



Consecration of Sr Jane Dixon



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The weather in Yorkshire on Saturday 16th March at Lower Wyke couldn't have been more dreary, with driving rain and wind, but nothing would deter the warm welcome given by members of the Wellhouse and Lower Wyke Congregations, as serving and retired ministers and congregation members from around the Province gathered together for the Consecration as Presbyter of Sr Jane Dixon. Every district of the Province was represented, with three Bishops in attendance. The church was packed and there was a real sense of joy and celebration as the service began. Sr Sarah Groves, our newly consecrated Bishop, conducted the consecration with the laying on of hands ably assisted by Br Joachim Kreusel and Br John McOwat. Br McOwat also preached on the text for the day: 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect' Matthew 5:48, having us all in stitches as he reminded us and himself of all our imperfections.

The Yorkshire District sang an excellent medley of hymns enthusiastically led by our Choir Master, Br Simon Dunn, who will be leaving Yorkshire in the summer for pastures new in the London Area. He will be very sadly missed by us all.

Consecration as a Presbyter is, as it should be, an important step in a Minister's life in service. Following a proposal at Synod recommending that a brother or sister goes forward for Consecration is in itself a confirmation of one's ministry, but just as importantly, it is a time for the minister themselves to examine the path they have taken and to affirm the promises made at Ordination to 'spend and be spent in the service of Christ' and 'to work loyally with his/her brothers and sisters according to the principals of the Moravian Church.'

Sr Jane, currently serving the Lower Wyke and Wellhouse congregations and having previously served the Royton and Salem Congregations in Lancashire, has shown

herself to be a very capable and dedicated minister and it has been a privilege to support her as her supervisor these past years. It was wonderful to see her husband Mark sitting alongside her and supporting her as she was consecrated.

As Moravians, there is nothing better than gathering together in a packed church, raising the roof with hymns of praise and thanksgiving, renewing acquaintances and coming together as one in Christ.

Well done and thank you, to the sisters and brothers of the Wellhouse and Lower Wyke congregations for an absolutely wonderful spread of food and drinks after the service, where the shared fellowship and love in the Sunday School was palpable. It was a 'right royal do', and now all our thoughts and prayers are with Sr Jane as she continues in her ministry, and may she serve the Lord faithfully in the years ahead.

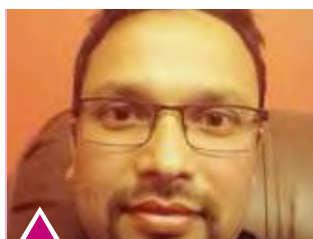
Br Robert Hopcroft



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Shopping Without Plastics

My Lent discipline this year was to shop without buying unnecessary plastics. This was in response to the proposal passed at our last Synod that our congregations reduce the use of single use plastics in all areas of church life. It was so hard and drove me to distraction. I failed in almost every way and trips to the supermarket became even more fraught than usual. Of course, supermarkets operate in a very competitive market and this means that single use plastics in packaging has increased dramatically over recent years as they seek to outperform their rivals. The produce is in clear plastic cartons and then covered in clear plastic wrappers. Everything in the stores is for convenience, easy to handle packs of fruit, veg, biscuits etc so they can be easily swiped through the self service tills or hand held scanners. The more people they can get to use these tills then the fewer people they need to employ on check out tills and the fewer people employed means lower costs, but that is another matter.

What I discovered on my personal journey into plastic free shopping is that it can't be on impulse - there has to be more planning beforehand; temptation has to be resisted, home made food must take precedence over ready meals; and over packaged treats avoided in preference to those sold with less packaging. In the supermarket I have bought more from the fresh fish, meat and deli counters where you can get served in plastic bags and they will serve you food in your own tubs if you remember to take them in.

But these counters are under threat as one large supermarket is planning to close them. I have also bought more from our local butcher but the great little greengrocer near us where you could buy veg in brown paper bags sadly closed three years ago through lack of support.

In addition, you can ask the shops to keep the excess packaging around other goods. I have had some success with this, but it takes a bit of brass neck and time to unwrap the produce and to then ask the shop assistants to put the packaging into the company's recycling system. The key to this is to be very polite to the staff but it is very effective as the company then has to pay to dispose of what is after all their own rubbish.

Why does this matter? Because if we say we believe that 'The earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,' Psalm 24 then surely we have to show it by our actions.

So, what can and should we do that is practical, to begin to change the way we shop and reduce plastics in the food chain and impact on the supermarkets that produce so much of the single use plastics?

Please let us know what you are doing, what reactions you have had and good ideas you can pass on for individuals, families and Churches.



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

SUMMER CAMP 2019



When: **3-10th August 2019**

Where: **Dovedale House, Ilam**

For: **Young people aged 10-17 with links to the Moravian Church**

Cost: **£340**

More information and booking forms can be obtained from your minister or Joy Raynor at: youth@moravian.org.uk

Information about the venue can be found at www.dovedalehouse.org

Booking before 31st May is recommended as we need to have a minimum number for camp to happen.

Can you help Summer Camp?

We want to share your expertise with the young people at camp so if you have a skill you would be able to share and teach, whether it is origami, hockey, dance, music or building Lego models, please get in touch with me if you are willing to come along to camp. Meals provided and we can give you a bed for the night if you need it. Email youth@moravian.org.uk or phone Joy on 01753 553549.

We are also looking for your financial support for camp. The fees only cover the basics and in order to make camp the best ever we need additional funds to pay for outing, materials and equipment. Please donate either by cheque payable to Moravian Union Inc or by BACS payment to CAF BANK Ltd, The Moravian Union, Account 00023436, Sort code 40 52 40, and labelled 'SC Donation'. It is helpful if you let Joy know you have made a donation. Examples of the expenses you could contribute to are; an activity, £18 for an hour and a half per person, a day ticket to the theme park £22, coach fees for the week £800, pack of sparklers £12.95, bag of marshmallows £1. Many thanks.

