



Fair trade supports and works alongside small-scale farmers, workers and artisans to trade their way out of poverty and help them, their families and communities to flourish.

The very end of February as well as being Leap Day is the start of Fair Trade Fortnight - Monday 29 February until Sunday 13 March.

This is an annual occasion in which we can specifically remember and be reminded of some of the inequalities in the world. It is also however an opportunity for us to give a small but significant help to those who wish to prosper, but who face third parties who conspire to ensure that they do not achieve that aim.

This is due to some Third World growers and makers of products being paid a price for their goods and talents which are so low that they cannot improve themselves or their communities.

## Fair trade - what is it ?

Fair trade is about paying a premium on top of the current world price for commodities (the premium is often 25%), which allows that to be invested in, for example, digging a well to provide a more reliable source of water, or helping to build a structure which can mean that their children can be better educated.

This is not charity or aid, it is about paying people a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. It is ensuring that work pays.

But who in the end pays that premium? It is an end the customer who can afford it. For an item which costs (say) £1 in your local supermarket, the provider will, under fair trade, be paid 25p rather than 20p. That 5p differential is the difference between existence and making a living.

Whilst our individual efforts are paltry, can we collectively make a difference? There is evidence to suggest that we can. There are various individual case studies which you can find on any number of web-sites. However, the increasing scale of fair trade must be making a difference for good. Below are some facts:

- o In the UK, sales of Fairtrade products now exceed £1.5 billion, which is a year by year increase of around 15%
- o 78% of consumers recognise the Fairtrade mark
- o One in 3 bananas sold in the UK is Fairtrade (Sainsbury's alone sell more than 1 million fairtrade bananas every week)

- o Over 26% of all roast and ground retail coffee is Fairtrade certified
- o The fairtrade mark is the most widely-recognised ethical label globally
- o The Fairtrade system currently works with 1.25 million farmers and workers
- o In 2012 the fairtrade premium amounted to 65 million euros

As well as buying fairtrade products there are other things as Christians we can do. The major wholesaler of fairtrade goods in the UK (Traidcraft PLC) is controlled by a Christian charity, and has deep Christian roots and traditions. These include, for example, morning prayers for staff members who wish to participate. They also produce various resources which are available free of charge on their web-site [www.traidcraft.co.uk/resourcesearch](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/resourcesearch). This includes fair trade church services for carol services, Palm Sunday, Harvest, Advent packs, Lent reflections, fair trade covenant services, and also individual case studies.

Using the power of prayer and reflection is something we can all do even if we don't have the financial resources to effect change.

But if you do have the financial resource, consider the following:

- o If you are going to buy an Easter Egg for a child, why not buy a Fair Trade Easter Egg, which has a booklet along with it that tells the Easter story?

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## Fair trade - what is it? *continued*

This is the first commercially-produced religious Easter Egg in this country

- o Fair trade products can seem to be more expensive than some of their competitors because the quality is often higher. For example, you get more expensive ingredients such as fruit in your Muesli, and more cocoa in chocolate bars, which you might prefer!
- o Not everybody likes Fairtrade coffee, and I would not want you to consume something you don't like, but there are various coffee brands out there - so give more than one a try
- o If you want to send a Christmas Card which isn't just a robin on top of a post-box amongst the snow, then most fairtrade cards have religious images or implicit messages

If you feel inspired, to arrange a small-scale event to celebrate Fair Trade Fortnight. You don't have to arrange it during the first two weeks of March. There are however free resources around at the moment which you can order and use on another occasion. One example is on the Traidcraft PLC web-site, where they are arranging a Big Brew event. At Salem we are having a lunch with a quiz, games and other elements of fun after the morning service at the end of February, but the celebration is flexible enough for you to do what best suits you. While the event is likely to be worthy, it does not have to be dull. Use your imagination, and enjoy it!

*Stuart Brierley*

## Synod 2016

The Provincial Board hereby give notice that Synod 2016 will be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick from 08 July to 11 July, 2016.

Please note the following dates for proposals and reports:-

1. A copy of the Deputies' Credential Form to be at Church House by 31 March, 2016. (Originals to be retained by the Deputy for presentation at Synod.)
2. Proposals affecting the constitution or functions of Provincial Synod or Provincial Board (i.e. Sections 2 & 3 of the Book of Order) must be notified to the Provincial Board by 07 April, 2016.
3. Other proposals should be notified to the Provincial Board by 19 May, 2016.
4. Reports and Memorials must be sent to Church House by 19 May, 2016.
5. Nomination forms for Provincial Board and Committees to be at Church House by 27 May, 2016.

*Gillian Taylor*  
(Chair of the Provincial Board)

## Yad Vashem

Outside the Holocaust Museum at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, a large outdoor sculpture by Nandor Glid commemorates the dead.

We did not find you  
in the bazaar  
on the Way of the Cross  
so we bought bright baubles  
and carried carved camels.  
Our erstz expeirnce  
cost thirty pieces.

Then we came to a place  
where skeletal forms  
stretched starkly under a livid sky.  
Backs arched  
in one continual agony  
over the twisted iron limbs;  
fingers spread like giant thorns  
pushing us away;  
skulls screamed silently  
accusing us  
who were not there when it happened -  
or were we?

It was this -  
this metal monument of death  
which pierced our apathy  
and brought us back to life again.  
We shed our tears then burning  
with shame and grief.

And we found you there -  
weeping with us.

*Margaret Connor*

## Lent

Laura Wood reflects



Lent, the Old English word for 'Spring', is a time when many of us choose to give up something for forty days, as a way of recollecting how Jesus prayed and fasted in the desert, totally relying on God. Giving up something can help us to be more disciplined. It can help us refocus on God and our prayer life. It can be a change for the better.

