



Bishops Graham Rights, Volker Schulz, Sarah Groves, Joachim Kreusel and John McOwat after Sr Sarah's Consecration

© Sr Roberta Gray

New Bishop Consecrated at Gracehill

On Sunday 8th July 2018, at the Synod of the British Province held in Swanwick, Sr Sarah Groves was elected to serve as a bishop of the Unity. There followed four and a half months of preparation and anticipation. Sr Sarah, the Church Committee of Gracehill Moravian Church, the Provincial Board, Bishop John McOwat, and others went to work on all of the matters that needed to be addressed before the service took place.

As the day for the service approached, all roads seemed to lead to Gracehill. Many crossed the Irish Sea, including a large number of Moravian clergy. On Friday evening, 16th November, the Gracehill Moravian Church was almost filled to capacity with a congregation estimated at 300.

Alison McCullough (organist), Sean Tranter (cornetist), two youth, Jessica and Katie McCullough (instrumentalists) provided music for the service, which began with the Processional Hymn, 'Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation.'

The opening sentences were led by Bishop McOwat who presided at the service. The hymn 'Worthy is the Lamb' was sung and prayers were led by Bishop Volker Schulz (from Basel, Switzerland) and Bishop Joachim Kreusel. The scripture lessons were read by Sr Roberta Thompson, Br Billy Kitson, Br Henry Wilson and Sr Alice Frazer of the Gracehill and Ballinderry congregations. The congregation choir sang a 'Gracehill Moravian Medley'. The medley included hymns by three ministers who had served

this congregation: 'Stand Up and Bless the Lord' by James Montgomery, 'Be with Me Lord' by John Cennick, and 'Jesus Lord of Life and Laughter' by A. J. Lewis.

Representing the Provincial Board, Br Livingstone Thompson then addressed Bishop McOwat and requested on behalf of the British Province that he as Bishop of the Unitas Fratrum 'consecrate Sarah Gillian Groves to the office of Bishop in the Church of God, by the power committed to you by Christ and the Church: and I testify that she has been duly chosen and elected by her brothers and sisters to serve the Church of God as a Bishop; and her acceptance of this office declares her sincere intention to follow Christ in loyalty as a true shepherd of the flock.'

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New Bishop Consecrated at Gracehill

After Bishop McOwat's acceptance of this testimony and granting the request, the hymn, 'Come, Let us all with Gladness Raise,' was sung - a hymn that, according to tradition was written for the ordination of the first Moravian ministers in 1467.

Bishop Graham Rights (from Winston-Salem, USA) then preached the sermon for the occasion, offering four images for

as a shepherd of Christ's flock, and places in your hands the royal law. Receive this book, here are the words of eternal life. Take them for your guide and declare them to the world.'

As the official representative of the Unity at the service, Bishop Rights then read a letter to Sr Sarah from the Rev Cortroy Jarvis, President of the Unity Board and



Gracehill Choir

Sr Sarah to keep in view in her service as a bishop. The first image was that of Jesus Christ as our Chief Elder, to whose service bishops are consecrated. The second image was that of a towel, symbolising Jesus' call to servant ministry. The third was that of the Good Shepherd, which speaks to the pastoral function of the bishop as a pastor to pastors and congregations. The fourth was that of the surplice, representing the priestly function of the bishop who is to be a channel for God to reach others, and a channel for the needs of others to be taken to God. He also issued a charge to the congregation to fulfil their role in the priesthood of all believers by caring for their pastors and bishops.

Following the sermon, Bishop McOwat led the liturgy for consecration of a bishop, the other bishops joining him in laying on hands as he pronounced, 'Sister Sarah, we consecrate you to be a Bishop in the Church of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' All joined in with 'Amen.' Bishop McOwat continued with, 'The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace' and all joined in with 'In the name of Jesus. Amen.' After silent prayer, all sang the Consecration Doxology.

Bishop McOwat then issued a charge to the new bishop, which was followed by the singing of 'Take My Life, and Let It Be.' Sr Zoe Taylor, member of the Provincial Board, presented a Bible with the words, 'Sister Sarah the Moravian Church receives you

the Rev Jørgen Bøytler, Unity Business Administrator, with the following message: 'On behalf of the worldwide Moravian Unity, we greet you in the name of our Chief Elder.

On the occasion of your consecration as a bishop of the Unity, we send our regards, prayers and best wishes for you and for the whole Moravian Church in the British Province. We congratulate you with all our heart.

Your service to the British Province and to the Unity at large will be appreciated. We pray that you will find wisdom and strength in your continued service for the Unitas Fratrum.

You are the 370th Bishop in the Unity since its beginning and the 308th Bishop of the renewed Moravian Church.'

Sr Sarah led the conclusion of the service by offering prayer, after which the hymn, 'In Heavenly Love Abiding,' was sung and she pronounced the benediction. All then joined in singing the Recessional Hymn, 'One More Step Along the World I Go.'

Following the service, a reception was enjoyed in Gracehill Moravian's Cennick Hall during which an 'open mike' opportunity was offered to all present.

By means of this service, God has provided and will provide abundant blessings to Bishop Sarah Groves, to the British Province, to the worldwide Moravian Unity, and to the Universal Church of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

Br Graham Rights
American Province, South

Editorial

Few members of the Church will be unaware of the upset caused to many people by the incorrect claim made by The Children's Society that they introduced the Christingle Service to this country 50 years ago.

Perhaps there are deeper reasons for this upset than just inaccurate claims from a charity wishing to maximise its fundraising potential. Part of our hurt is over the perception that this is trampling over a beloved tradition in our Church, a treasured memory from our childhoods and one memory we hope to bequeath to our children and grandchildren. I am sure too that another feeling is that this has happened because we are small church. One cannot imagine a charity 'borrowing' a visual image from a bigger church, and then omit to recognise its origins correctly. It has unconsciously made people feel as though we don't matter, we can be sidelined and what we have as a treasure can just be appropriated from us without any acknowledgement.