Joy Raynor

Moving towards new horizons
in children's ministry

25. – 29. March 2019 BERLIN



This conference attended by delegates from across Europe, Finland to Spain, UK to Ukraine, is three days of intense learning and four days of being together.

The accommodation was in a youth hostel run by an Evangelical Christian organisation and the conference was held in a separate building nearby. The whole complex of buildings was quite interesting, and a large amount of social action was carried out from there, including mobile dentists for the homeless, a night shelter, and accommodation for those coming out of prison as well as those with drug or alcohol dependencies under control. The income from the youth hostel and conference centres helps to fund this.

Now you may be thinking 'youth hostel, that's a bit rough for a conference' well this wasn't like the British hostels of the 70s and 80s. I opted, and paid more for, a room on my own. The room had twin beds and a bunk, so at full capacity would sleep four, a shower room and separate toilet. There were four lockers and hanging space, and lots of sockets, if only I could find something similar at a reasonable price for summer camp the campers would be very happy. Everywhere was clean and tidy and spacious.

Anyway, on to the conference. Worship each morning was led by a different region and it was quite interesting to see how different regions put a different spin on the worship all reflecting the theme of the day. The UK worship was on the day the theme was 'Be Adventurous' and a small group put together the worship which includes an activity for bible study, a dance, prayer and 'My Lighthouse' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFBZJGSgyVQ>) complete with actions. 88 European adults doing actions is quite something and they seemed to really get

into it. In fact, we had it twice more before we went home.

Following worship each morning we had something billed as 'Bible study/creative activity'. Although these were reasonably good there wasn't enough engagement for me, too much watching, not enough doing, but at least one of them really got me thinking more about a familiar story.

A lecture and discussion came after a coffee break and these were very intense. Thinking out of the box about theological matters and children. The experts all used the theme of the day to stretch and engage us in some serious thinking. Titles like 'PLEASE DO NOT FEED! How to educate children by learning from children', 'Be adventurous with the bible' and 'If you do not become like the children' give you some idea of the breadth of the lectures. Lots to think about. If anyone wants the papers I have electronic copies. At some point I'll read them slowly and hopefully digest some of the content a little more.

There were varying activities in the afternoon and early evenings including three workshop slots. I went to one about talking about death with children. Unfortunately the workshop leader spoke in German but with the aid of an English handout and her slides I got the gist of what the project was about, very interesting setting time each week for children in school to talk about death, and very interesting that it made the parents uncomfortable when the children presented their work to them. I also attended a workshop on conflict, presented by the only UK representative from Northern Ireland who started his work life at Corymeela. An excellent workshop on adapting sessions to be friendlier to children with additional needs was also very good and had some useful hints and tips.

On the Wednesday we were split into five

groups to visit parishes in Berlin. The group I went with visited the Tegel area near the airport. We walked past the prison where Bonhoeffer was incarcerated on the way to the church. The pastor welcomed us, told us something about how the church came to be where it was and then took us on a tour of the parish. It was interesting to see that this church set near lovely family homes was also the church for the nearby large social housing area divided by a main road. The social problems in the area seem to be extensive and the building of an accommodation block for refugees had caused considerable friction. The church had been able to work to increase tolerance in the community, but it is an ongoing issue. The residents of the social housing don't feel the church is for them, but for the middle-class families living by it, a similar problem to many British churches. After this tour and pizza for tea we headed back to the centre of Berlin and our accommodation. One of the group lives and studies in Berlin and offered to do a walking tour which a few of us took up, an excellent way to end the day, finishing up in a wine bar.

We had another tour, by coach, on the Thursday evening which was very funny. The tour guide hardly stopped talking for two hours giving us lots of facts and figures about Berlin, including the nicknames for various buildings, and she is an Angela Merkel fan calling her our Angie!

This is only a brief reflection on the conference, but I hope gives you some sense of it. Talking to people from outside the UK helped me to realise that the problems we have affect the church throughout western Europe. I think it will take me the three years to the next conference to digest the lectures.

Sr Joy Raynor

Provincial Youth and Children's Officer

Housing Poverty

“There is a complex two-way relationship between housing and poverty - the housing system can help to prevent poverty but can also create it.” (JRF, *Housing and Poverty*, June 2015)

For more than a century the close relationship between poverty and housing in the UK has been recognised. Joseph Rowntree, perhaps best known as the owner of the family chocolate business, was one of a series of eminent 19th Century philanthropists who invested much of their wealth in providing decent homes at low cost to help alleviate poverty and promote health and well-being amongst their workers. After the First World War the government embarked on the 'Homes Fit for Heroes' programme and began building homes for men returning to a post war Britain which could offer few the prospect of economic security. The provision of public housing became a key component of the Welfare State in Britain and an important safety net to help protect people from the impact of poverty if, as a consequence of sickness, low pay, unemployment or old age they were unable to afford a decent home.

As part of his legacy, Joseph Rowntree established a series of trusts concerned with improving understanding of poverty in the UK and developing solutions to tackle its underlying causes. Recent reports from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) provide growing evidence that far from protecting people, the housing system is now a contributory factor to rising poverty levels in Britain.

Key observations on the last decade:

- Poverty levels in the UK are rising with an estimated 1 in 5 of the population experiencing poverty in any year.
- An increasing number of people whose poverty is linked to the cost of their housing.
- The rising cost of housing and less help for low income renters is leaving more people struggling to meet their housing costs.
- When the costs of their housing are also taken into account this pushes an extra 3 million people into poverty.
- Home ownership is in decline, public housing is in decline and more people are renting their homes from private landlords.

- Poverty linked to housing costs is greatest for those who rent privately.
- The poorest people live in privately rented homes; this number has almost doubled.

People living in poverty have a higher risk of living in poor housing than others

Whilst not inevitable, it is more likely that poorer people will live in unsafe or inadequate housing. Regional variations exist both within and between different parts of the UK. Notably, the relationship between poverty and housing deprivation is most apparent in London, rural Wales and Northern Ireland.

