

moravian messenger

MAY 2020



This Very Hour

War-time Edition of the
Moravian Messenger for May 1945



As we approach 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe we take a look back at the front page of a war-time edition of the Moravian Messenger for May 1945, some of which may have some relevance for these times

Victory is in sight. It may come before these words appear in print; it may be delayed. But it is in sight. It will not be the end of hostilities, for the war in the East has still to be won. But it will be victory in Europe and for Europe, the major victory even for the world.

That it will be celebrated by Thanksgiving in church is plain. We shall indeed thank God that these days and years - more than any one could have thought possible or endurable - of anxiety and danger, of suffering and sorrow, of loss and sacrifice, are passed; that our country has been saved from a terrible fate; that our people have been granted an amazing unity of spirit and a great leadership; that our men and women have given, both at home and especially in the Forces, unsurpassed devotion to national service and good cause.

'We offer Thee our humble praise, O Lord, for that Thou hast sheltered, upheld and brought us through the past of our life to this very hour.'

'This very hour!' What an hour it will be - of rejoicing and rightful

relief! But let us be sober and realistic. It will be an hour for new duties.

The first duty of the Church is to make clear to all that it will be an hour for new tasks, new problems, new opportunities, as great as, in some respects greater than, any that have confronted our people hitherto. We must guard against dangerous restrictions that the years of strain; efforts must be redirected, not relaxed. We may have less restrictions but we shall have some. Our necessities will be supplied, but we must forgo luxuries lest other nations starve.

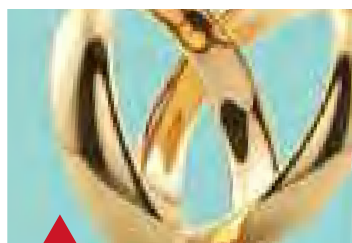
The second duty of the Church is to turn with renewed care to the fostering of its own life. Rehabilitation is needed; but more than that. Renewal is needed; and extension in both dimensions, outwardly in an increase of membership and inwardly in a deeper understanding of the Gospel. In each direction there is an urgent call for believing evangelism in which laity and ministry should equally share. And as we look forward to the rerun of our men and women from their scattered places of service we

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Editorial

Seventy-five years ago, on the 8th May this nation celebrated Victory in Europe Day. The planned long weekend of celebrations this May has been abandoned, as have so many of our other plans for the immediate future. But we still have the opportunity to reflect on what unfolded 75 years ago as the Allied armies moved across Europe; what they found and what was revealed to the rest of the world - bombed cities, concentration camps and the mass movement of peoples as refugees. Of course VE day did not mark the end of the Second World War, that did not happen for another four months on 2nd September after the dropping of two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It took years to recover from the worldwide trauma of that war. The economies of many countries were shattered by the war effort and in the UK, rationing was harsher in the years following the war than during the war. The final instalments of Britain's war debt to the United States and Canada were not made until 2006. The world that emerged from the war was quite different from that which went into the war.

Now we are in the middle of a worldwide pandemic where no country is spared, and many lives have already been lost. Further, economists are already saying that we will be entering a period of depression when we come out from the lock down and that our way of living will be impacted for some time to come. Once again, the world ahead of us will be different from the world that went into this pandemic.

We had planned to use Bishop Shawe's letter in the Moravian Messenger of 1945 for the May Messenger 2020 before we went into lock down. Reading it now in the context of COVID-19 it is just as relevant now as it was 75 years ago. We believe that there is an end in sight for the pandemic and there will be a time of thanksgiving to God in our Churches as well as for services of commemoration for those who have died

during the lock down. We will have cause to honour all those who have worked on the front line, not in war this time but in the care homes, clinics and hospitals and community care.

As a Church we have had to adapt quickly, and it has been wonderful to see how imaginative and flexible ministers and congregations have become. This will be invaluable for the Church going into the future as we consider how we, as a small Church structure our worship and activities in years to come. The online space is a place for us all where we can connect and worship. But as Bishop Shawe said 75 years ago we will need renewal and believing evangelism in which ministers and lay people share so that we move from outside our cosy space online to those who still need to hear of the love of God for his world and all that dwell therein.