However, for many people Lent can easily pass them by, or worse still, Lent can be a period that isn't eagerly anticipated. Lent is almost the opposite of Christmas. Christmas is the time of excess, sharing lots of food with friends and family over several days, exchanging presents with those you care for, Nativity plays, plus the exciting celebration of Jesus' birth on Christmas Day too. It is a positive time; a time many of us look forward to for months in advance. Lent is not like this.

Lent is the time when we are meant to look towards Easter to remember all that Christ went through. It is the time when many of us re-visit that familiar tale of Jesus' death and betrayal, a time when we might ask ourselves why did it have to happen? Or even, what would I have done or said if I had been alive? Questions to which we might actually have vague answers, but for many of us the questions are left hanging with an unspoken awareness of our own uncertainty. Lent is a time to rest and wrestle with our uncertainty, but also value the mystery.

As we draw towards Easter, the unfairness and confusing reality of the powerlessness yet also powerfulness of Christ's death often comes back to me. Jesus' death is unjust. It forces me to remember those in the world who experience injustice today, those who are forced to look at the Cross and see Jesus as someone who understands like no one else can. The brokenness of humanity is striking through the story of the cross during Lent.

Lent and Easter evoke mixed emotions for me. It highlights how much I don't understand or comprehend; how small my mind is, compared to the understanding and will of God. Yet I have learnt to look forward to Lent as a time when I purposely refocus my thoughts on Jesus' story. It is a time when I am reminded it is all right not to understand everything. I just need to remember to read and learn from Jesus. I encourage you to read this poem regularly throughout Lent, using it as a time of reflective prayer about the one we follow.

*Sr Wood is Youth and Children's Worker at St. Peter's Church Shipley, and also worships in Fairfield Moravian Church.*

## One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village  
The child of a peasant woman.  
He grew up in another obscure village  
Where he worked in a carpenter shop  
Until he was thirty when public opinion turned against him.  
He never wrote a book  
He never held an office  
He never went to college  
He never visited a big city  
He never travelled more than two hundred miles  
From the place where he was born.  
He did none of the things  
Usually associated with greatness.  
He had no credentials but himself.  
He was only thirty three.  
His friends ran away.  
One of them denied him.  
He was turned over to his enemies  
And went through the mockery of a trial.  
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.  
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing,  
The only property he had on earth.  
When he was dead  
He was laid in a borrowed grave,  
Through the pity of a friend.  
Nineteen centuries have come and gone  
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race  
And the leader of mankind's progress.  
All the armies that have ever marched,  
All the navies that have ever sailed,  
All the parliaments that have ever sat,  
All the kings that ever reigned put together  
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth  
As powerfully as that one solitary life .

*(Attributed to James Allen Francis 1926)*

# The Third Commandment

# 3

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain (Exodus 20.7)

'You have heard his blasphemy!' (Mark 14.64). With those words, Jesus is condemned. It seems a strange counterpoint to the third commandment. The people of God are commanded not to take the name of God in vain, yet Jesus is condemned for doing precisely that. As our Lenten pilgrimage takes us towards this moment, a consideration of blasphemy becomes important. I want to suggest three disciplines arising from looking at Jesus' condemnation and the third commandment.

So let us look closely at the questioning that leads to Jesus being condemned as a blasphemer (Mark 14.53-65). The priests are trying to find evidence that they can take to Pilate to have Jesus executed. They accuse Jesus about his teaching about the Temple. Finding something here would meet the need for something that would implicate Jesus on a political charge (rebuilding the Temple was the job of the Messiah, the true king of Israel) and a religious one (the Temple was the place where God dwelt). But this can't be made to stack up.

Instead, the High Priest asks a direct question: 'are you the Messiah?' and for the first time Jesus owns this publicly. 'I am', he says, quoting Psalm 110 and Daniel 7, 'and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power", and "coming with the clouds of heaven".' This is the blasphemy that the High Priest identifies. Jesus seems to have handed his opponents the double charge they needed to dispose of him. Why is it blasphemy? Jesus has set himself against the Temple and the priesthood. In quoting these Scriptures, Jesus is saying that he will be vindicated and the dwelling place of God destroyed. The clouds of heaven, the sign of the presence of God, merely add to the effect.

Notice, however, that the charge of blasphemy comes where the religious and political powers combine. It gives the High Priest power over Jesus, power to offer him up to the Romans. It changes the priests and their attendants into a mob, spitting on him, hitting him, mocking him. Where there are mobs, blasphemy is a powerful accusation. Conversely, the accusation of blasphemy can be a way of forming a mob.

Here, then, is the first discipline that comes from considering the condemnation of Jesus for blasphemy: we must learn to stop mobs forming and undermine them when they do. In the face of a mob, there is no time for nuanced debate. Social media seems to be a place where mobs develop quickly and easily. Sometimes it is simply a matter of putting ourselves physically between a mob and their victim. Think of Christians

in Egypt surrounding Muslims at prayer to protect them; or Muslims who surrounded a church during mass to protect the worshippers. Mobs are rarely far from us. Protecting those who are victimised, breaking down the unanimity of the persecutors and naming the mob for what it is are all powerful ways of subverting the operation of a mob.

If the first discipline is to prevent and to subvert mobs, then the second takes its clue from Jesus' condemnation in a different way. The second discipline is to learn to blaspheme. When the gods of this age stand in opposition to the life-giving God of Jesus, the Christian is called to blaspheme. There are many such gods, but let me take as an example one that Jesus names - Mammon. This god dominates so much of our life that it can be hard to spot. That is why blasphemy is so important. To blaspheme against Mammon can take a number of forms. Why not try taking a day a week and not spending any money? Give money away, or take what money you have and invest it in a cause rather than what will provide the greatest return. Use your imagination and come up with new and inventive ways of blaspheming against Mammon this Lent. The point, of course, is to loosen Mammon's hold on us and to return us to the true and life-giving God of Jesus.