Paying for housing whether rent or mortgage, is the single biggest cost for many households in Britain. It is generally accepted that no more than a third of household income should be spent on housing, however almost half of those on low income spend more than a third of all their income on housing.

In the most extreme cases poverty can leave people without a home at all. The powerful 1960s TV drama 'Cathy Come Home', featured a young family where the father lost his job and was unable to pay the rent. Evicted from their home, they ended up living in a caravan and eventually, as a consequence of their appalling housing conditions, their children were taken into care.

Housing costs can create poverty but housing is also part of the solution

The film helped to change the way people thought about poverty and homelessness in the UK. It triggered a series of events which culminated in new laws to ensure people would not be left homeless through poverty which was no fault of their own. To help low income families, government also provided financial help to those on lower incomes to meet the cost of rented housing.

Access to good quality affordable housing not only protects people against the worst excesses of poverty, it also provides a stable platform for educational achievement, enables access to public

services such as health care and improves work opportunities which increase income and ultimately helps to lift families and individuals out of poverty.

But is the safety net unravelling?

The vital role of public housing has been undermined as for a considerable time less public housing has been built than is needed. Reduced levels of government funding have also driven higher rents which means in many parts of UK the poorest people can no longer afford to live in 'public' housing.

The implementation of the welfare reform agenda has brought major changes to benefits including how people are provided with help to meet their housing costs. This has led to rent shortfalls and tenants struggling to pay their rent from an already very low income.

In these homes the impact of poverty is being keenly felt with people having to make hard choices. Coping strategies include cutting back on food, heat and light, selling belongings, borrowing money including from high interest lenders and increasing use of food banks. Inability to pay the rent means rising levels of evictions and homelessness and an increasing lack of willingness amongst landlords both in the public and private sector to provide homes for those who are poor.

Surely it is time to reflect on the legacy of Joseph Rowntree and the lessons of 'Cathy Come Home'; time to remind ourselves of the critical role which housing can play in preventing and alleviating poverty; and in one of the richest countries in the world, time to ensure that everyone, including the poorest in our society, has a decent home to live in?

Sr Janet Wray
Director of Housing
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The Covenant of Creation

Where there is no vision, the people unravel,
But blessed is one who keeps the Law,

Proverbs 29.18, my literal translation.

The whole Creation was bound together in one great system. Earth and heaven, the natural world and human society were one, bound in a network of bonds. Sometimes these bonds were called 'The Eternal Covenant' or 'The Everlasting Covenant', where 'Eternal' means the timeless but constant presence of God. 'The Eternal Covenant' joins all things to God. Sometimes the bonds were called 'The Covenant of Peace', where 'Peace' means wholeness, integrity, everything as God intended it to be. This is the usual translation of the Hebrew word shalom. God remembered 'the Everlasting Covenant with every living creature' when he spoke to Noah and gave him the sign of the rainbow, Genesis 9.14-16. When Isaiah reminded his people of this covenant, he called it 'the Covenant of Peace' Isaiah 54.9-10.

Isaiah showed the nature of this covenant. One style of Hebrew poetry composes lines in pairs: the second line repeats the first in different words. Isaiah wrote:

My steadfast love shall not depart from you,

My covenant of peace shall not be removed, Isaiah 54.10.

This shows that the covenant of peace was based on steadfast love, chesed. In the time of Jesus, people were calling it the covenant of steadfast love. The community described in the Dead Sea Scrolls said they had entered this covenant of steadfast love, and Jesus spoke of this covenant at the Last Supper. After the meal, he taught his disciples 'By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another' John 13.25. When St Paul wrote about 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace', he was saying the same, Ephesians 4.3. This bond was the covenant of peace that bound together not just the Christians, but also the whole creation.

We tend to emphasise the Moses covenant and the ten commandments, but this was a part of the greater Covenant of Peace that was known long before Moses. Covenant love was the foundation of the whole system. It led to right judgment, which the Bible calls mishpat, and this led to right action, which the Bible calls zedakah. The result was shalom which was true justice, peace and integrity - creation and human society as the Creator intended. Restoring and upholding the Covenant of Peace was a matter of healing, not of judging - doing what was necessary to put things right.

The prophets were taken in their visions to stand in the presence of the Lord. Isaiah saw the Lord on his throne, Isaiah 6.1-12. He heard the seraphim proclaiming the great holiness of the Lord and that the whole world was full of his glory. He recognised that he and his people had unclean lips, which means they had been following false teachings. They had eyes that did not 'see', ears that did not 'hear' and minds that did not 'understand'.

There was no way they could repent and be healed, because they were grounded in false teachings. The Lord warned Isaiah that this would continue until the land was desolate. The rest of his book has many hopes for the renewal of the creation, 'when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea', Isaiah 11.9. He looked for the time when the Spirit returned and the covenant was restored, when eyes would be opened and ears would hear, Isaiah 32.3; Isaiah 35.6. St Paul said that those who were led by the Spirit were the sons of God, and the creation was waiting for them to release it from the bonds of futility and decay, Romans 8.14-23.

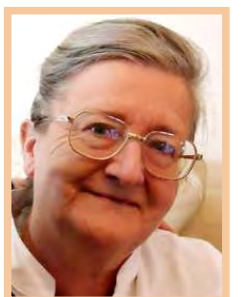
When the prophets in their visions stood by the throne of the Lord, they were able to look out from eternity and see the whole pattern of the world and its history. They saw the unity of the creation and its beauty, and they saw the pride and human sin that brought destruction. We have experienced something of this when pictures of the earth were taken from space in 1968, and we saw for the first time the strange beauty of our home. These pictures were an impetus for the environmental movement that has now made us aware of the dire state to which we have brought the creation.

There is teaching, very subtle and clever teaching, that has made us unable to see and hear what is really happening. The vision of the whole has been replaced by other visions: those of politics and power, the market and its servants, the media. Short term commercial profit and political advantage are but two of the evil influences breaking the Eternal Covenant, and the web of creation is unraveling. Can we imagine a world-view and a way of living that has love as its basis and 'all things very good' as its goal? We have been given the blueprint in the Bible, and we must return to the biblical vision for the creation.