I am sure that that this has not been a deliberate act by The Children's Society but just shoddy research which brings credit on no one. The Provincial Board has been in touch with the BBC and with the Children's Society and a meeting with The Children's Society is I understand, scheduled for the New Year. It would be ungracious not to mention that The Children's Society and the BBC have made changes to their wording in some places.

Sr Lorraine Parsons, our Church House Archivist, has been researching in the Provincial Archives and she has discovered that the first mention in the Moravian Messenger about Christingles is in a congregation report from the Bristol Congregation in 1891. The first mention of Christingles being candles and oranges is again in the Moravian Messenger reporting from Fairfield in 1903.

So, the Messenger Editorial Team would like to hear from archivists or anyone interested in stories from your congregation' archives, whether they are



held in your church or in the local county archives to find references to Christingles and all children's services at Christmas. We want to be able to have accounts from every congregation of their children's Christmas services to discover how the Christingle tradition emerged in our province.

We would also like accounts from you about how your Christingles are made. It is apparent that each congregation has its own traditions and ways of making Christingles and that these have changed over the years particularly when we ceased to use goose quills. Lastly please send in special memories of Christingle services. I spent a lovely time the other day talking with the oldest member at Gracehill and it was really interesting to hear of her memories of attending Christingle Services at Gracehill in the 1930s. Oral history is important history too.

Please send your research, descriptions of your Christingles with pictures if possible and memories of Christingles to our Archivist, Sr Lorraine Parsons at Church House or by email to editorialteam@moravian.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you and with your help we can make sure that the story of Christingles is properly understood and explained to the wider Church.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team and
Minister of Gracehill



Letter to the Editor

Christingle - It's more than 50 years!

Anyone who receives information from The Children's Society will no doubt be aware that this year they are celebrating 50 years of Christingle. Facebook posts promote 'last chance' to apply for your Christingle pack and register your Christingle celebration; and their website is full of information about this 50 year anniversary.

It is true that it is 50 years since the Children's society held THEIR first Christingle service in Lincoln Cathedral on 7th December 1968 but Christingle services were being held in Moravian Churches in the UK for many years before that.

In some parts of its website The Children's Society does acknowledge that the custom of giving children a candle originated in 1747 in the Moravian Church in Germany. However they claim that it was they who introduced the custom to the UK! This following quote from their website is one of many making that claim!

'In 1968, John Pensom of The Children's Society, known as 'Mr Christingle', brought Christingle to this country and introduced it to the Church of England. This involved children decorating an orange with a red ribbon, dried fruits, sweets and a candle to create a new visual representation of Christ, the light of the world, celebrated by the lighting of the Christingle candles'.

Their website is so full of inaccurate and misleading information about Christingle that it has caused great upset to many Moravians. No one doubts that The Children's Society does a lot of good work and whilst using our precious Christingle as a fundraising tool goes against the grain with many of us, we

acknowledge that it does help them raise money for their work. However, it surely is not too much to ask that they get their facts right! Repeated requests to The Children's Society for them to do this have fallen on deaf ears over the years!

It is not known exactly how the Christingle developed from the original candle tied with a ribbon to the orange stuck with sweets and a frill that we know today, but our archives show that they developed into this form prior to the first world war and Christingles are known in all parts of the world that were served by British Moravian missionaries. During the war Moravians in the UK used turnips in place of the oranges that were not readily available!

The symbolism of the Christingle is essentially that the light of the candle represents Christ, the Light of the world, the fruit and nuts are God's bounty to us, and the red frill at the base of the candle (or in some churches a red candle) is the blood of Jesus shed for all people. The Christingle is given freely to show that God's love is given to us freely, we cannot earn it by our own efforts, it is a gift to us.

The correct history of the Christingle can be found on the Moravian Church website, <http://moravian.org.uk/index.php/12-visitors-to-the-moravian-church/17-moravian-christingle>

Leaflets about the true history of Christingles are also available in Brockweir Moravian Church. If you are attending a Christingle Service, please consider passing the correct information on to organisers.

Sr Sue Groves
Brockweir

In Essentials, **Unity**;
In Non-Essentials, **Liberty**;
In all things, **Charity**:

Why the Moravians claim this formula as their own

Livingstone Thompson

Part **4**

This is the final part of an article about the Moravian motto

The simplicity and clarity of stating essentials, however, proved extremely vulnerable to the theological ferment especially in Germany around 1900. This theological ferment showed that the limits to diversity could be breached even within the Moravian Church. Of particular concern to the Brethren was the thought of Albrecht Ritschl, which sought to frame a new apologetic synthesis between the Christian faith and the new knowledge. Though the General Synod of 1909 reaffirmed the principles of 1879 Synod, the tensions at the Synod indicated that a new dispensation in Moravian theology was dawning. However, it was not until the Synod of 1957 that the new dispensation was officially ushered in. Rather than detailing the essentials in doctrine, as was customary, the Synod approved what was called the 'Ground of Unity', effectively shifting the emphasis from clarity in theological fundamentals to mission, as the vocation of the church. The Church was understood as an instrument of God's kingdom and the specificity of doctrines was further de-emphasised. This vocational emphasis in the understanding of the church took the place of the reference to specific doctrines. For example, the 'Ground of Unity' asserts that:

'The Unitas Fratrum is, therefore, aware of its being called to serve mankind. ... With the whole of Christendom we share faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ... We recognize ourselves to be a church of sinners. ... The Unitas Fratrum realizes that the mystery of Jesus Christ to which the Bible bears witness cannot be fully comprehended in any human statement. ... The Unitas Fratrum recognizes in the creeds of the Church the thankful acclaim of the Body of Christ.'