The first discipline is to prevent and subvert mobs. The second is to loosen the hold of false gods by blaspheming against them. The danger in both of these disciplines is our own righteousness. The High Priest, putting Jesus on trial, is convinced that his interests and those of God are identical. He is wrong. The real blasphemy in the condemnation of Jesus is the blasphemy of convicting an innocent man, the blasphemy of condemning God's Son. Here the third commandment comes into its own. Whether it be using God's name to bolster our own position; speaking of God in a way that supports worship of a false god; or finding a religious justification for our own agenda; we need to take care that we are not taking God's name in vain.

This Lent, as we attend to the Commandments, let us consider also the condemnation of Jesus for blasphemy. Let that spur us to prevent and subvert the operation of mobs. Let it urge us to blaspheme the false gods of this world. And let it warn us of too easily identifying our own interests and ideas with those of God. Let us not take the name of God in vain.

**Simon J. Taylor**

*The writer is an Anglican priest*

## A lawyer writes... Divorce

One of the questions we ask as Christians is how the compassion of Jesus fits what appear to be strict teachings on social issues, such as divorce. While it can be argued that Jesus is protecting the far weaker party in Jewish law, the wife, we may wish to consider his teachings with regard to current legal situation in England and Wales. Understanding better our society's current provisions may help us with our exploration of scripture and the social Gospel.

### How the law has evolved

English law on divorce is to be found in the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, the product of extensive discussions in the previous decade. A principal participant was a group appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury which produced a report entitled Putting Asunder; another was the Law Commission which advises the United Kingdom government on revising the law.

The result was a pragmatic approach finding that:

- o an increased number of divorces is alarming only if it indicates an increase in the number of broken homes and not merely that a larger proportion of broken homes is leading to divorce;
- o even an increase in the number of broken homes might merely indicate that there were more marriages subject to the risk of breakdown;
- o and thirdly, that, even if the proportion of marriages that did break down could be shown to have increased, it might merely be that the marriages were subjected to greater risks and not that there was any decline in respect for marriage and morality;
- o from a secular point of view, divorce is socially harmful only when the possibility of obtaining it leads to the break-up of a home which would not have occurred if the parties had known that in no circumstances could the legal tie be severed;
- o it is right and proper for the state to make provision for divorce and re-marriage; and that
- o there is nothing to forbid the Church's recognising fully the validity of a secular divorce law within the secular sphere.

Their report recommended that a good divorce law should seek 'to buttress rather than to undermine the stability of marriage and when regrettably a marriage has irretrievably broken down, to enable the empty legal shell to be destroyed with the maximum fairness, and the minimum bitterness, distress and humiliation... It should ensure that divorce is not so easy that the parties are under no inducement to make a success of their marriage and to overcome temporary difficulties. It can also ensure that every encouragement is afforded to a reconciliation and that the procedure is not such as to inhibit or discourage approaches to that end.'

### Divorce today

A divorce petition cannot be filed at court before one year has elapsed from the date of the marriage. This rule cannot be waived in any circumstances. Before 1984 there could be no divorce until the marriage was several years old, unless there was evidence of 'exceptional depravity' by one spouse.

There is only one ground for divorce: the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

There is no irretrievable breakdown unless the petitioner establishes one of these five facts:

- o Adultery.
- o Unreasonable behaviour.

- o Desertion.
- o Two years' separation with the consent of the respondent.
- o Five years' separation (no consent required).

To get a divorce based on adultery, the petitioner must prove that the respondent committed adultery and also that the petitioner finds it intolerable to live with the respondent.

Adultery is voluntary sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not married to each other but one or both of whom is or are married.

In an unreasonable behaviour petition the petitioner simply has to persuade the court that he, subjectively, finds it intolerable to live with the respondent, whether or not this is reasonable of him. He does not have to show that it is because of the adultery.

Considering unreasonable behaviour the court will ask: Would any right-thinking person come to the conclusion that this respondent has behaved in such a way that this petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with him or her, taking into account the whole of the circumstances and the characters and personalities of the parties?

A divorce petition must be served - formally delivered - to the respondent. This may be done in a number of ways but personally handing it over by the petitioning spouse is specifically not allowed.

It is rare to dispute that the marriage has broken down. The presentation of a divorce petition is itself taken to be a fairly clear indication that the marriage has broken down.

### Reconciliation

A solicitor acting for the petitioning spouse must file a statement of reconciliation with the petition stating whether or not he has discussed with the petitioner the possibility of reconciliation and has provided him with the names and addresses of people or agencies qualified to help effect reconciliation. There is no duty on the solicitor to discuss reconciliation but if he has not discussed it he must record this in the statement of reconciliation.

### Mediation

Avoidance of contested court hearings is encouraged. Family mediation is a voluntary and confidential process. It involves the appointment of a neutral and impartial third party (the mediator, usually a lawyer) who helps the parties reach a negotiated solution to their dispute. The mediator does not have any authority to impose a decision on the parties. Instead, the mediator helps to facilitate discussion between them, identifies potential solutions and assists the parties to reach their own informed decisions. The parties retain control over whether or not to settle the dispute and on what terms. If agreement is reached it can be embodied in a court order made by consent and thus more readily enforced.

**Paul Mitchell**

# Lenten reflection



One way of living Lent more fully is through seeing how people of the past have viewed passages of scripture. One of the richest resources is the local art gallery, and some, like the National Gallery in London, have series of talks in Lent, or a group can request a curator to explain a painting.