*For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight,
Lord of all, to you we raise
This our grateful hymn of praise.*

[Hymn 467]

Dr Margaret Barker
Methodist Preacher and Theologian



Finding Zula's Hollow

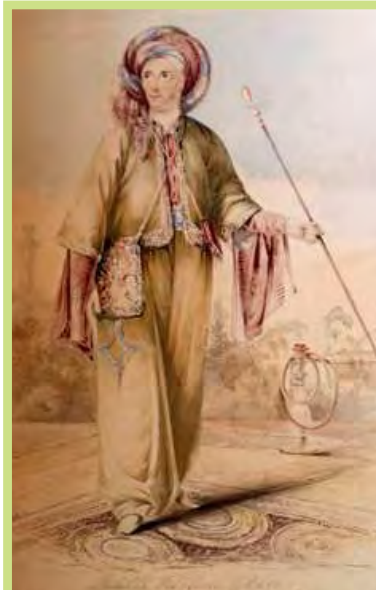
Uncovering the intriguing history of the Thermopylae Garden at Kilwarlin Moravian Church



Kilwarlin Moravian Church, Co. Down and the earthworks of the unusual Thermopylae Garden.

The 'Finding Zula's Hollow' Project at Kilwarlin Moravian Church, Co. Down, is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. This phase 1 project commenced in July 2018 and is working to establish new information in relation to Kilwarlin's historic garden, known as 'Zula's Hollow', recognised by garden historians as one of the most unusual gardens within the British Isles. The project is spear headed by Rev Livingstone Thompson of Kilwarlin and the 'Finding Zula's Hollow' Project Committee (chaired by Mark Kernohan of University Road Moravian Church in Belfast) and is managed by Project Manager Peter Dornan, with historical research facilitated by Research Co-ordinator Rachael Garrett. This project aims to lay the foundations for the restoration of Zula's Hollow and the future development of the site as a local heritage attraction.

As research co-ordinator for the 'Finding Zula's Hollow' project I have spent the last nine months delving deep into the story of one of the most interesting and intriguing figures from the history of the Irish Moravian Church. Rev Basil Patras Zula (1796-1844), a native of Greece and the famed minister of Kilwarlin Moravian Church, was the builder of Kilwarlin's unique and wonderfully bizarre Thermopylae Garden. The extraordinary earthworks of the Kilwarlin Garden (or 'Zula's Hollow' as it is locally known) have attracted interest for decades from historians, academics and from the local community. This unusual series of mounds, ridges and gorges was constructed by Rev Zula to re-create one of the most famous battles of ancient Greece - the battle of Thermopylae 480BCE. This battle saw 300 Spartans, led by King Leonidas I, and other Greeks take on the gargantuan Persian army of Xerxes I. The brave Greeks succeeded in holding back the Persian hordes at the narrow Pass of Thermopylae before betrayal forced them to make the ultimate sacrifice for Greek liberty. The 'Finding Zula's Hollow' project sought to learn more about this unique garden and its intriguing builder. On commencing my role, I knew nothing about the mysterious figure of Zula and less about the history of Kilwarlin Moravian Church but quickly I was gripped by the fascinating history of this unassuming church and its mysterious Greek minister.



Portrait of Rev. B. P. Zula in Greek dress, by Edward Hayes RHA, c.1833. Original portrait located at Kilwarlin Moravian Church.

I began by reading the remaining diaries of Rev Zula which recorded with absolute clarity his sincere passion and dedication to the rejuvenation of Kilwarlin and the dynamic energy which he applied to his ministry.

'What am I my God ... that thou should honour me to help to build up the "old waste places". From a far country have I journeyed and found rest here & at thy altar do I anew dedicate body, soul and spirit to be devoted to thy glorious service.' Kilwarlin Congregation Diary, 12th September 1834, Kilwarlin Moravian Church.

Almost immediately Zula did indeed 'build up the old waste spaces', rebuilding the dilapidated old church and manse. Such improvements, and Rev Zula's pastoral work, dedication and charisma, would prove to have an almost miraculous effect on the Kilwarlin Moravian congregation. In the early 1830s only six elderly church members remained but by the time of Zula's death in 1844, the Kilwarlin congregation had gone from near extinction to a thriving flock of over 200 individuals.

However, I wondered, how did a Greek even end up in Ireland in this period? In-depth research within Irish and Greek sources was required to shed light on Zula's early life in Greece, to unearth new information about this extraordinary figure. A principal mystery was where exactly Rev Zula had been born. Online genealogical records revealed that Zula's surname was likely to have been 'Zoulas', common in the Epirus region of north west Greece. Further research, by Greek historians Katerina Kolotourou, Giannis Michalakakos and by a Greek research trip, revealed that the Zoulas family were one of seventeen prominent clans from the town of Parga in Epirus. This town, like the Ionian Islands, had remained outside of Turkish control and in the early 19th century the Zoulas family and the rest of the town's citizens were desperately trying to maintain their independence from the rule of the Turkish vizier Ali Pasha. Nineteenth century biographies of Zula mention Parga and claim that Ali Pasha once put a price on Zula's head. It seems that, from an early age, Zula and his family were involved in a struggle for liberty from Turkish control; a struggle Zula was to continue in later life, as an officer in the Greek Revolution (1821-1828). However, Zula eventually sickened of war and left Greece to travel to Great Britain alongside the English nobleman Sir William Eden, and the pair eventually arrived in Dublin c.1828. It was here that Zula met Ann Linfoot, a Moravian schoolmistress (and his future wife), who introduced him to the tenets of the United Brethren and inspired him to



Mount Callidromos - one of the mysterious earthworks of the Thermopylae Garden.

devote his life to the service of the Moravian Church.

With this background established, my attention then turned to Zula's Hollow and the Thermopylae Garden - investigating when and how the garden was built and, most importantly, why?