Despite the approval of the 'Ground of Unity', which for some may be very vague, the formula 'in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity', is still treated as a succinct description of what it is to be Moravian. As the history of the formula shows, for nearly two hundred years prior to 1957 distinguishing 'essentials' from 'non-essentials' was an important theological task for the Unity. The Bohemian Formula should then be treated as a classical description of Moravian understanding. Therefore any use that is made of it in theological discourse today should refer to its subsistence in the Moravian Church.

The Ecumenical Significant of the Formula

While the Moravian Unity was moving to substitute the idea of a hierarchy in doctrines, as expressed in the old Bohemian Formula, for a more general statement of ecclesiology in the Ground of the Unity, the idea of the formula was resurfacing as a leading concept in ecumenical relations. In the Second Vatican Council Pope John, Cardinal Bea, and others drew to the attention of the Roman Catholic Church the important

distinction between the unchanging deposit of the faith and the changing, changeable manner, mode, language etc., in which it is presented. Alluding to the idea in the formula, the Decree on Ecumenism calls attention to unity, liberty and charity with respect to doctrine: while preserving unity in essentials, all members of the church, according to the office entrusted to each, should preserve freedom in the variety of liturgical rites, and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth; and that in all things charity be exercised. This distinction between the essentials of the faith and the elaborations of the revealed truth, in which there is variety (in consequence of which there must be freedom), was further developed and applied to the relationship between Catholics and 'separated brethren.' The section of the Decree dealing with the practice of Ecumenism asserts that Catholic theologians engaged in ecumenical dialogue, while standing fast by the teaching of the Church and searching together with separated brethren into the divine mysteries should act with love for truth, with charity and with humility. When comparing doctrines, they should remember that in Catholic teaching there is an order or 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith. This idea of truths organised around the centre or foundation of the faith is reminiscent of the distinction between 'essentials', 'auxiliary' and 'accidentals', which was made by the early Bohemian Brethren. It is also reminiscent of the Reformation period in which churches summarised the truths of the faith in catechisms meant for the edification of the people of God.

The conclusion of the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church alludes to the need to go in the direction of the Bohemian formula. The Working Group argued that a 'hierarchy of truths' may also be a means of ensuring that the necessary expressions of the faith in various cultures do not result in any loss of its content or in a separation of the Christian truths from the foundation. In other words, the formula, which preserves the notion of a hierarchy of truths, may be a useful means for addressing different expressions of faith in different cultures. The notion of hierarchy of truths, which for the Moravians is preserved in the formula, 'in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity', gives the church an approach to deal with differences, not only those internal to the communion but also differences that may arise in the wider ecumenical and interfaith contexts.



Br Livingstone Thompson
Minister at Kilwarlin and University Road Belfast Congregations

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The Cennick Minibus tour at Ballinderry

© Chris Nealy



Gracehill Village Tour Guides at the talk on the Friday night at the Braid

Cennick 300 Weekend

Although the actual dates of the 'Cennick 300 Weekend' were from 2nd until 4th November, planning began well in advance. We are indebted to Elaine Hill, the Heritage Development Officer for Mid & East Antrim Museum and Heritage Service who helped with so much of the basic details, planning and publicity, and also to Mid & East Antrim Borough Council for helping to fund the weekend as part of the 2018 European Year of Culture.

I was involved in planning the Cennick Minibus tour and Sarah Groves and I spent hours pouring over old maps of the area: with help from the local history librarian in Ballymena. It goes without saying that because roads had changed so much over the past 300 years it was really no surprise when a plaintive message went out from Sarah: 'Anyone free on Monday to plan out the final coach route for the weekend?' You guessed - I volunteered!

We headed out at 10am and returned home at 5pm after what can only be described as an informative, fun-filled day. Just as Cennick must have done on his travels we met and were welcomed by so many people. To mention just a few: the two men at Gloonan who were able to show us Cennick's Well and remembered the original house on the site and then the man from Gracehill who bought us our lunch in Randalstown after we invited him to join us. We stopped for so many photos of people's houses and I sneaked down so many lanes that I'm surprised the police weren't called. Can you imagine the headlines in the local press 'Gracehill minister and colleague arrested for snooping!' It really doesn't bear thinking about. After a quick stop off at Ballinderry I was informed that we had very little time left. Two minutes away was the site of Portmore House where, encountering a man at the door of his bungalow, we asked if we could park the minibus near his house. Over an hour later, after afternoon coffee and biscuits with him and his wife, we finally headed for home - with a few more stops on the way!

The weekend itself was definitely a great

success. Friday night saw us in the Braid (Ballymena Town Hall) where, after refreshments, we had a really interesting talk by Gary Best for the launch of his book: 'John Cennick - The Forgotten Evangelist'. Gary Best is a well-known Methodist historian who has written a number of books including a few unusual detective stories. At present he is Warden of the New Room, the oldest Methodist building in the world, in Bristol. Gary is an excellent speaker, even if he does pronounce Cennick with a 'K' at the start and held his audience enthralled until the end when there was a rush to buy his book. Amongst those present it was good to see Cllr Ruth Wilson representing Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Lorraine Parsons, Archivist at Moravian Church House, Rev Dr Livingstone Thompson, representing the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church, Dr David Johnston OBE, local GP and chair of Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and Rev Dr Bob Cotter, who is doing PhD research on John Cennick's theology.

Saturday morning arrived cold and wet with the coach tour group meeting at Ballymena Town Hall. We had a short, interesting talk about where Cennick first preached and the reception that he received: not very friendly and so unlike the usual Ballymena welcome!

Here is a quick resumé of our trip: a visit to Crebilly where, in 1748, Cennick leased a house and a large barn for worship, then on to Gloonan about two miles from Gracehill, where he settled in 1749. Unfortunately nothing remains of Cennick's home there but the well bearing his name can still just be made out at the side of the road.