The picture, 'Christ before the High Priest', was painted in 1617, almost 400 years ago, by the Dutch artist Gerrit Van Honthorst. He was twenty-four years old and living in Italy. It hangs in the National Gallery. It is almost life-size, and the viewer is drawn in immediately by the lines of the table, and placed this side of the drama between the central figures. There is no escape from the moment and its consequences: shadowy military figures in contemporary dress crowd the exit: behind them are the spears of yet more soldiers. We are in a vast room, below the temple perhaps. Apart from a faint glow through that crowded door to the right, the only light comes from a single candle with a huge flame.

The face of Christ is tired, careworn, and older than usually depicted. He is bound, though he has no means of escape, and his clothes are disordered - the white outer garment reminiscent of a surplice pulled sideways over his rusty-red inner robe, the colour of drying blood. He has his dignity taken from him - he is a prisoner, demeaned, even while he is meant to be on trial. Yet he is dignified, with the dignity that places love for the other first, and which he will not lose even when stripped on the cross.

Opposite him the high-priest, an elderly man, is dressed finely, in splendour even, and before him on the table are the scriptures. We have come to a crucial moment - the priest raises his finger threateningly, in exhortation or warning. Is this the moment when he puts Jesus under oath to tell who he is, knowing that

if Jesus answers as he believes he will, he can condemn him for blasphemy? We may think: 'Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the test', the text Jesus had quoted to the devil when tempted at the start of his ministry. In any event it is an unfair question: the prisoner is being forced to condemn himself. God's law, known through the open Scriptures is here misused, to entrap, not to bring the freedom that God intended when he gave the Law in the desert to the Israelites freed from slavery.

The high priest's eyes are raised, above the candle, the line pointing to Jesus' forehead. He wants to know what Jesus thinks. But Jesus is looking through the candle into the priest's heart. He, the light of the world, looks through the light in the darkness to search out the heart of the man interrogating him. He reminds us that the core of the scriptures is love, nor knowledge. Jesus, with his brilliant intelligence, places love first, the love that anyone can aspire to. And Jesus loves the high-priest too.

These too are the focus, the crucial question is being asked but already decided. One man must die for the people and justification for this must be found, in the words and actions in which Jesus is felt to offend. But Jesus has responded in a love deeper than the question, through a love which lightens even the darkened room of this illicit night-time court.

Here too it has had an effect. Also looking on, dressed in the clothing of their own day, contemporaries of the artist who must have meant that they are our

contemporaries too, are two men. They must be the false witnesses who could not agree, or the two who claimed that Jesus had said he would destroy and rebuild the temple. There is another disagreement now. One is as hard-faced as the high-priest without his subtlety, and he too looks aggressively into the head of Jesus. The other has softened and looks into his heart. Is there a hint too of the two thieves who will hang on the cross the next day, one turned in love, the other still in anger?

Certainly there is hope for us in the painting, in Christ the light of life, and the way in which we can change and turn to him. We may not easily get out of the room, except by following Jesus in his suffering, but we seek an end full of light.

Honthorst was to live many years as a successful court painter. But perhaps he saw something clearly in the wisdom of youth, while living a wild life away from his homeland, with wild if talented fellow-artists. Central to this painting is Christ as the light of the world, who came into the world which did not receive him, but was a light in the darkness, a light that the darkness could not engulf.

**Rosemary Power**

## A Minister Reflects

### Part 4: Memorabilia for 1917

#### Kit Shorten continues the series

Owing to the Minister being employed upon War Work during the week he found it impossible to write the Memorabilia at length as on former occasions. The following is a summary of the service given at the Communion Lovefeast held on 06 January, 1918.

Another year has passed to find the world still under the shadow of war, and the shadow deepens. But Christians also dwell under the Shadow of God's Wing, and they are safe.

Joined Army: Brother Leonard Beaumont, now in France. Wounded: Brother A. Shepley, Willie Brooke, George Ibbotson, A Gore (missing). E Sampson (killed).

The Church Services, Celebrations, Anniversaries - all maintained. Sale of

Work carried through successfully. Sunday School suffering from shortage of staff and losing some scholars in consequence. Exceptional difficulties in 1917. Weather made successful gatherings of first four months an impossibility. Omission of Lovefeast has been a setback. Guild meetings have been dropped and all Church activity has suffered. The necessity of Minister to undertake war work was mentioned and the indulgence of the members asked for. Sale of Work again revealed the Capacity for congregation for work when work was to be done.

We can work for the temporal needs of the Church. Can we not work for the spiritual needs? What is the Church for? A good thing to ask and answer this question and the endeavour to carry it out, and so justify our existence. What is

the Church for? Surely to embody God and visualise the Spirit! Here if anywhere men should be aware of the Divine. One is thankful for the true unobtrusive piety in our Congregation, and which is in our strength. Yet our attendance keeps small, and many are irregular.

The Minister intends to support at the Annual Council Meeting the following proposal. That the Congregation take up as its sphere of work as a Church the following:

1. To adopt measures to mobilise the neighbourhood.
2. To foster and help the Sunday School and make it efficient.
3. To arrange for Social intercourse of the members Will all consider this suggestion and be prepared to discuss same?