Bishop Shawe reminds us of the needs of other nations and the call to rebuild. We have a well-developed health care system but how hard this pandemic will be for countries with less capacity for support and less developed health care for the poor. People living in refugee camps across the world could suffer worst of all. International Aid will be needed, in terms of charities and government aid. If this pandemic is not tackled on a worldwide scale, then it will not only harm people on a terrible scale across the world but will slow down world economic recovery. Now is the time for generosity and perhaps a new version of the Marshall plan. Shawe said 'Our necessities will be supplied, but we must forgo luxuries lest other nations starve' and these words are still true after 75 years.

May God be with us in this hour and in all hours.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



© Sr Sarah Groves

Letter to the Editorial Team

Now that the issue of UK child poverty is on its way to Parliament via Catherine West M.P. I have written to the PEC looking at a second of our British mission statements.

The integrity of creation should be paramount in Christian thinking what with the issue of global warming and climate change. The massive loss of the lungs of our earth, Australian forest fires and the constant cutting down of the Amazon rainforest are a crisis for humanity.

The Woodland Trust Charity plants thousands of trees per year however they have a campaign to plant one million more. I have written to the PEC to bring a proposal to 2020 Synod for our Church to join the WTC in this endeavour. They in turn have written to the Mission and Society Committee.

Will you support such a cause for our future generation? If so, ask your Church Committee to send such a proposal to Synod.

Yours in the interest of the integrity of creation,

Br Alan Holdsworth.



Book review: Using Christian Contemplative practice with children

Although this book concentrates on practices which are suitable for children it would be of use to anyone looking for more contemplative practices whether leading adults and children or for personal use. It gives a

background of the history of children's work in the church, as to why children need stillness and these practices, and the history of contemplative practice in Christianity. The second part of the book is a 'how to' including chapter on using the outdoor spaces, meditation, movement, art and creativity words, stories, using stations - enough ideas to give you something fresh every week for a year! Using such a range means that there will be something to suit anyone.

*Published by Jessica Kingsley ISBN 978-1-785921-662-4
Softback £14.99*



That Virus!

A quick look at some of the science

As I sit and write this article the country is in lockdown all caused by a tiny virus. The wonder is that something so small can cause such disruption to the whole world with effects that will be felt for a long time. I hope to enlighten you a little about the science involved in the response to this pandemic.

Let's start with the discovery of this virus. Coronaviruses are a large family and get their name from the crown like spikes that surrounded them - but you do need a special type of microscope to see them! They were first identified as a group in 1960 and linked to a range of illnesses, most commonly colds and other respiratory infections. You may have heard of SARS which emerged and then seemed to disappear before it could cause too much trouble globally, although as the death rate was 37 % that is just as well. There have been other scares of possible pandemics by coronaviruses since then but our current crisis caused by SARS-CoV-2 emerged at the very end of 2019 when 44 cases of a new viral respiratory illness were identified. Now you may ask how they identified it as new. This is quite complicated, and they did a range of tests on the samples to try and work out what was causing these illnesses, including standard genetic assays. PCR, looking for genes of known viruses, negative results suggested this illness was being caused by a new virus. Tissue culture and electron microscopy identified this infection to be caused by a coronavirus, but distinctly different from any previously seen in human infection.

The next step was to sequence the genetic material (mRNA) before using this to develop specific tests for the virus. Fortunately, technology has moved on and these tests, about 20 different ones, have been developed rapidly, days rather than the years it used to take. I find it staggering that folk are moaning about lack of tests. Do they forget this is a completely new virus? New tests used to take years. I think back to the amount of time and the range of developments testing for other infectious agents took and wonder at how quickly tests have become available. Speaking to an ex-colleague who works in virology, the hospital reference laboratories were primed and ready to go but a lack of reagents, that is chemicals, and the right sort of swabs, was the limiting factor to the number of test that could be carried out, not lack of equipment or personnel. We may look at other countries and see that they have lots more testing available, but to what standard? The questions that have to be asked are 'Are these tests really testing for SARS-CoV-2?' and 'Are these

tests detecting all the positives with no false positives?' Imagine being told you have had COVID-19 because the test was positive only to later develop the disease, that is the consequence of the test not being specific enough. Only time will tell which tests were the best. Meanwhile, think about the scientists, in development labs and diagnostic labs across the world working under pressure to get testing up and running.