From here we made our way to O'Rawke's Fort, an ancient rath surrounded by countryside where you could imagine people sitting along the top ridge listening attentively to the words of the preacher. At least this time, knowing Sarah's past record of trespassing, entry had been legal!

Next stop was Lower Ballinderry Moravian Church where we had a short talk about

John Cennick in Ballinderry and Portmore. Although the rain had stopped it was lovely to be welcomed with hot drinks and biscuits here by the ladies of the church.

At this stage we abandoned our visit to Portmore House as access was not suitable for the minibus. All that remains of the stables where Cennick preached are a few briar covered bits of wall. Nothing is left of Portmore House except stories of opulence and hidden tunnels.

During the trip we also passed through Grange, Groggan and Glenavy. It took us a day in a comfortable coach to visit many of the places where Cennick preached. At one stage we met a man driving a horse and cart and we imagined the distances Cennick travelled on horseback, in a cart and especially on foot. It is a measure of the man that he never faltered.

Back in Gracehill we were treated to coffee and scones in the church and given a sneak preview of the amazing plan of God's Acre completed by Anderson Weir. This is a real work of love and is dedicated to his wife, Sr Sally, who died recently.

Saturday's events were not finished, however, and we were soon back in Ballymena Town Hall for an excellent talk, given by the Rev Dr Bob Cotter, on the role John Cennick played in the eighteenth-century evangelical revival.

end ended with Gracehill Church's Anniversary Service taken by Sarah and Gary Best and a lunch in the Church Hall.

In conclusion it must be said that a great time was had by all and we were brought a good bit closer to 'the Forgotten Evangelist' who was John Cennick.

Sr Jackie Neil
Gracehill



Jackie on the Cennick planning trip



Teltschik's family home © Sr Sarah Groves

Dr Horst Schinzel, Daniel Řičan, Lubomír Kuc and Daniel Dvorsky, conference organisers © Sr Sarah Groves

Museum of the Moravian Brethren © Sr Sarah Groves

From Suchdol into the World: Moravian History Conference in the Czech Republic

During 21-23 September 2018, the Eighth International Moravian Conference was held in Suchdol nad Odrou: a small market town in the east of Czechia. This conference has been held there every three years since 2001, and this year Sr Sarah Groves and I were honoured to receive invitations to attend and give papers. The main theme of the conference was 'How the Moravian Brethren Enriched Countries and Nations'.

The Moravian National History Association in Suchdol nad Odrou, supported by the local town and other historical associations, prepared an interesting program for the conference which was held in the Klub Kultury. There were 19 papers, many of which were about people who had emigrated from the area including Johann Teltschik, Georg Kunz, Josef Kuřera, Wenzel Weber (missionary in St Croix), Daniel Neisser (missionary in the Caribbean), Rosina Nitschmann, Marie Kateřina Jelínková and the Neisser clan.

Sarah and I gave presentations on the work of Johann Teltschik, who was originally from Suchdol, and went on to help with the establishment of the Moravian Church in England and Ireland. Other presentations included the centenary of the Czech State which was established in 1918, the Brethren's translations of Texts into Kalmyk and other languages, and the mission of the Moravian Brethren in Livonia. It also provided a great opportunity to learn more about the region and the origins of our Church.



Out in the 'Forest Church'

© Moravian National History Association

Suchdol nad Odrou is a small market town, about five miles from Fulnek, that belongs to the Moravian Silesian region of Czechia, which was historically a German speaking area. The German name for the town is Zauchtel or Zauchtenthal. It has a railway station on the route from Písek to Ostrava and is situated in a triangle of three towns - Nový Jičín, Odry, and Fulnek. In 1624 there was a royal decree to expel all the non-Catholic priests from the country. Despite this, unlike the neighbouring villages, the whole village of Suchdol managed to remain essentially evangelical until the issue of the Tolerance patent in 1781.

In 1722, Kristian (Christian) David of Ženkla, helped refugees from Moravia to escape to Saxony, and stayed on the estate of Count Zinzendorf where he felled the first tree for the new settlement at Herrnhut. David also visited Suchdol, where his sermons created a great spiritual awakening in the local people. Over the next sixty years, around 280 inhabitants emigrated from Suchdol to Herrnhut. More than 60 of these people went on to become mission workers in the Moravian Church. The conference revealed the work and lives of some of those people and included an exhibition of the Moravian Church's work.

Daniel Řičan, President of the Moravian National History Association,

has devoted his time and energy to documenting and displaying the story of the Moravian Brethren from Suchdol, and to share what they did to bring the Gospel to the world. The History Association not only organises the conference every three years but has also established and manages the Moravian Brethren's Museum (Muzeum Moravských bratří) and the Moravian Brethren's Park (Park Moravských bratří). This park is located on the site of David Nitschmann's house - the first bishop of the renewed Moravian Church.

At the park there are many plaques in honour of the Moravians who left Suchdol for religious freedom in Saxony and whilst we were there two new plaques were unveiled in honour of two Suchdoliens and two memorial trees from places where Moravians worked were planted: one from Dublin and another from Herrnhut. I had the pleasure of unveiling the plaque for Paul Munster and

Sarah planted the tree from Dublin. The History Association also organised the Via Exulantis a walking trail of about 215 miles from Suchdol to Herrnhut along the sites that the first emigrants to Herrnhut with David Nitschmann Syndikus followed.

On the first day of the conference we also

ventured out to the 'Forest Church' of Martin Schneider (about a mile away) where a simple service was held. The second day started with a wonderful performance from the Skřivánek Children's Choir, and in the afternoon there was a coach excursion to the Kravare region where we were taken through many areas of historical and political interest. One of the stops was at the house where Kristian David was born in Ženkla.