## Refugee crisis

On 03 January 2016 an open letter was sent by 27 humanitarian organisations, including Christian Aid and Oxfam. The following is abridged:

*Dear Prime Minister,*

*As a coalition of international humanitarian organisations, refugee assistance organisations, and human rights advocacy groups we ask you to approach this new year with new resolve to address the appalling plight of refugees in Europe.*

*Last year saw 3,695 people drown and hundreds of thousands more endure a desperate march of misery across the continent. Together, our organisations bear witness to the full arc of this refugee crisis.*

*We see first-hand the human cost of war, persecution and human rights abuses that force people to abandon their homes in search of refuge. We provide emergency relief to desperate men, women and children who have fled to Europe's shores. We help refugees begin to rebuild their lives here in the United Kingdom...*

*We therefore join leading members of the legal community in endorsing the following four refugee principles and believe that, as a matter of urgency:*

- *The UK should take a fair and proportionate share of refugees, both those already within the European Union*

*and those still outside it.*

- *Safe and legal routes to the UK, as well as to the European Union, need to be established.*
- *Safe and legal routes within the European Union, including the UK, should be established.*
- *There should be access to fair and thorough procedures to determine eligibility for international protection wherever it is sought.*

*The UK, along with other European countries, must take responsibility for responding to the refugee crisis on Europe's doorstep.*

*Over 64 years ago, soon after the horrors of the Second World War, European governments adopted the refugee convention, an instrument of international law which British lawyers helped to draft. As a nation, we made a promise: that never again would refugees be left out in the cold to fend for themselves; that this country would protect them; that here, they would find safe haven.*

*We urge you to keep that promise.*

Full letter published in The Guardian 03-01-16

# Moravians and Peacefulness

Few Moravians today have heard of Peter Chelcicky, but he inspired the formation of our church. During the Wars of the 1400s, Peter called for Christians to abandon the unjust social order of the Middle Ages, especially the idea that there are holy wars. He urged people to live according to the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Christ told his followers to love their enemies, and Peter asked how can we love someone while we are maiming, torturing, and killing them? It is certainly the greatest blasphemy to kill anyone in the name of Christ. For Peter, no war is a holy war.

The followers of Christ know there is a 'peace that passes all understanding.' This peace fills the soul even during periods of conflict and turmoil. It is more than avoiding violence and war. Conflict and bitterness, gossip and cruelty have no place in the church. It is sinful to destroy another person's soul by violence, gossip, lies, greed, jealousy, or any other means. The mission of the church is to build up not to tear down. The Unitas Fratrum was founded on the principle of peacefulness as defined by Peter, but over time the church moderated its strict non-violence and allowed some military service. However, the Brethren never gave up the core value of peacefulness.

The most eloquent advocate for peace in the history of the Moravian Church was John Amos Comenius. He lamented the fact that humans divide the world into nations, declaring some enemies and other friends: 'mother earth bears them and nurses them all for a time; air and winds breathe upon them all and make them grow. The same sky protects them all; the same sun and stars traverse all regions in turn so that all men may enjoy a common life and thrive with a common spirit. Therefore since we are all fellow-citizens of one world, what is to prevent us from combining into one political state with one set of laws?' Comenius spent his life trying to find ways to resolve conflicts and promote harmony in the world.

Count Zinzendorf spent his fortune trying to realize Comenius' vision of a world united: all races, languages, and nations joined in prayer and service to God. It was essential to the Moravian global mission that the gospel be separated completely from the violence of European colonialism and exploitation. The message of Christ's redemption had to be divorced from fear. Moravian communities around the world were to be havens of peace. By signing the Brotherly Agreement a person agreed to live according to a very strict discipline that included non-violence. Like the old Brethren, Moravians under Zinzendorf educated children to resolve their conflicts peacefully and admonished brothers and sisters not to stir up trouble in the

world. Forgiveness is a Christian virtue. Revenge is a pagan value. In 1749 the British Parliament exempted Moravians anywhere in the British Empire from being forced to bear arms or swear oaths.

Gradually, though, Moravians grew weary of standing against the values of the world, and in those years the United States moved toward the epic tragedy called the Civil War. The first war in which Moravians were encouraged to participate in was also one in which Moravians fought on opposite sides. As Abraham Lincoln said of that horrifying waste of human life, both sides prayed to the same God, but God could not be on both sides. Perhaps he was on neither side. Since the middle of the 19th century, the Moravian Church has not been a 'peace church,' but it has still maintained a peace witness.

One of the great moments in recent Moravian history came after World War II. The British public hated the Germans and wanted revenge. It was costly for the Moravian Church in England to be associated with Germans, but the church kept the unpopular Moravian name. More important, at the first General Synod after the war, German Moravians were received as brothers and sisters by British and American Moravians. The church was reconciled long before their nations were. Forgiveness remains a Christian virtue. Revenge is a pagan value.

One of the golden cords of the Moravian Church through five and a half centuries is the conviction that the peace of Christ restores the souls of individuals and builds up the congregation of the faithful. This peacefulness should flow from the church into the world. One of the marks of true Christianity is that we treat all people, including unbelievers, with respect and gentleness. Christians are called to do all in our power to get rid of the causes of war even though we know all too well just how evil people can be. As American Moravians pray in our litany, 'Deliver us from the sins which lead to war and conflict, and strengthen within us the will to establish righteousness and justice on the earth.' This message of peacefulness in our hearts, in our homes, in our churches, in our neighborhoods, and in our world has not been popular in recent years. It is routinely ridiculed in the media and by politicians. Even some preachers have advocated violence and justified torture. But, a community's true core values are revealed in times of crisis, conflict, and confusion. They provide the moral compass we need when the world has gone insane. Peace is such a core value for Christians, especially for Moravians. May we continue to follow the teachings of generations of Moravians who refused to listen to the siren song of violence and revenge.

## Face to Faith

# Me, my M.E. and my faith



James Woolford

Thursday 26 November 1997 was a day that forever changed my life, as I was rushed into hospital. Things were touch-and-go for a while, and my poor parents had to wait agonisingly for news on whether I would survive. I came around the next evening and was very confused, with a pounding headache, and was told I had meningitis. A few months earlier a girl at my school had died from the condition, so this news sent chills of panic down my spine.