Attempts were made to locate the ministerial diaries of Rev Zula for the period 1835 to 1844, as this primary source evidence would have been invaluable in shedding light on such key questions. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts and numerous inquiries, these diaries could not be found. Nevertheless, detailed analysis of available sources, from Moravian Church archives, the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland and various other collections, did provide some answers. Evidence was discovered which suggested that Kilwarlin's garden was built sometime between April 1839 and August 1840, while local stories hold that it was constructed to provide employment for the local community at a time of agricultural distress and hardship - the fact that Zula's Hollow appears to have been built with local labour may support this view. Meanwhile, further research also revealed other fascinating potential motivations for the garden's construction.

Zula's experience of fighting for Greek independence, and memories of his homeland, appear to have influenced his construction of Zula's Hollow in several important ways. Research has suggested that Zula may have recreated Thermopylae at Kilwarlin, arguably the most famous story of the fight for Greek liberty versus a foreign power, due to its clear parallels with the Greek Revolution, and the fight for Greek freedom from Turkish control. Meanwhile, one of the most exciting discoveries of the project suggests that Zula may also have directly recreated a piece of home within Zula's Hollow. Evidence revealed that part

of the garden was also referred to as 'Karaouli' and new information discovered regarding Zula's region of birth worked to shed light on this mystery. It was discovered that a mountain located only 50km from Parga, named Mávro Óros (Black Mountain), was also referred to as Karaouli (the guard). This mountain's proximity to Zula's hometown must be more than mere coincidence and suggests that Zula recreated this mountain within his garden to bring a piece of his childhood home to life.

Overall, everything that I have learnt has only reinforced my view that Zula was an exceptional man, who was determined, dedicated, imaginative, caring and someone who was greatly loved and well-remembered within the local community. And, while many questions have largely been answered, something tells me that this unique and intriguing figure, and his unique and bizarre garden, will continue to yield more secrets and mysteries in the years and decades to come.

NB: The Finding Zula's Hollow Project would like to extend sincere thanks to Roberta Thompson of Gracehill, Henry Wilson of Ballinderry, John Costley of University Road, Lorraine Parsons, Edna Cooper, Bishop Sarah Groves and the congregation of Kilwarlin Moravian Church, for all their help and support in assisting with the historical research conducted as part of this project.

Rachael Garrett
Research Co-ordinator



Finding Zula's Hollow Research Co-ordinator Rachael Garrett (left) with Gracehill Archivist Roberta Thompson (right).

Asher Sampson



Hello, I am the minister at Leominster Moravian Church and Hall Green United Community Church.

Hall Green is a small village within the Birmingham area. It is culturally very diverse (49% Asian descent) and situated on and around the busy Stratford Road. The congregation is also very diverse, made up of Moravian, Methodist and URC members. Many of the Moravian members joined the church when they arrived from Jamaica and the Caribbean islands in the 1960s. People feel at home and welcomed into our huge family.

This is particularly so of two brothers, Asher and Aamir Samson. They began to attend the church when they arrived from Pakistan seeking asylum 12 years ago. They had been brought up in a Christian family, their father was a local Pastor, but with increasing political and religious tension in Pakistan, and following their father's death, they chose to leave their home and seek a safer life in the UK.

When they first arrived, they were legally able to work and study, the brothers were, and still are, keen to offer themselves as substantive members of society. Asher initially studied nursing but then moved on to study theology and spent time volunteering with local homeless charities. But then the law changed, asylum seekers and refugees were no longer able to offer themselves for work, they had to rely on family to support them. This is not easy for anyone to have to do.

The brothers continued to worship at Hall Green Methodist Church, now Hall Green United Community Church, but kept themselves low key, not wanting to bring attention to themselves and their situation.

All this time they were fighting legal battles to prevent them being deported back to Pakistan. The fight came to a head in November 2018 when Asher, during one of weekly sign in appointments, was, without notice, detained by the Home Office and taken to Morton Hall detention centre. The family were, understandably, devastated at this unannounced and sudden move by the Home Office and they began another urgent legal fight to release Asher whilst I launched a Change.org petition to highlight the dangers that Asher would face if he was deported. Christmas was a bleak time for Asher, spending it alone in a detention cell away from family and friends. However, a ray of hope appeared, and Asher was granted bail on 27th December and he was allowed to return home. Asher and all his family, his mum, sister and niece had arrived in the UK to support him, all visited church the following Sunday and there was much rejoicing and many hugs. Asher felt lifted by the prayers and letters of support he had received from the members.

This moment of joy was not to last unfortunately. Two weeks later, during his regular sign Asher was again detained for deportation and sent this time to Harmondsworth detention centre, over three hours' drive away from home. Once again the family, and I, wrote to our MP, promoted the petition, we gave interviews on Christian radio stations, the Independent newspaper covered the story, we tried to get anyone who would listen to understand the dangers that faced Asher if he was deported.

For years, Christians in Pakistan have been subjected to violence, bombings and killings simply for practicing their faith in a predominantly Muslim country. In December 2017 a Christian church was bombed by Muslim extremists, killing nine people and injuring 57. In Lahore, a deadly suicide bomb attack on Easter Day 2016, 75 people were killed and 340 injured. A splinter group of the Taliban, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, claimed responsibility for the 2016 attack, saying it had 'targeted Christians celebrating Easter'.

"Under Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws, Christian persecution is a growing problem and Christians continue to live in daily fear that they will be accused of blasphemy - which can carry a penalty of death. Additionally, radical Islamists seem to be gaining more political power, and the new ruling government must maintain good diplomatic relationships with some radical groups. Christians are largely regarded as second-class citizens, and conversion to Christianity from Islam carries a great deal of risk." <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/pakistan/>

All of these concerns went unheard and even a last-minute attempt to persuade the judge at a special hearing was ignored. On Wednesday 9th January 2019 Asher was forcibly put on an un-chartered flight by the British Home Office and sent back to Pakistan. Aamir, Asher's brother rang me whilst Asher was on the plane and we cried and prayed for Asher's safety on his arrival. It was a very dark time for all the family.