On the last day, there was a final presentation about the mission work of the Moravian Brethren from the area. Worship was then held in the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, which was followed by a guided tour of the church including a climb up the church tower. After lunch we were given a tour of Suchdol and finally discovered Johann Teltschik's house, now sadly in a state of disrepair.

The conference provided a wonderful opportunity to learn not only about the area but also of the many Moravians from that region who fled and later worked in the mission field. We were well looked after, staying in the local guest house and great efforts were made to ensure that the conference was translated for everyone. We would like to thank Daniel Řičan and Daniel Dvorský in particular, for all their help and hospitality and look forward to the next conference in 2021 when perhaps other British Moravians will be able to join us!

Sr Lorraine Parsons

Editorial Team and Provincial Archivist

Lay Preachers Training Weekend: Reports from two attendees

It was a motley crew of lay preachers and worship leaders that gathered together at Luther King House in Manchester on Friday 26th October for our biannual training weekend. Twenty of us were there this year for a programme mainly based on the Old Testament.

Sr Kathryn Woolford led us through some thoughts on preaching from the Old Testament in our first session on Friday evening while Br Peter Gubi introduced us to a study on Moravian worship on Saturday morning. However, and with great respect to both of these leaders, we all agreed that the high spot of the weekend were the two sessions on 'Temple Worship' led by Margaret Barker DD.

To be honest, I wasn't looking forward to this. Old Testament theology is not one of my strengths and it promised little but boredom. How wrong I was!

Margaret not only knows her subject incredibly well, she has that rare ability to share her enthusiasm with her listeners. We were as entranced as we were educated. We were so pleased with her contribution that we have asked that she be invited back in two years time.

The work and study are, of course, only part of the weekend. Luther King House provides quality accommodation, good food and, not least in my requirements, a well-stocked bar!

There in the evenings we discussed theology, funerals, the organisation of the Moravian Church, family, theatre and

more. The fellowship at these weekends is special.

The weekend ended with our closing service led by Sr Woolford which included the Cup of Covenant. As I set off to drive back to Birmingham, I was thinking how lucky I am to be part of this fellowship, sharing experiences of following their calls to preach the word of Christ. As always I returned home energised by their energy, revitalised by their vitality and strengthened by their faith and witness.

If you lead worship, make sure you come to the next gathering in 2020. I guarantee you will enjoy it.

Br Blair Kessler

Hall Green



Lay preachers and worship leaders at Luther King House

As a 'newbie' to the training weekend I must admit to having a bit of a flutter beforehand attending as I was unsure if:

- I would make the 'grade';
- People would be welcoming;
- The training would be beneficial.

On all counts I was to have no concerns.

The speakers arranged were interesting and informative; Br Peter Gubi - Moravian Worship and Margaret Barker - Temple Worship, gave greatly of their knowledge and experience. Br Peter reminded us of our Moravian roots and asked about their place in our current church. Margaret is a well renowned academic who still has the enthusiasm to wake up every

morning at 5am to continue her body of research.

There was plenty of time for group discussion and listening to new thoughts which on some levels were simply 'mind blowing'. These took time to process and made for some stimulating questions and conversations.

Sr Kathryn Woolford facilitated as well as leading us on the conference theme regarding 'Sermons using the Old Testament'. This led to much spirited debate both in and out of sessions as well as chances to use the excellent research facilities at Martin Luther King House and the opportunity to present new found information to all attendees.

This was 'homework' that I am sure all attendees did not find a chore.

The real joy of the weekend was to engage with other brothers and sisters from all walks of life, experiences, and ranges of age from a variety of provinces in fellowship - much laughter over food, wine and with good company. The weekend ending with all participants taking the cup of Covenant.

I came back refreshed in faith and ready to plan my next sermons with thoughts of my fellow worship leaders also feeding back into all their congregations with a new vigour and understanding.

Sr Penny Weir

Dukinfield

A Moravian Shipwreck

Part II



Neuwerk beacon in a storm, 1840

The ship carrying Moravian missionaries from London to Hamburg in 1817 has foundered off the coast of Germany...

A council was then held with the whole ship's company, and it was unanimously resolved, that we should remain on board during the following night, and use our utmost efforts to prevent the water gaining too fast upon us, by constantly keeping the pumps at work. This was done, and, with great exertion, we had at one time brought the water in the hold, from five to three feet in depth, though it afterwards gained upon us, as the ship continued to strike, and became more and more leaky. Every seam opening, the water penetrated from all parts. Only one dry spot remained in the cabin, into which we put the poor children. They slept well, apparently fatigued with fear and crying. We spent this dark and tremendous night in watchfulness, with prayer to Him, whom wind and waves obey, that He would speak peace to the troubled ocean, trusting that He would not suffer us to perish by the ship's going to pieces, but send us deliverance.

During the night, by the light of lanterns, our small boat was repaired, and rendered water-tight, and in the morning of the 21st, the captain and three men went in her on shore, to endeavour to provide some means for the preservation of our lives. On leaving the ship, he shook hands with us, and with much earnestness and compassion, assured us, that he would soon come and take us and the children off the wreck.

Meanwhile our friend Mr Brown, the mate, contrived to get us a dish of warm coffee, which proved a great relief to us and the children. While we were partaking of it in the cabin, the sailors called to us through the sky-light, that Blankanese¹ boats were seen approaching, the report of which filled our minds with joy and comfort. The first was soon alongside, but it did not seem as if her crew cared in the least for the lives of the ship's company. They rushed on board with dreadful shoutings and wild uproar, to the no small terror of us all, tore up the hatchways, and began to seize the

cargo, breaking open one chest after the other, to carry off its contents². Other boats now arrived. Mr Brown used his best endeavours to secure for us a passage with the first boat going on shore, and to get as much of our baggage as possible put into it, and the remainder into the second boat. The people were meanwhile eager to fill their boats with as much of the ship's cargo as they could carry. At length they permitted us to enter one of them.