I was one of the lucky ones and I was released from hospital the following Tuesday. With hindsight, it was far too soon as my immune system was still recovering, I still had a line in my hand, and had to go back to hospital every day for a week for antibiotics. But at least I was at home, resting on the couch, a position I would become very familiar with over the coming months and years.

It was taking me a long time to recover, longer than would be expected. I never seemed to get my strength or energy back. It took various trips to doctors and hospital but eventually I was diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, or M.E for short. Now it is more commonly known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or CFS. There has been, and to a thankfully lesser extent still is, a stigma around the condition. There is very little actually known about the condition, and diagnosis only really happens when everything else is ruled out as there is no test. If you have a heart condition or a broken leg you can unconditionally prove that, but what if there is no test that shows it up?

CFS is a lifelong illness. There is at this stage, no cure and no real sight of one either. There are lots of things that can help but no pill or treatment that will take it away for good. I have had to combat this condition using careful pacing of my activities and lifestyle changes (it's the reason I don't drink alcohol for example). I gradually and carefully increased my activities trying to avoid over doing things. This was a hit-and-miss approach though, and something that I still have to consider every day. The knowledge that this will be a lifelong battle for me is something that I had to come to terms with a long time ago.

CFS affects different people in different ways. It is also a condition which gives you a lot of up-and-down days. One day I could feel fine, the next I'm not.

The main symptom though is fatigue. This is not simply tiredness. This is an ache and heaviness that affects all my muscles. It is like walking around underwater sometimes, and when I was at my worst it would reduce me to being laid on the sofa, and even getting up for the toilet was a struggle.



The fatigue also affects the brain and concentration, memory and problem-solving. This can to silly mistakes that I am generally quite embarrassed about because 'normally' I wouldn't make them. It also affect my immune system, and if there is a bug floating around I will no doubt get it.

The symptoms I have described are bad day symptoms and on a good day I am largely 'normal'. I have to live my life carefully trying to pace myself which in ministry is often easier said than done. I want to be able to do as much as other people and I find it greatly embarrassing, as a young man, that sometime people twice my age or more are helping out with the physical things while I try to find something else to do. On a good day I can and do those things but if I seem like I am being lazy or unhelpful then please consider that I am just trying to pace myself.

My faith has been a great support to me, as has been my love of music and of course the support of my family and close friends. I have had to try and remain positive because another trigger for CFS is depression, something which is also a symptom. I found myself feeling down because I was fatigued and feeling fatigued because I was feeling down.

God never promises life is going to be easy but he does promise that he will be with us and will support us when things are at their hardest. It was a comfort to know that however hard things were, Jesus suffered worse. I found God giving me the nudge to not give up and to be mindful that there are a lot of people worse off than myself.

I sometimes felt tempted to say, I wish this hadn't happened to me and why me God! I have been made stronger by all the experiences that I have had, both good and especially bad. I am who I am, I am now doing what I am doing, because of that which went before. This attitude helps me cope with those embarrassing moments because whilst there are some things I cannot do, there is a lot I can do and say because of those experiences. God does have a plan for you. That plan may not be the most straight forward or easy to follow, but it always the right one in the end and it will be worth it.

Thanks be to God for his wisdom and support and thanks to all my family and friends for the love and understanding they have all shown and continue to show.

Another in the series of articles about stewardship considers the archives



## More than a load of Dusty ol' Books

It's just a load of dusty ol' books and paper - would be good for the fire! was a comment encountered when I started working in the library at Church House. Although said tongue-in-cheek, it is a misconception of archives. They can be used for so much more! So what are the Provincial Library and Archives?

Some may have come across the Provincial Library through their own interests and research, whilst others may have seen reference to it in the 'Church Book' or 'Book of Order' of the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland, the document which governs the running of the Province. The Provincial Library and Archives falls under Section 6, which states that 'the provincial archives consist of the official records of the Moravian Church no longer in current use' and the 'provincial library consists of publications, official and other, relating to the Moravian Church, and includes works dealing with its history, as well as a number of works by Moravian authors'. It is distinct from the Unity Archives, in that it keeps the records of the British Province of the Moravian Church, whereas it was resolved in the Synod of 1764 that the records of the Unity should be united in one archive, now in Herrnhut.

It was not until the 1818 Synod that the creation of a Provincial Conference in Britain was encouraged. The first record of the Provincial Archives can be found in the minutes of the Provincial Helpers Conference (the predecessor of the Provincial Board) of 26 April 1824: 'It was resolved, that an iron chest be procured for preserving deeds & documents, under the care of the Provincial Helpers, to be sent to Bedford, & deposited there', later adding that: 'These books & papers, belonging to the Provincial Helpers' archive, which are not in immediate use may remain for which rent is paid for the Provincial Helpers.'

The Provincial Helpers had resided in Fairfield since 1804 and then moved to Bedford onto Ockbrook in 1825 where they remained until 1875, when Moravian Church and mission offices moved to Fetter Lane.

The Provincial Synod of 1874 recognised

the need for a Provincial Archive and someone to care for the manuscripts and various books on the history, theology and hymnology of the Church that had been collected. Br. J. F. Pemsel subsequently became the first custodian to be appointed to the Archive. Even then it was noted that: 'Our archives are not merely a source of entertainment for the antiquarian, but contain an inexhaustible mass of materials for instruction and



edification from our Church history.' The Library of the Society of the Furtherance of the Gospel (SFG) was removed from No. 10 Nevill's Court to the manse at Fetter Lane in 1867, and later the Principal's Library from Fairfield College was amalgamated with the Provincial Library in 1962. Since then the archive and library has continued to receive new accessions from congregations and private collections, archives of congregations that have since closed, as well as the latest publications pertaining to the Church and the library's current acquisition policy.