You may have heard about antibody (Ab) testing. This doesn't look for the virus in the patient but looks for the specific response, antibodies produced, by the patient's immune system. There will be a delay between infection and response so in the early stages of infection Ab levels will be low but it is these that will give lasting immunity, if it develops. Looking for the SARS-CoV-2 antibodies is a bit like looking for a needle in a haystack as there are lots of antibodies in everyone's blood, they are part of our defence mechanism against all infections. The amazing immune system can do all this without us even thinking about it, it is fantastic that the human bodies have built in defence systems.

An antibody response is what is required of a good vaccine. Usually vaccines can take ten years or so to produce as they are required to have extensive testing to ensure they are safe and effective, giving lasting protection against the infectious agent. Scientists and vaccine production companies are in a race to get the first COVID-19 vaccine out but even the most optimistic are suggesting 18 months as a minimum. The problem with vaccine production is selecting the right part of the virus to produce antibodies that give protection against infection, are long lasting, easy to manufacture, and the vaccine must not damage the person being vaccinated. This is complicated by the fact that all humans respond differently to the vaccine which can make it less effective, especially in older people.

All I have been able to do is outline some of the factors. For more information there is an excellent Futurelearn course, COVID-19 (<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/covid19-novel-coronavirus>), plenty of scientific articles, as well as Horizon programmes (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000h3nm>), and if you want the statistics debunked listen to More or Less on Radio 4 (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrss1/episodes/downloads>).

Keep Safe, Stay Home.

Sr Joy Raynor

Provincial Youth and Children's Officer who formerly worked in a medical testing laboratory

may be sure that the welcome we shall certainly prepare for them will be doubly acceptable if it gives them the warm sense of a live and forward-looking Church.

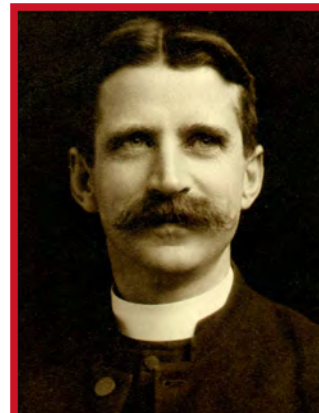
A third duty of the Church - and certainly of our Church - is to seek a renewal of contacts with other branches in occupied and enemy countries. A reconciliation with the enemy is, for reasons which shout aloud, difficult; but for equally obvious reasons it is one of the tasks of a period of peace. We can be thankful that in Christian circles in Germany the Nazi outlook found most opposition; in these circles the point should be found where useful contacts can be made. The Church has already taken the first step. The fund for the Reconstruction of the Christian Church has been well launched.

Christian Reconstruction! Not only in England, not only in Europe, but all over the world. Do we realize how strong the longing has

become, in spite of, or perhaps because of, all the happenings of these war years, for a rebirth of Christian faith, the permeation of civilization by a Christian spirit. Whether the world is ready to yield its obedience to Christ we know not, but for us the point is whether we are prepared to go ahead with our example.

This hour is God's hour. We meet it with gratitude; we will seek to use it with wisdom and with hope.

(Signed) C. H. Shawe



Report on the Yorkshire District Spring Conference

Br Dick Porter reports on the spring conference of the Yorkshire Moravian churches, held at Wellhouse on 22 February.

Members of the Moravian Churches in Yorkshire are being urged to put themselves forward to serve the province on a committee. Sr Roberta Hoey, of the Provincial Board, told the conference that some committees had experienced vacancies for the last three or four years.

The church is looking for members to serve four-year terms on committees that include Finance, Church Book, Church Service, the youth committee, Mission and Society, the World Mission Committee and the panel that advises the province in faith, order and ecumenical matters. Sr Hoey said that to be effective, committees had to meet regularly. She estimated the work would involve a week's worth of commitment over the year. Anyone wishing to stand should make themselves known to Church House.

In other news, Sr Hoey reported that Br Livingstone Thompson was continuing to explore re-establishing a Moravian presence in the Dublin area. Currently, services are held once every other month at St Mary's Church of Ireland in Navan.

Closer to home, the conference was told that significant damage had been caused by the accidental fire on Boxing Day at Hornsey Moravian Church. No one was

injured as the previous service had been on Christmas morning. The congregation were currently meeting in the church hall and have thanked other churches that have sent their support. Sr Hoey said the repairs should be finished in time for next Christmas.

Brockweir, the settlement in Gloucestershire, has also had its share of sorrow. While the church escaped the worst of the recent flooding, some of the riverbank homes have been affected. A task force has now been established to support the congregation in considering future plans for the church properties there. Sr Hoey said the floods served to highlight the need for sustainability.