Soon after Asher's deportation Jeremy Hunt MP, Head of the Foreign Office, made a statement supporting www.OpenDoorsUK.org and said: 'No-one should face persecution for their faith, wherever they are and that includes Christians.' We have not been able to speak to Mr Hunt and feel that he is not actively helping persecuted Christians abroad, especially in high risk countries such as Pakistan. Pakistan is #5 on the #worldwatchlist where Christians face the most extreme persecution.

Asher is now living in hiding in Pakistan, his mother returned there a few weeks after Asher to try and support him but has been taken ill and needs medical help, but Asher is unable to leave the house safely to get her medicines.

I have spoken to Asher via WhatsApp messaging service and he is very depressed and fearful for his life. The family are watched, and they try not to leave the house. He has recently contracted Typhoid and is still unable to work and support himself and his mum. What kind of life is this for a man? He feels he has a non-life and is living in jail, for what?

I am sorry that there is no 'good news' ending to this story. All I can do, and ask all of you reading this article, is to pray for Asher. His faith is all he has at the moment. He, and his family, need your prayers for strength to get through each day. Also, if you feel able please go to the Change.org link below and sign and share the petition to keep Asher's situation in the public eye. Thank you.

Sr Lorraine Shorten

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-35910331>
<https://www.change.org/p/please-help-us-bring-asher-home>
https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/governments-anti-persecution-inquiry-launched?utm_source=Evangelical+Alliance&utm_campaign=bc34c1a0d3-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_11_14_04_03_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9c7f3b9355-bc34c1a0d3-302248469&mc_cid=bc34c1a0d3&mc_eid=95e54bb6f4



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is a joy and a gift from God that I find myself in your midst as a minister in the Moravian Church. My journey of faith has taken me to some wonderful and unexpected places and finding myself in your midst is a joy-filled surprise. I was born in Michigan in the USA, where my mother is from, and lived there for a few years until my parents decided to move to where my father is from in Quebec, Canada. We lived there until I was in my early teens and then we moved back to Michigan. The faith community of my childhood was, on my mom's side, the Assemblies of God, and on my dad's side, Pentecostal Church of Canada.

When my family moved back to Michigan we moved to a town without an Assemblies of God church and began hunting around for a new church home. We went to many of the more charismatic churches but found them to be exclusive and unwelcoming. Out of sheer desperation my parents decided to attend the First Presbyterian Church of Sturgis (PCUSA). To our delight we were welcomed warmly by the greeter by the door, made to feel welcome, shown to a pew and then greeted by the minister at the end of the service. It was a lovely and nurturing church home for me and my brother and sisters.

Through the ministry of First Pres. I was encouraged to attend university and while there felt the call to ordained ministry, or 'Teaching Elder' as ministers are named in the Presbyterian tradition. After graduating with a joint BA in Philosophy and Religious Studies, I attended Princeton Theological Seminary. After my second year in seminary I earned an internship at Groomsport Presbyterian Church, which brought me to Northern Ireland for a year. While on that internship I met Elaine in Bangor. We were married in 2013. I graduated with my MDiv, and received my first call in Stamford, New York in 2011. After a few years Elaine and I both received work in the UK so we came back. I held a post with West Presbyterian Church from 2015 until 2017. At the end of that post I began seeking where God was calling me. I received an invitation to lead worship at the Ballinderry Moravian Church and subsequently I received an invitation to lead worship in Gracehill. I was asked if I had any interest in working in the Moravian Church - I was delighted with the idea since I had become impressed with the open and loving feel of the congregations, and the serious way the

Introducing Jared Stephens

Moravian Church takes faith and Christian Fellowship. After being invited to a meeting with the Provincial Board, I was subsequently offered a position in the Moravian Church. I was overjoyed.

Over the last few months I have seen what the Moravian Church is all about. It is delightfully consistent with what I see the Bible calls us to be as Christians, putting aside all divisions, placing first the love of Christ and the call of the Kingdom ahead of all differences of opinion and doctrinal divisions. The Unitas Fratrum lives in the hearts of the Moravians I have met and have come to cherish. God has blessed each one of us to be a part of this community of faith that takes so seriously the fundamental truth of the Salvation of Jesus Christ, not that we should transform the world, but Jesus Christ transforms us and in and through us works his love, offering his grace, sharing his hope to a fractured, hurting, and frightened world.

God's peace be with you all.

In the Love of Christ,

Br Jared Stephens

Minister at Cliftonville and Ballinderry Congregations

Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Conference



Northern College's popular Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Conference for 2019, entitled **Preaching for "Ordinary Time": Inspiration and Resources for Worship from Trinity onwards**

The conference will support lay preachers and worship leaders preparing to lead worship in the non-festival times of the year; bible studies, practical sessions, and an optional evening workshop.

THURSDAY 23RD—SATURDAY 25TH MAY 2019
Times, cost and full programme to be confirmed
Luther King House
Brighton Grove
Manchester
M14 5JP
To register your interest and for further information:
0161 249 2504 learning@lkh.co.uk
www.lutherkinghouse.org.uk



Dukinfield

After a considerable discernment process which lasted for more than a year of prayer and discussion, and after eventually gaining the consent of the Congregation Council by more than a two thirds majority, we spent much of the summer of 2018 busily re-ordering our Church. This included: the modernisation of the electrics; the decorating and reordering of the worship space with the removal of pews and the inclusion of chairs and carpeting throughout. The flooring throughout the downstairs of the building has been replaced, and the church and all rooms downstairs have been decorated to provide a bright and more modern feel to the building. We received funding, through the Hamper Project and some generous donations, to replace the cupboards throughout in the downstairs room. These improvements make the Church more flexible and accessible for different styles of worship and abilities and enable us to use the rooms for meetings on week days, thus enabling our building to be fit for purpose as a spiritual and community resource which complies more with the Equalities Act and with our wish to enable more inclusion. We are grateful to all who brought about these initiatives as they have demanded much sacrifice from many in terms of time, energy and generous financial giving - but these challenges have been met more than generously in faith.