So why keep archives? Archives and libraries do not simply store records and books - they are meant to be used. They provide evidence of the Church's activities which enables accountability, so these records have a very specific enduring value and must be preserved. Another reason is to provide an institutional history or a corporate memory for the Church itself. The records don't just tell us where the Church came

from; they also contain evidence used to make current decisions that will affect the Church now and in the future. There are a variety of ways archive material can be used - it is limited only by people's imagination.

What does the archivist do? The main role of the archivist is for the care and development of both the archives and library material of the British Province of the Moravian Church, and to facilitate access to the information it contains. However, no day is the same; from crawling around in attics and basements in order to appraise possible new acquisitions, then assisting visitors on how to use the records. People may need help with deciding what records to access, deciphering old handwriting, interpreting unfamiliar record types, or using the microfilm reader. Other work can include finding information on a property; scanning documents; producing records management guidance; arranging, cataloguing and repackaging the materials in order to provide access to researchers; giving a talk to a Church group; checking copyright issues and new draft publications; or the annual cleaning of the library and the books!

We now receive nearly 500 enquiries per year from people all around the world to make use of the library for official business, academic research, genealogy, or personal interest. A significant proportion of the enquiries now come from in-house, i.e. from the congregations, or from the Provincial Board, which helps to support their administrative and legal work. This takes up most of the time. Researchers who have visited include not just historians and those interested in family history, but also theologians, meteorologists, architects, solicitors, artists and designers, and film producers.

Archives are about bringing the past, the present, and the future together. If you would like to learn more about the archives, or would like to access some of the material and books, please contact me at Church House.

**Lorraine Parsons**  
Provincial Archivist

### Brockweir

#### "Hosanna, blessed is he that comes!"

This Advent we were prepared for the Hosanna Anthem, thanks to Sr. Holdsworth and a recording of Yorkshire Moravians. Our version sounded quite tuneful, a vast improvement on previous attempts!

On Friday 18 December, our Nativity Walk began with mulled wine as we assembled to hear the Christmas story, journeying to various locations in the village. Additional scenes are added each year and we began with the prophets Isaiah and Micah, aka Paul and Alan Holdsworth. Villagers and cast members are encouraged to dress in period costume and the children were especially good, some even attending as sheep. We had over 70 people in attendance and the refreshments were provided by a 'Mystery Moravian' from the



Lancashire District. It's a very good form of outreach and attracts people from far and wide. Thanks are due to Sr. Mary Harris who marshals the troops and comes up with fresh ideas each time and it was also good to have Sr. Holdsworth narrating for the first time.

Our Christingle service was led by Sr. Sue Groves who coped remarkably well with 18 very excited young children who helped her

## Congregation News

to act out the nativity story. We'd made 50 christingles but soon ran out and it was extremely touching to watch the children process around the church. On Christmas Day, Sr. Holdsworth took the service and it was gratifying to see so many villagers made the effort to attend. It was a joyful service and it was a real blessing to have Holy Communion on this special day.

On the 27 December, Sr. Carol Ostler led a Festival of Lessons and Carols. The church was also represented at 'A Lighter Side of Christmas' where various village groups perform to raise money for charity. We sang the Twelve Moravian Days of Christmas, provided an alternative Bible story from St Luke and even threw a few tap dancers into the mix. We also thank our organist Sr. Carol Burrey for her efforts during this busy time.

**Judith Ashton**

### Fulneck

Advent and Christmas events began early at Fulneck. The Boys' Brigade room was given its festive decorations in November ready for the Christmas Fair which was well attended and supported raising just over £800. The Christmas Party three weeks later raised £200 and was an enjoyable occasion.

The Christmas Tree Festival at the start of Advent was very successful in spite of the bad weather. This year the theme was the World Wide Moravian Provinces and each group was given a specific province to represent. For example the Men's Fellowship presented a tree redolent with ideas of Christmas in Suriname and Fulneck School represented Africa. Comments such as, 'It really shows up the Church at its best,' were heard and a viewer

of one of our Facebook pages wrote that she had enjoyed it very much and her children had loved the Twelve Days of Christmas Treasure Hunt.

On December 01 the Women Together group had their inspiring Christmas meeting where they read individual Christmas and Advent poetry and prose both humorous and serious. The children's Toy and Nativity service on 13 December went well and was followed on the next Sunday evening by the service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Mulled wine and mince pies were served afterwards in church creating an opportunity for happy fellowship.

In recent years it has become traditional for carol singing throughout the settlement just before Christmas. This year, as the weather was cold but dry, there was a good turnout of

seventeen people who sang at ten stops through the village. One pleased listener said, 'Thank you all very much. Now I feel that Christmas is really here.' The singers felt the same and the evening ended again with mulled wine and mince pies.

At the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve children sang and played instruments and the darkened church with the candles and the Christmas trees lit was a moving sight. People of all ages attended the Christmas Morning Service and a small boy in his new policeman's hat lit the last candle on the Advent wreath. Other members of the congregation placed the figures in the stable saying a few words about them. May we at Fulneck wish everyone a peaceful, healthy and happy 2016.

**David Ingham**

### Gracehill

As always in Gracehill Autumn and Winter have been a wonderfully busy time! Organised by Br. Raymond Kitson, on Friday 09 October, we enjoyed a very special evening of 'Music on the Maine' from the Police Service of Northern Ireland Ladies Choir who provided an eclectic range of choral pieces, led by their musical director Mrs Yvette Anderson MBE, to the delight of the audience who responded with a standing ovation. As a result £920 was raised for the Church Building Fund.