The MWA 70th anniversary was scheduled to take place on 25 April at Fairfield Moravian Church, the conference heard. Sisters from all over the British Province were invited.

The morning service was scheduled to have Sr Carol Ackah as the speakers and Holy Communion in the afternoon was to be led by Sr Sarah Groves. The cost for the whole day is £6, but the services, of course, are free.

For the Moravian Singers, delegates heard that the shared leadership between Br Glynn Jones and Sr Diane Thornton was working well and they planned to continue it for the new season. Br Jones will look after Advent 2020 and Sr Thornton the Palm Sunday service.

It was reported the group had around

23 members but could do with more, particularly sopranos. Sr Thornton stressed it was a relaxed group for people who enjoyed singing.

On behalf of Sr Joy Raynor, it was reported that Summer Camp was scheduled to be held at Dovedale House, Ilam, Derbyshire, from 1-8 August. To keep costs down, the holiday would be self-catering for the first time this year. Youngsters aged 10 to 17 are being urged to attend. The youth committee says it is aware that the cost of £330 is a lot for many families but several delegates stressed there were ways that financial support could be accessed so families do not need to stand the entire cost by themselves.

The meeting then turned to the annual election of officers and all were re-elected. They are: the chairman, Br Michael Newman, Sr Jane Dixon as vice chairman, Sr Thornton as secretary, Br Les Machel, treasurer, Br Kenneth Evans the West Yorkshire Churches Together representative, Sr Dixon as youth co-ordinator and Br Dick Porter as Messenger correspondent.

The conference went ahead in the absence of Br David Howarth, who was ill, so the meeting unfortunately had no representative from Baildon and Horton. Delegates sent him their best wishes for a quick recovery.

That's all, folks! Stay safe.

Br Dick Porter

One Plus One

(A United Reformed Church Publication)

The fifth article
on understanding
marriage in
21st Century:

What Matters Most?

Last month's article needed to be somewhat forensic and legalistic in its style, in describing the history of what marriage has meant over the centuries. We recognised that there is no single, simple definition of what marriage means, or even what Christian marriage means. This month we want to go back to basics in looking at how we go about dealing with disagreement and the diversity of viewpoints in the way we understand marriage and relationships. We must always start from the perspective of Jesus who, as St John and St Paul remind us, is the one through whom all things in heaven and on earth were created, who is before all things and in whom all things hold together. We will quote extensively from the sections of the United Reformed Church's document 'One plus One' headed 'Finding what matters most' and 'Human sexuality and the lordship of Christ'. These sections quote a wide range of personal reflections of people who participated in the human sexuality task group's conversations which resulted in 'One plus One' being published in early 2014.

'My hope was that we would create an atmosphere in which Christians - who have often been bitterly divided over issues of sexuality - could engage in real dialogue and not simply repeat past arguments. It has been a real privilege to be a part of this group, and it has felt like an important journey for us to have shared throughout the last year or so.'

'I believe there is a definite shift in the debate, both from within bodies such as the Evangelical Alliance on the one hand, and with the emergence of studies such as Queer Theology on the other. Queer Theology draws on scripture and tradition as places of encounter with God, and represents a return to seeking a more faithful interpretation of scripture within a living, dynamic tradition.'

'Like many others, I have come to believe that there has been too much reflecting on human experience and not enough on the nature of God, and that we need a different and more theological approach to sexuality ... All love has its origins and fulfilment in God, and our relationships are the real but imperfect anticipation of union with God. Heaven is the fulfilment of human desire, and this cannot be narrowed down to heterosexual love. We need to recover that vision, which historically has been fundamental to us.'

'We have been in danger of creating groups within the church, almost completely unable to talk to each other, but it feels to me as if we are now being taken to a different place where we can begin to see things from a different angle. God is always enlarging our vision, and is always surprising us!'

'The way we live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ means that

our moral and ethical choices are no more our own than any other aspect of life: all belongs to Christ. Being under the lordship of Christ requires that we surrender to his headship and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance as a first principle.'