We cannot express our sensations on leaving the ship. The weather was excessively cold, with snow and sleet. We were put into a small cabin, and, after some time, provided with firing³ and weak coffee, which proved very acceptable. The boat's crew behaved friendly towards us, and on the 22nd, having passed by Cuxhaven, put us and our goods into a fishing-boat, which brought us to Blankanese, where we landed between one and two o'clock, and were conducted to the Comptroller⁴.

This gentleman informed us, that our baggage must be considered as stranded property, and subject to the same laws as the ship's cargo, which amounted to positive seizure. It was therefore with some difficulty, that we were permitted to take the most needful articles of clothing, &c. with us. We appealed to Messrs. Van der Smissen⁵ at Altona⁶, as our friend, who would declare us to be only passengers on board the brig, and furnish the sureties demanded. Having been provided with a small Danish waggon, we proceeded to Altona, where we were most kindly and compassionately received by Brother Seiffart⁷, minister of the Brethren's congregation at that place⁸, and by his wife, who did every thing for our relief, and for the recovery of our dear children.

We had suffered so much from terror, fatigue, and cold, that every one of us was indisposed, and in the following days grew seriously ill, with coughs and colds in the head. But we had no time for rest. On the 23rd and 24th, we were obliged to return to Blankanese, accompanied by Brother Hamel⁹ as our advocate, and furnished by Messrs. Van der Smissen, with a petition in our behalf, directed to the Amtman (or

chief magistrate) of the Pinneberg¹⁰ district.

Its object was to obtain the free delivery of our baggage to us as passengers, unconnected with the cargo. The petition was rejected, the baggage was under sequestration, and the disposal of it to be submitted to a decision by law, on the Saturday following, when all persons concerned were to meet. We exceedingly regretted the heavy expense attending these circumstances, greater indeed to you, than our few things are worth to us, and would rather have forfeited all, than that it should have been incurred.

Meanwhile the magistrate seemed to have some pity for us, and promised to show us all the lenity in his power. The children were very ill about this time, nor were we much better. The Brethren and Sisters here treat us with great kindness, and do every thing to assist us.

At length, it was decided, that our baggage is to be delivered to us, on payment of a hundred dollars for salvage of that and our persons. As soon as we are in a situation to travel, we shall set out, but we rather dread the badness of the roads, and the unfavourable weather at this time of the year. The country is covered with snow.

To all our kind friends and Brethren in London, and elsewhere in England, we beg to present our best salutations. We shall always retain a most lively sense of their kindness and hospitality towards us. We remain your obliged and affectionate Brethren.

J. H. Hastings, Mary Hastings, A. Kunath.

N. B. By subsequent letters, we are informed, that, by the Lord's mercy, they all arrived safe at Herrnhut¹¹ and Kleinwelke¹², by way of Gnadau¹³. Brother Hastings and his wife will reside at Kleinwelke, (near Bautzen¹⁴), after thirty years faithful services in Labrador, and Brother Kunath will return to his station in that country.



Adrian Wilsdon

With thanks to Lorraine Parsons

1. A fishing village on the River Elbe.
2. The rights of the salvagers apparently overrode the rights of the legal owners of any cargo.
3. Possibly some kind of cooked food.
4. The controller of wrecks.
5. The Mennonite van der Smissen family had moved to Altona from Brabant in what is now Belgium in the 17th century to avoid persecution and subsequently became successful businessmen. There is to this day a van-der-Smissen Street in Altona.
6. A town close to Hamburg at this time under the Danish crown.

7. Johann Christian Seyffart was minister at Altona from 1814-1818 and then 1823-1834.
8. The Moravian congregation in Altona lasted from 1763 to 1885.
9. Probably a member of the Altona congregation.
10. A town near Altona under the Danish crown.
11. A town in Saxony, Germany. The centre of the Moravian Church.
12. A town with a Moravian congregation near Herrnhut.
13. A town with a Moravian congregation in Saxon-Anhalt, Germany.
14. A town with a Moravian congregation near Herrnhut.

Old and young together!

Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds' on Channel 4 at first seems the recipe for disaster mixing the very young with the very old but anyone watching it soon realises there are benefits for both the children and the older people. The changes in both groups were monitored and measured to show this, but to me the real benefit was the obvious delight of all those involved on being together and doing activities together.

In churches we have a ready-made multigenerational community but often we seek to keep them apart for comforts sake. However, this programme has got me thinking about how we could change this and work together to build multigenerational groups, where everyone benefits. There is already some work in this area, after all Messy Church requires children to be accompanied by adults and the activities are designed for

adults and children to do together, but I think more could be done.

St Monica Trust (where the programme was filmed) has produced a guide to help you that can be accessed free from www.stmonicastrust.org.uk This has many pointers for setting up a group, even though this is aimed at care homes.

Ideas that came to my mind while looking at this included:

- a multigenerational Godly Play group, perhaps meeting for a couple of hours a week for a term;
- inviting older adults into your toddler groups which could lead to setting up a group for toddlers and older adults;
- starting an after school club for young pupils where crafts can be passed from one generation to another knitting, baking, woodwork, car care, including tea together so there is an

opportunity to build relationships over food;

- a music or singing group;
- an exercise group, chairs for the older people and lots of running and bouncing for the children giving everyone the chance to increase fitness.

I am sure you could come up with many more. This shows God's love to all his people including those most vulnerable in our society. One of my great pleasures in church is watching a six year old skipping alongside a 94 year old's wheelchair as they both go for communion. It would be fantastic to see these friendships develop across our congregations and out into the community.