In November, we held a lovely service of re-dedication, led by Bishop Joachim Kreusel. We also held our Autumn Fayre - but this was the first time it was held in the Church. It was a very successful event, but it highlighted a few teething problems which we will learn from for next year. Our Christingle service was absolutely packed out, so much so that we needed to bring in extra chairs! Sadly, Sr Enid Slater was called to higher service just before Christmas, and we hosted her funeral on 28th December. She is very much missed, but we know that she is with her Lord.

Our outreach work in the community has continued to thrive with the Youth Work (Mums & Tots, Uniformed Organisations, Junior Church, Messy Church, Friday Club), the Hamper Project



Brs Gubi with Sr Beatrice

© Sr Sue Selby

and Dementia Warriors. These activities are all forms of 'Church' and worship - in that where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am present; and what you do for the least of these, you do for me.

In February, we hosted the wedding blessing of Sr Sophie and Br Jack Weir. We continue to think through the practicalities of our part in the Whit walks, as it is more difficult to get people to carry the banner.

We were blessed for a year by the presence of an asylum seeker, Sr Beatrice, who inspired us with her faith and commitment. She was due to be received as a member on 7th April, but sadly she was deported back to Nigeria just before then. She has left an important imprint on our souls, enriched our spiritual lives, and has taught us much about what it means to live by faith.

We continue to think about potential initiatives for growth. However, on 7th April we received Sr Kerry Cain into membership by Confirmation, and Sr Janet Jackson into membership by reception. We thank God for His many blessings on our community. We are blessed by people (both members and non-members) who contribute generously in their hard work, prayer, love and financial support.

Br Peter Gubi

Hornsey

Hornsey has a new kitchen! The previous one had served faithfully for a number of years but, in recent times, it had needed a full refurbishment. The congregation decided to go a step further and seek to replace the entire facility.

Although not then completed, it was functional in time for the start of Hornsey's stint hosting the local Churches' Winter Shelter. The work was completed after the Shelter had finished.

This year the Shelter was operational for two weeks longer than usual in the hope that more of the guests could be found permanent accommodation by the time it was finished. Up to 14 guests were welcomed each Sunday night and were offered showers, an evening meal, bed, breakfast and the



© Sr Jackie Morten

opportunity to recharge their mobile phones! Phones are essential to those risking the dangers of life on the street.

The volunteers come from many of Haringey's churches and this year, for the first time, the local synagogue has shared in this venture. Each church raises the funding needed for their time as hosts and members gave generously - either their time, their money or gifts of food,

toiletries and warm clothing. It is a privilege to be able to offer practical help to a few of those whose lives are, for whatever reason, spent on the streets.

We now look forward to Palm Sunday and the joy of Easter.

Sr Jackie Morten

Fairfield

The start of the year has been as busy as ever, as the saying goes new year new hope!

As in the whole of the church we here at Fairfield are mindful of the devastating effects that the loss of memory has on a person's life and that of their family and friends and how easy it is for those affected to become isolated from society. To attempt to offer some support in a safe and welcoming environment Sr Janet Warr has started 'the Fairfield Memory Singers'. They meet every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month in the college from 1.30pm until 3pm, with the aim of offering singing to exercise the memory and perhaps even more importantly, fellowship. Everyone is welcome to attend, but most especially those diagnosed with memory loss and their carers.

We continue to send weekly donations to St Mary's Food Bank, but regrettably the need grows rather than diminishes, we can only continue to offer what we can and continue to include the recipients in our prayers; it just seems so infinitely wrong in such a wealthy country to have people going hungry.

Still offering a warm time of fellowship, the Fairfield Tot group continues to thrive with three new tots and mums joining the



© Sr Margery Sutcliffe

group (taking the attendance to around 12 little ones) after they saw the group on Facebook - social media can work to the good!

Of course, in the midst of after church coffee for external charities, Ladies Thursday Group, Thursday Coffee mornings, College working parties, youth club, messy church and bible classes, like most churches we continue to worry about the day to day costs of running our own church. We had an after church Cake Stall on 25th February and on 30th March an Afternoon Tea in the college from 2-4pm which raised an impressive £401 for church funds, it was very pleasing to see that the tea was attended by lots of non-members and thus bringing the wider community into the fellowship of the church.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe

Gracehill

Music has always been an important part of worship in Gracehill Moravian Church and the sound of the beautiful organ enhanced the meaning of the words of great Moravian Hymns. However, having served the church for so long, this wonderful organ was beginning to show its age and the decision was taken to have it refurbished. Over the past weeks Michael Macdonald, the organ builder, has taken the workings bit by bit over to the workshop in Glasgow, leaving only the empty casing in church rendering the upstairs an 'out of bounds' area!

Now slowly the cleaned and skilfully restored workings are being returned to the church. The pipes have been carefully gilded and it is hoped the whole task of bringing this wonderful and important piece of church history back to its original state will be completed by the end of May. During this time our organist Alison has been enjoying playing our shiny new piano, which she spent a long time choosing and which is another great asset to our worship. It is planned to have a special organ recital to celebrate this amazing step in the history of Gracehill Moravian Church.



© Sr Roberta Gray



On the theme of music, a really enjoyable evening was held on Saturday 31st March when the NI Police Male Voice Choir entertained a packed hall to raise money for the Building Fund. Everyone appreciated the variety of music from the wonderful blend of male voices, along with the Humble Folk Group who came with them. What a sound was created when the audience was asked to join in and they did so with such enthusiasm! At times the hand clapping, feet stamping and sheer enjoyment rose to the roof! The amount raised reached over £1,500 all due to the enthusiasm of Br Raymond Kitson and his team!