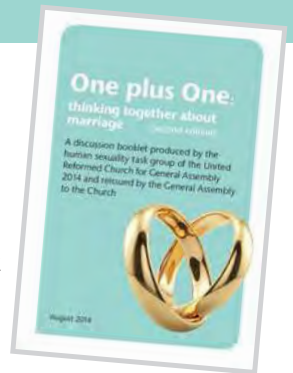
'... both sides of the discussion must start from the same point as disciples of Jesus Christ who have died with him - symbolised by our baptism - and are raised to a new life in the Spirit. This must make our personal starting positions secondary as we unite in our desire to be faithful to Jesus, the only head of the Church. Too often this does not seem to have been the case - open hostility has coloured this debate.'

'When we do begin from a place of submission to the lordship of Christ we must all surrender our own positions and look to Jesus who is the only head of the Church. Such a starting point will have different consequences for all sides of this debate.'

'Such a perspective does not allow us to hold on doggedly to scriptural interpretations without allowing the Holy Spirit to move us forward in our understanding of truth. Our affiliation is first to Christ; biblical exegesis is subject to his lordship.'

'The winning of the argument is not what we are about. Together we aim to submit to Jesus, and, as sisters and brothers, listen to the Holy Spirit's lead. Perhaps what we need most is not better dissection of the issues and biblical texts but an attitude that surrenders all to Jesus. Our deeply held positions matter because we matter - but they must be released to the Lord of the Church who has bought us with a price.'

This rainbow pattern of diverse viewpoints bears out what also lies at the heart of the Moravian Church's perspective: 'in essentials unity; in inessentials liberty; in all things charity.' It is clear that almost ever since Pentecost, there have been many disagreements about how to follow Jesus faithfully, both within local congregations and between churches with different cultures and doctrines. While the church must never bend to accommodate the trends of the contemporary secular world, it is vital that we go on listening to God, to one another and to the world that we are called to serve.



**Brn Martin
Smith & Philip
Cooper**

Ministers at Royton,
Salem and Fairfield
Congregations





© Br Simon Dunn

'Little Things Mean A Lot'

Some members may remember the song 'Little things mean a lot' originally released in 1954 (I was only five at the time). The words talk of sending a smile across a room, touching hair as you pass the chair, and other things in a romantic context meant to send young (and old) hearts aflutter.

During Lent many of us decided that, instead of giving something up such as chocolate or alcohol, we would do something positive. We followed a 'little acts of kindness' calendar and gave people a smile, paid them a compliment, wrote them a letter, gave them a hug (no more of that now) or looked after our own health and wellbeing. The phrase 'little things mean a lot' took on a different meaning.

Now, in the situation we find ourselves, the phrase really, really, comes into its own. For those living on their own or in enforced isolation little things really do mean a lot. Communities have come together, doing shopping, collecting medications, telephoning each other and helping neighbours in any way they can. Our congregations are, even more than ever, supporting each other and communicating with all members. Basically, the human race is made up of social beings and the closure of all clubs, societies, groups, gatherings and church activities has robbed many of their life line. It has also changed the way others work, relying much more on technology, fitting home schooling into their day and making life more hectic in some ways. People can be together remotely but not physically.

Most of you will have heard of The Moravian Singers or Yorkshire District Choir, a group of Moravians and friends made up from the six Moravian Congregations in Yorkshire (and two from Lancashire). The choir started many years ago with Hugh Brooke and Harold Jones being two of the early Musical Directors. Following Br Jones, the baton was passed to Sr Maureen Colbert, who held the position for 20 years. When Sr Maureen went to help with teaching in South Asia, Br Simon Dunn became the Musical Director. He continued to lead the choir until 2019 when he moved to Middlesex. Last year the Musical Directorship became a joint position between Br Glyn Jones and myself, Sr Diane Thornton.

Br Jones led us through rehearsals up to Advent Sunday 2019 when we enjoyed singing and performing a selection of songs, Advent hymns and Christmas Carols. I took over in January and began preparing for our next service/concert at the beginning of April.

Under normal circumstances the choir would have led a reflective service at 6pm on Palm Sunday but we were stopped in our tracks, for obvious reasons, with only three rehearsals to go!!