Sr Joy Raynor

Provincial Youth and Children's Officer

Training with Leaders and Potential Leaders

- Lutheran and Moravian Church, Albania

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is with great pleasure that we would like to inform you hereby about the seminar had with pastor Klas Lindberg in Tirana, organized in our church on 9th-11th November.

Sunday morning we celebrated Holy Communion in a service that was really blessed, to be followed Friday and



© Lutheran and Moravian Church in Albania



with practices to be used in our groups in the long run. The seminar was blessed; people felt engaged, motivated and encouraged to go back to their working areas and share what they

Saturday by the seminar with leaders and potential leaders from the six different areas where we work: Bathore, Elbasan, Burrel, Pogradec, Tirana and Lezha. Teachings were led by Klas Lindberg; the seminar was focused: 'Living together as God builds his church. A house built of living stones'; a walk through the first letter of Peter and also a shared word from Sune Andersson. The main purpose was to know and understand how the Word of God builds fellowship and how we can be equipped

have learned with their children, youth and adults. We shared meals together in the church and had the opportunity to have informal talks during the breaks.

We as staff and leaders would like to express hereby special thanks to Klas Lindberg and Sune Andersson for the time spent with us and for their big heart for the work in Albania.

In the love and peace of Christ,

Staff and leaders

Lutheran and Moravian Church in Albania

Congregation News

Baildon



© Sr Sara Clarke

Members at Baildon ringing their newly restored bell at 12-30pm on 11th November 2018 to mark the Armistice 11th November 1918. Libby Mitchell, Andrew Wrigglesworth, Paul Snowden, Vivienne Wrigglesworth.

Congregation News

Fairfield

On Sunday 14th October we welcomed Bishop Joachim Kreusel to conduct our morning Harvest Festival and Parade service and we look forward to welcoming him back again in the future. The tins/dried produce brought to the service was all passed on to the foodbank we support and the fresh food used to decorate church was sold after the service with the proceeds going to Moravian Leper work.

The following Friday, the 19th, we had a Jumble and Good As New Sale in the college which raised £585 for church funds and then an Autumnal Afternoon Tea on 10th November which saw a profit of £438.20 again for church funds.

We have been holding a weekly Fairfield Tots Time for a good while now on Thursday afternoons and this, I am pleased to report, is thriving and everyone attending (not just the tots) reports to have a very enjoyable time of fellowship. We offer sincere thanks to Srs Sarah and Denise for all their work in organising and running these sessions. Also for our younger members and friends Sr Ann Larkin does a sterling job of managing Messy Church. She has been running these for a good while now, but the numbers seem to be on the increase as word spreads of what a lot of fun this is. At the last Messy Church on Saturday 24th November twelve children attended the two hour session. Keep up the good work Ann; us lesser mortals quake at the thought of two hours of 'messy anything' with twelve children!

Still working hard to retain interest as the children get older Sr Anne and Br Mel Wood are still running a youth club held on 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month in term time which is well attended but again requires patience and stamina, so again a big thank you to them for all their hard work.

On the weekend of 1st and 2nd December we held our



© Sr Margery Sutcliffe



Christmas Tree Festival.

Let me tell you from a person with no artistic flair, the church looked awesome.

The work that goes into this event is truly humbling and again a massive thank you to all those who work so hard (in some cases for many months before the event). This year we hosted a beautiful concert by the United Christian Singers on the Saturday evening entitled 'Immanuel A Christmas Blessing', which had an audience of somewhere between 60 to 70. The concert was free, and donations were for Willow Wood Hospice.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe

Cliftonville, Belfast

Our small congregation meets faithfully and in good heart each Sunday. We were happy to welcome Br Scott Peddie's return in May after a year of sick leave and since then he has been responsible for the services twice and sometimes three times each month; the lay preachers kindly continued to fill in the other services. Due to unexpected changes in ministry, on 18th November we met to give him a farewell gift, to thank him for his services to Cliftonville and to wish him well in his new sphere of service assisting in the work at University Road and Kilwarlin and a Pioneer ministry in Dublin that he will share with Br Livingstone Thompson. We hope he will enjoy this new challenge.

Br Jared Stephens has been called to Cliftonville and Ballinderry on a three year contract and we welcomed him on 25th November along with his wife Elaine. He preached on several occasions and has been helping with pastoral visiting for a few months. Elaine is from Northern Ireland and Jared is from Michigan, USA. We wish them joy as they too begin a new ministry.



Br Peddie and Sr Sonya Anastassi

During the year, quite extensive repairs had to be carried out on the church, including the re-roofing of the tower. The maintaining of the grounds and other tasks is carried out on a voluntary basis.

Once again 116 Christmas Shoe Boxes have been packed by the teachers and some young people, also bags of blankets and jumpers etc. for needy children in orphanages in Europe.

We are saddened that Fortwilliam Presbyterian, yet another North Belfast Church, closed very recently and the area has also lost two nearby Roman Catholic Churches.

Sr Edna Cooper

Bath Coronation Avenue

It has been a very sad but also a happy week for Coronation Avenue members. Last Sunday we were really pleased to welcome Br Alan Holdsworth into our little congregation. It was good to officially welcome him as he had requested joining us a few months ago and we are always happy to see him with us.

On Thursday morning we were very saddened to hear of the death of our Br John Lock who had been in hospital for a week. Most of our congregation had visited him in Bristol on the Monday and we had said our goodbyes at that time. Br Paul Holdsworth said a prayer at John's bedside. John had been fighting cancer and had been having dialysis for the last few years and we know he is at peace now. We will all miss him greatly.

Sr Sandy Smith



© Daniel Lock

Yorkshire District Autumn Conference

Sr Chris Porter reports on the Yorkshire District autumn conference, held at Gomersal on 29th September.

Members of Yorkshire Moravian congregations are being urged to help people facing the ordeal of appearing at court.