We were very privileged to have our Bishop, Rt. Rev. Joachim Kreuzal with us to celebrate our church anniversary on Sunday 01 November. It was the 250th anniversary of the building and opening of the church on 01 November 1765.

Also at this service Br. Raymond Kitson, Chair of the Fund Raising Committee, launched the Parable of the Talents. Over the Winter months we will attempt to live out the Parable Jesus told in Matthew 25: 14 - 20. using our talents. So far this has really taken off, with people using their creative talents to make a wonderful variety of items which are selling like hotcakes!

As part of our preparations for Advent, Rev. Sarah and Sister Roberta Thompson led 'Feast For Advent' Bible Studies with prayers and refreshments in the Bates Room every Wednesday morning.

The Moravian Women's Association held their annual Christmas Fair and raised a marvellous £700 towards their charity projects for this year.

Friday 04 December saw our much anticipated 'Carols by Candlelight' in the Cennick Hall organised by Br and Sr Billy and Kathleen Kitson. Some 80 friends and members were joined by All Saints Parish Folk Group who sang a mixture of old and new carols. Interspersed were readings from Scripture, poems and Congregational Carols. This was followed by a delightful supper and good fellowship. A freewill offering was taken and £230 given to Br Raymond Kitson who is going to India with Habitat for Humanity with a cross community group from Ballymena.

Sunday evening 13 December saw our Carol Service - Emmanuel God is with us - led by Sarah. A large group then went round the village singing Carols to the delight of the residents. These eager carol singers were even invited into some houses to view the Christmas Trees!

Our traditional Christmas Christingle Service took place as always on Christmas Eve. The church was packed to capacity and everyone joined with the children to celebrate the Birth of the baby Jesus. The Sunday School performed their singing and drama accompanied now and then with the odd interjection from the beautiful white lamb 'Faith' who was looked after by Sr Rhebe and Br John Clark from Riverside Farm. We thank God for such a wonderful Christmas Season of good fun, good fellowship and worship.

We were also delighted when one of our Church family, Sr Janet Wray was awarded the OBE in the New Years Honours list for services to the community. Janet has been the Director of Housing Rights Service since 1994, a charity that works to advise individuals and organisations about housing rights. She also sits on the Promoting Social Inclusion partnership and is also a long term member, and former Chair, of the Management Committee of Law Centre NI. In her spare time she is one of our amazing Gracehill Village Tour Guides! We are all absolutely delighted that Janet's work has been recognised by this honour.

**Roberta Gray**

## Congregational Register

### Baptisms

Ray Daniel Owen 22nd November  
Andie Sienna Hopkinson 6th December

### Deaths

Peter Hutchings 14th December

## Noticeboard

**Sr Jane Dixon** will be Ordained as a Deacon at Salem Moravian Church at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday, 16 April. Br Joachim Kreusel will be the officiating Bishop. Please keep Sr Dixon in your prayers as she prepares for this, the next chapter in her service of our Lord.

**Correction!** More on poverty - January 2016 Messenger page 3 The co-author was of course Sr Elizabeth Hollindrake.

**A note for Scientists** 400 years ago on 26 February 1616 Galileo was required to cease to teach that the earth moves around the sun.

### 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

## Dates to remember

**7 Feb** Poverty Action Sunday  
[www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)

Ash Wednesday

**10 Feb**

**29 Feb** **13 Mar** Fairtrade Fortnight  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

## Prayer Notes *Richard Ingham*

### February 7th [Transfiguration Sunday]

**Luke 9:28-36**

Chosen One, who revealed your glory to Peter, James and John when you were transfigured on the holy mountain, speaking with Moses and Elijah about the about the way you must take and the end you must fulfil at Jerusalem. Transform us in such a way that we too may be permitted to behold the King in his beauty. May it be plain to all that we have been with you; sharing your sufferings and making you known to the world. Give to your servants today strength to bear the cross and be changed into your likeness. You are the one who gives light in the darkness - the Light of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### February 14th [Lent 1] Luke 4:1-13

Son of God, who chose to be born as we are born and to live as we live; you know that we have many temptations to conquer and many difficulties to overcome. Give us strength both by your example and by your presence, for you are faithful and do not permit us to be tempted beyond our ability, but with the temptation also provide a way of escape that we can endure it. We would not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from your mouth. As we trust you for our daily bread, we trust you to give us day by day the inward nourishment of that living truth which you have revealed to us in yourself. Deliver us from evil so that, when we have been tried, we may receive the crown of life, which you have prepared for all who love you. Amen.

### February 21st [Lent 2] Luke 13:31-35

Son of David, whose messengers and prophets were sent before you to prepare your way, grant that you may find in us a dwelling prepared for you. Look mercifully upon us so that we may choose the way of peace and, being rescued from the captivity of the sins which have long oppressed us, we may attain the heavenly Jerusalem. You yourself are the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, fulfilling all the ordered purpose of the Father - fill our hearts with joy and gladness, now and always. Join our faltering songs to all who proclaim your glory. Amen.

### February 28th [Lent 3] Luke 13:1-9

Saviour, by whose word the barren fig tree withered from the roots: grant that we do not invite your condemnation because of our own fruitlessness. Give us grace to repent and obey you while there is still time. Grant us pardon and remission of all our sins; time for true change of heart and amendment of life. Touch our barrenness, till all things bloom. Make the very desert blossom as the rose; for our souls thirst for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. You have put your eternity in our hearts and made us to hunger and thirst after you. Satisfy the instincts which you have implanted in us; that we may find you in life, and life in you. Amen.

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