After missing only one rehearsal I had the simple idea of focusing on one of our songs/hymns each week and singing at home, on our own, on Thursdays at 7.30pm when we would have normally come together in the Boys Brigade Building at Fulneck. Not exactly high tech like Gareth Malone's virtual choir, Brighthouse and Rastrick's on line concert, Alfie Boe singing from Les Miserable or the many other choirs and orchestras that have appeared on social media, but aimed at bringing us together in spirit if not in body. To begin with I found this quite emotional but now it has slotted well into my weekly routine. Some members find it difficult to sing in isolation so they just listen to the relevant music on YouTube or maybe merely think about their friends in the choir and how they are coping in these unprecedented times. This keeps us together as a group until we are released from this enforced imprisonment! It is a little thing but means a lot to those involved. If you would like to join in with us please get in touch with a choir member, find out what we are singing and sing along in your own home. It may help you to feel connected with your Brothers and Sisters throughout the Province.

As I write this, we do not know how long it will be before the choir can meet again in body but I truly hope that by September we can once more sing under the leadership of Br Jones and prepare for our service on Advent Sunday 2020. What a wonderful service that will be!!

Moravians are known for singing in times of trouble, so to everyone - keep smiling - keep safe and keep singing.

Sr Diane Thornton
Lower Wyke

The Pilgrimage of a Lifetime

Country Music is very popular in Northern Ireland and Ronnie Harper's life time desire was to visit Nashville, Tennessee. Ronnie and Lorna are members at Gracehill Moravian Church

I have always loved country music especially American country music. There are many different sounds in American country music including Bluegrass and Honky-Tonk with my particular favourite being The Bakersfield sound and Meryl E Haggard my favourite artist. He had a troubled childhood but managed to turn his life around and developed a successful country music career. He wrote songs about his life and the working class and indeed was always a bit of a political rebel. One of my favourite songs is 'Sing me back home'. Meryl Haggard sadly died in 2016 and is survived by his three sons who also write and perform country music. Alan Jackson who sings gospel as well as country music is another one of my favourites and one of his best albums being Precious Memories.

I realised my life time ambition at the end of last year when I visited Nashville Tennessee, considered by many to be the home of country music. This was a wonderful experience from start to finish. I was able to see for myself the museums of country music and also experienced live country music daily as we enjoyed our meals in the local restaurants. This was such a treat and it gave me great pleasure to share it with my family. We started to soak up the culture from the moment we landed. After sampling a few coffee houses we decided that Dunnes was the best and we visited it every morning to enjoy muffins and Danish pastries like no others we have tasted. The owner of the coffee house was very friendly and by the end of our stay he would shout at us when we entered that our table was free. Close to our hotel there was a war museum and peaceful spaces outside to enjoy.

We visited the Johnny Cash museum and the country music hall of fame and ventured out on a trip down the river on General Jacksons showboat. Nashville is steeped in history and there were many sites to visit where battles were fought throughout the American Civil War. We visited one small plantation and had an insight into the history of that family and how events had shaped their lives and how it led to the development of the Tennessee Zoo. The plantation had been owned by two sisters before it was donated to the Tennessee state for the Zoo. They had returned from Cuba where they had left with their father years earlier where he started a successful cement business,

however in the communist revolution of Fidel Castro they lost their home and business and had to return to Tennessee to the family home.

Like all big cities Nashville has a large homeless community who were visible throughout the main part of town. Nashville church community had a strong support network for them providing hot food in the mornings and showers and clean clothes at the weekend. Community workers wearing yellow T-shirts could be seen on the streets administering help and advice to the homeless. We know that crime was prevalent and the police were visible, however we never witnessed anything but warmth and kindness.

Unfortunately, we never managed to attend a church service but we did notice all denominations represented throughout Nashville. We would have loved to have been able to visit a Moravian church while in America but they were all too far away from us on this occasion.

We went shopping in a huge shopping mall which was a real experience. It took us the best part of the afternoon just to walk around it. Here I purchased a cowboy hat which I carried home with extreme care. I couldn't resist attending a house building show which I saw advertised. I appreciated all the huge pickup trucks which were everywhere we went and they kept getting bigger and better.

The real highlight of our trip was going to the famous Grand Old Opry concert where Vince Gill was headlining and the Oakridge Boys were one of his supporting artists. Vince Gill is married to Amy Grant who is a gospel singer and I am familiar with their music. The lyrics of country songs are always about true life events and some are very funny whilst others trigger real emotion. I listen to country music daily and have watched so many concerts which were filmed in this venue so it was such a treat to actually get to visit it.

We are truly thankful for this special time and we made so many memories.