Volunteers of all faiths are asked to work at magistrates' courts in Bradford and Keighley, giving confidential support to a wide variety of people who are often confused and worried at appearing before magistrates.

Volunteers are asked to be good listeners, non-judgemental, patient, reliable and caring. Br David Howarth, the minister for Baildon and Horton, told the conference he had become involved with the scheme and had found it highly rewarding and worthwhile.

Br Howarth had earlier suggested a new approach for strengthening and renewing the Moravian Church, with possibly a church café or library in a central location. He said a meeting was held at Lower Wyke, with 18 members attending. Food and fellowship featured high on the agenda. and following on from the successful first evening a further meeting is planned for 27th November at Gomersal.

Ministers reported on their work in the various congregations. Sr Jane Dixon said Lower Wyke had 39 members, no change from last year, with membership at Wellhouse standing at 13, and average attendance of 17. At both Lower Wyke and Wellhouse, community defibrillators are being sought and fundraising for them is ongoing.

Br Howarth said membership at Baildon stood at 30, and membership at Horton had remained the same as last year. He said no successor from within the Baildon congregation had come forward to act as treasurer and after many 'financial

headaches' it was decided to approach someone from outside the congregation. He said that while it was far from ideal it had worked well so far.

For Fulneck, Br Michael Newman reported on the congregation's 82 members. He said Gomersal had 34 members and reported that the Manse - empty for several months for restoration - now had new tenants. He told the meeting: 'For a smaller congregation, there is a lot going on and a lot to feel positive about.'

The conference was told there are vacant roles on the Provincial Committee's Finance and Mission and Society and that a District Youth Co-Ordinator will be appointed soon.

The board also said it was finding a shortage of reliable and affordable handymen to carry out work in the settlements. Those that had found good workers were asked to share their contacts.

Most members had heard that Br Simon Dunn would be leaving the area next summer, following a career move to Middlesex. The District will be looking for a successor to fill the role of musical director for the Moravian Singers, which Simon has carried out magnificently.

Conference finished with a short discussion on the Church's definition of child poverty and how it can be tackled. Br Newman said government statistics showed 20% of children within the Pudsey area were living in poverty. The chairman, Br Kenneth Evans, referred to a book by John Kirby entitled 'Nevertheless', which gave practical help to families on budgeting.

Sr Chris Porter

From Church House

Provincial Diary for January

2 Church House reopens
12 PYCC, Royton
Mission and Society, Lower Wyke
17-18 PEC, Church House

Dates to remember!

1	New Year's Day
6	Epiphany
7	Christmas Day - Orthodox
14	New Year - Orthodox
18-25	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (https://ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)
25	Burns Night
27	Holocaust Memorial Day (http://hmd.org.uk/)
	Homelessness Sunday (www.housingjustice.org.uk/Event/homeless-sunday-2019)
	World Leprosy Day (www.leprosymission.org.uk)

Roberta Hoey

From the Sanctuary

Last night, I couldn't sleep. 'Things' were playing on my mind, as 'things' can do at 3am. I found myself feeling low, and generally angry with God. All I was hearing on the radio (which I was listening to as I couldn't sleep), in the small hours of the morning, was yet another bombing and yet more threats from terrorism. 'How many more peace candles, and prayers for peace, do we have to say before there is peace?!' I was saying to God in my angry prayers.

Just as I had got that off my chest (for prayer, I find, often changes my perspective on things), God answered! The depressing news on the radio was followed by an encouraging article on how many people, who are in prison because of drug addiction, have used the experience of prison to re-educate themselves, and have made a success of their lives once they are on day release from prison. Examples were given of a lady who learned floristry in prison. On release, she had set up her own business using the skills and advice of The Prince's Trust. Now, a few years later, she had three outlets to her business and was employing others. She had gone from being unemployable because of her prison record, to being an employer. I also know of a friend who, once imprisoned, learned to read and write braille, and spent his time in prison translating books for the blind. Now, out of prison, he has set up his own business and is continuing the work that he learned in prison, giving him a new direction in life, in which he feels purposeful again.

Out of the darkness has shone forth light! This is the message of Christmas, but not the message only for Christmas. It is one

that we need reminding of, day by day, as we begin a new year - that however bleak things may look from time to time, or whatever twists and turns our lives may take, God is in it with us. There is always light in the darkness if we can but see it; and if we can keep enough of that light (that awareness of God and of goodness) in our vision of life, we can maintain a sense of hope and optimism in a seemingly bleak world. Whether there is more darkness than light, or more light than darkness, depends largely on the attitude we bring to life; and our faith can help us see more of the light if we choose to remember it, and to live with an awareness of God constantly in our lives.

With more light than darkness in our vision - more of God than doom in what we see, and how we regard what is happening to us and our world - let us embrace the opportunities of a new year with hope and gratitude. Let there be light!

Br Peter Gubi,
Dukinfield



British Mission Board News

Student Calls

The British Mission Board are delighted to announce that three of our students in India have completed their theological training and student placements and have now received their first Calls.

Br Jacob Gangmei has been called to serve in Assam, covering Binnakandi, Haflong and Latingkhal. Br Bir Bahadur Rana has been called to serve Rajpur Moravian Congregation. Br Levi Ruangmei has been called to serve in the Delhi Fellowship, continuing to develop ministry in the city.



Br Nathaniel Gengmei and Br Dimchui Rongmei are in their final year of studies. Please continue to pray for our students and their work in South Asia.

Delhi Fellowship - New Home

The Delhi Fellowship continues to thrive, and since its foundation has met in people's homes. Two members of the fellowship have recently opened a restaurant and there is enough space to accommodate at least 25-30 people and it will open for 2-3 hours on Sunday to allow the fellowship to meet. The first service took place there on 9th December 2018.

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