptable in his home town and a person's enemies might sometimes be found in his own house; we are sorry that your own people were slow to believe and even tried to kill you when your ministry was scarcely begun. Help us never be afraid of suffering, nor to suffer without cheerfulness in your service, confident that being yours none can pluck us out of your hand, and fearing you, none can make us afraid. Amen

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Editor: Rosemary Power
rosemary.power@moravian.org.uk
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dave@redragdesign.co.uk
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