Br Ronnie Harper



© Sr Lorna Harper



Bath (Weston)

Hi everyone, Bath (Weston) hope that you are all coping well in this nightmare!! With the lovely sunshine we have had, everybody is going to have the perfect garden and the cleanest of houses. We here at Bath have been putting together a fellowship sheet which will be mailed or printed off for people who do not have access to the internet. We are asking people to write a little piece to say how they are coping and keeping busy during this isolation time. This is a way to keep in touch with our congregation as well as by phoning. Br Paul is using his exercise time dropping off these fellowship sheets to those with no internet, also delivering the Passion Week and Eastertide book.

I have made a nesting place for birds out of a teapot, not sure if they will nest this year now, it may be too late. Everywhere is so quiet (quite creepy really) no planes going over, still a few cars about though. It's lovely to hear the birds singing, also to watch them in the birdbath splashing around, it's such a delight!!

Stay safe and every blessing.

Sr Carole Young



© Sr Carole Young

Cliftonville



© Sr Edna Cooper

The rain was pouring down after the morning service on 8th March when 22 of us made our way to the Clubhouse of Cliftonville Golf Club and were soon happily settled in the warm and welcoming dining room. We enjoyed a hearty

meal and a time of conversation and good fellowship. We were unanimous that it was an event to be repeated, little realising that after one more Sunday, churches would be closed by the coronavirus pandemic and that the majority of us would be isolated in our homes.

We are prayerfully concerned about the people around the world who are succumbing to the virus, and the many who are losing their lives. We are grateful for the kindness of neighbours, the unstinting service of nurses and doctors and all the others who are exposed to risks to care for the sick and supply our needs. We have no idea when the pandemic will end and it will be possible to once again meet together in church, but in the mean time we keep in touch. Beth Stewart supplies the Daily Watchword on our church WhatsApp group, and Br Stephens leads the Sunday service, Bible study and morning prayer online on Zoom or Facebook.

Sr Edna Cooper

Fairfield

Well these are certainly difficult times, the time when we all need support and more than ever want to spend time in our churches we are shut out, but never shut out by God. I like many of you do not live close to church and just when I was starting to feel isolated from my church family, emails and texts started to come through. A church notice sheet, an online copy of the Messenger, and little details of what's happening in the Square all help to make me feel close.

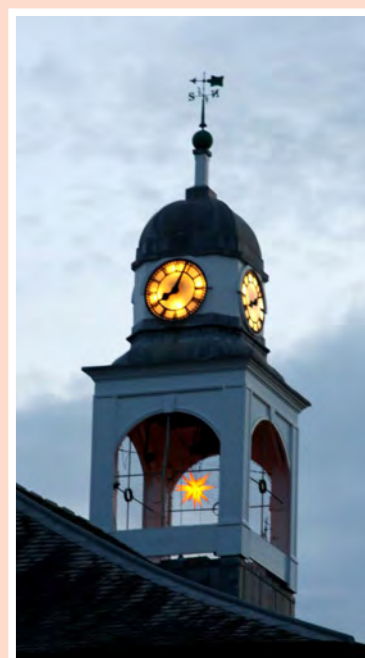
The weekly services posted online are a real blessing and my Daily Watchword has been an even greater comfort than usual.

Like many of you my Advent Star has been brought out of storage and placed prominently in an upstairs window and again brings me close to all my brothers and sisters in Christ. Fairfield's star is shining brightly from the cupola.

On Palm Sunday I received a text, Br and Sr Yates had let it be known that at 10.30am they were singing the Hosannah anthem from their home in Oldham. Word spread and the residents in the Square decided to stand on their doorsteps and do the same, I have been told that there were 20-30 singing. I did the same from my home in Glossop and probably many more of you did likewise.

By the time you read this I pray the love of God will have brought us through the worst and you and yours are all safe and well.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe



© Br Anthony Torkington

Fulneck

It is not easy to report on events in Fulneck when everything is closed down in response to the Coronavirus crisis, because there is nothing happening. So, I am inclined to remember times when all was busy and there was laughter in the air.

I was not around in the 1920s when my great-grandfather, William Bramley, was taking part in an entertainment given by the residents in the Sunday School building, now the Comenius Centre. He was on stage to recite a poem and he tried to begin by announcing its title. 'The Lifeboat', he offered, then hesitated and began again. 'The Lifeboat' then a pause. From out of the darkness in the audience a voice said, 'Nay, Bramley, tha can't even launch it!'