When Bishop Groves was asked to speak to the Ballymena Local History Group of course she jumped at the opportunity to share the story of John Cennick with everyone. With her engaging enthusiasm she led the group through the story of how he preached around the area and led them on a virtual walk to the original site of the old church and well. With everyone completely engaged, the question session at the end had to be curtailed as everyone wanted to learn more about the history of the church, so much so an outing has been arranged to visit Gracehill!

Sr Roberta Gray

Congregational Register

Confirmations		
7th April 2019	Sr Kerry Joanne Cain	Dukinfield
Reception into membership		
7th April 2019	Sr Janet Jackson	Dukinfield
Deaths		
12th March 2019	Sally Elizabeth Ashworth	Royton
7th December 2018	Sr Enid Slater	Dukinfield

From Church House

Provincial Diary for May	
1 World Mission Committee	(Sr Hoey & Br Howarth)
3 Joint Schools Meeting, Fulneck	(Sr Taylor, Sr Hoey, Br Thompson)
7 Estates Local Agent's Meeting	(Sr Hoey & Br Howarth)
24-25 PEC	
26 Eastern District Fellowship Day	(Sr Hoey)
20 Ockbrook Governor's Meeting	(Sr Hoey)

About five years ago, I had a wooden cabin built at the bottom of my garden, which houses my study and counselling room. It is a lovely place to work in, and it is the place in which I write these missals. I call it, 'The Sanctuary', as it is my sanctuary.

Once the workmen had erected the basic shed, it was left to me to decorate the interior to my taste, to add the preservative to the wood - and to put up the guttering. I am reasonably proficient at DIY, but I recognise that I am not quite up to 'professional' standard. So, I duly got the materials from a local DIY supplier, and set about the tasks. The decorating was OK, as was painting on the wood preservative. However, the guttering was a little trickier. For that, I had to screw in brackets to hold the gutters - but it has to have a slight angle so that the rain water is able to run away with gravity into the down pipes, and into the water butts, so that the garden can benefit from the water when we have a dry summer. Needless to say, I thought I managed a good job.

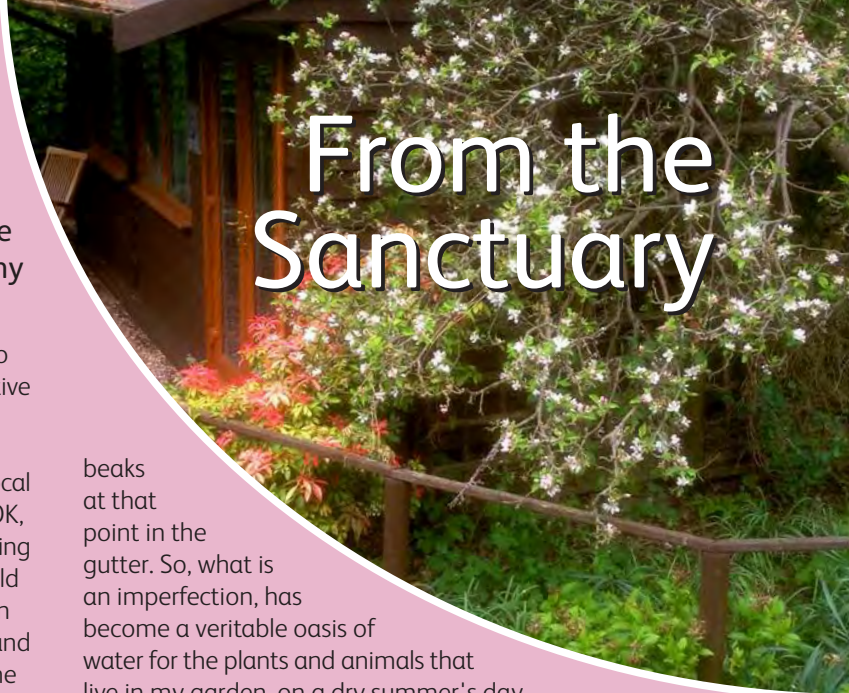
However, my efforts were not perfect as I managed to achieve a slight 'kink' in the guttering. It wasn't quite the perfect gentle slope that I had hoped to achieve. Every year since, I have looked at it and thought I ought to start again and get it right; to correct the imperfection, because in a heavy downpour the water drips at the point of the kink, rather than run-off as it is supposed to.

But I have held off from correcting it. Instead, I have observed that the plants that are under the kink thrive more than many of the plants in other parts of the garden - because of the dripping of the water. I have also observed that the squirrels run down the slope of the roof, put their little paws on the edge of the gutter and drink from the water that has collected in the kink. Likewise the birds are often scooping water up in their

beaks at that point in the gutter. So, what is an imperfection, has become a veritable oasis of water for the plants and animals that live in my garden, on a dry summer's day.

So it is with us. There is a story in Judges Ch 7 about how Gideon used broken jars to defeat the Midianites, and in 2 Corinthians Ch 4, Paul talks about us as being like clay pots which contain spiritual treasure. Clay pots are frail and imperfect. If Gideon's jars had been perfect, they would have hidden the light. As they were cracked, or imperfect, light could escape and shine forth. As with my gutter, God can use our imperfections to benefit His work. So, let us not punish ourselves when we fail to be perfect and don't live up to the standards of Christ all the time. That is not an excuse for complacency in our striving 'to become' in faith - but perhaps our imperfections enable others to relate to us better, or are actually endearing to others at some level. Whoever we are, and whatever our idiosyncrasies, gifts and talents, God can use us for His work - sometimes because of our imperfections.

Br Peter Gubi,
Dukinfield



Dates to remember!

6	Ramadan begins - Muslim
12-18	Christian Aid Week (www.christianaid.org.uk)
30	Ascension Day
31	Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power/Destiny) - Muslim



18th BAILDON MORAVIAN BEER FESTIVAL

20 Real Ales • Real Ciders • Wine & Soft Drinks

FRIDAY
3rd MAY
4-11 pm



ALL WELCOME!

SATURDAY
4th MAY
12 noon-11pm

Moravian Church Hall, off Westgate.

The Moravian Messenger

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