The 1950s saw several of these entertainments, with various Fulneck characters taking part. My uncle, Harold Powell, was the cause of some worry to some of the more serious-minded Moravians in the audience. He was aware of the possible unsuitability of his act as singer and comedian. So, he began by introducing himself. He seemed to be saying that several people had been afraid he would be putting in jokes about sex as it was a subject he knew a lot about. In fact, he was an expert. He ought to be because he had been 'filling them with taties

all afternoon'. He was of course talking about 'secks' which is the broad Yorkshire pronunciation of 'sacks'. He finished his act with a rendering of 'I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen' - to his wife, my mother's sister, Kathleen.

May Latrobe also took part. She once pretended to be my grandmother, Lily Norton, stranded at a bus stop on her way home from visiting her youngest daughter, Mary Hinchcliffe, who lived in York in those days. 'I've been waiting here an hour with no luck. Two buses have gone past but they were no good: they were both going to Duplicate.'

In the 1950s, aged about twelve, I watched a play in which my Aunt Muriel Fuller took part. Also, in the audience was the author, J.B. Priestley. The play was 'When We Are Married' and it had just been released for amateurs. He kindly gave us an adjudication afterwards and it was a resounding success. My mother ensured that I was introduced to him and he shook my hand. Later that year, at St. Lawrence Cricket Club, in the scoreboard building, I was given a smacker of a kiss by 'Two-ton' Tessie O'Shea. After which I can truly say I was never the same again! Keep smiling!

Br David Ingham

Fetter Lane

Lessons from lockdown

At our last face-to-face service on 15th March, when our small group of members worshipped together (sitting well apart), I'm not sure all of us realised that the Easter traditions we value so highly would not take place this year. No gathering for evening Passion Week readings, no early morning Easter hymns in God's Acre with other London Moravians, no substantial Easter breakfast. But necessity being the mother of invention, our minister, Sr Claire, has got some of us wired up to Zoom, and others linked by receiving papers through the post, and phone calls all round. So, we will celebrate Easter as ever - different but no less heartfelt and sincere.

And if Easter is a time of trust and hope, then those of us who live in this part of London, as I'm sure is the case across the country, are witnessing acts of kindness and collaboration that are inspiring. In north Kensington where I live (also the site of the Grenfell Tower tragedy), churches and our local mosque have teamed up with Age UK K&C and the Volunteer Centre, supported by the council, to make up parcels of food and toiletries for those who can't get out to brave the queues. All of this is being donated by residents and businesses. Our local charitable giving Foundation, the K&C Foundation has been raising significant amounts of money to support local charities to continue their core work once we've reached some



© Sr Cynthia Dize

level of safety. And of course, our local NHS is doing their usual sterling job. So many groups and individuals working together for the common good must raise our spirits in the weeks ahead.

Here's a cheerful photo of Holland Park in the spring, taken on one of my 'exercise' outings. We hope everyone had a happy Easter, in whatever way you could.

Sr Cynthia Dize

Gomersal

Due to the coronavirus situation, Br Michael Newman has set up a Fulneck and Gomersal Film Club on Facebook. Each week we all watch a chosen film, available through BBC iplayer, at a time to suit ourselves. We can then share our thoughts and

comments about it. So far, the group has 21 members who have watched the first film, The History Boys.

Sr Norma Machell

Wellhouse

Since we last wrote we have had a busy Autumn of 2019. We hosted the Katie Philpot School of Dance Presentation Service led by Sr Jane in September. There was a full Church with families of the young people receiving their trophies, plus the final trophy to be presented was the Wellhouse Cup to the most improved dancer of the year.

In November we commenced with a very successful Bonfire and Fireworks night, with all the usual bonfire fare, hotdogs, burgers, pie and peas, parkin, toffee etc. and an attendance of some 300 local people made it a real community occasion. Later in the month on the 16th we held our Annual Christmas Fair. Again, a very successful day, with a variety of goods on sale. We think the attendance was a bit down, but the turkey casserole in a Yorkshire Pudding with roast potatoes and rounded off with a cup of tea and a chocolate biscuit was enjoyed by everyone.

In December we enjoyed the Christmas Supper with entertainment by Re-workz, organised by the brethren and assisted by the sisters - a rousing evening was enjoyed by all. On the 23rd we said goodbye to a loyal serving and dedicated past member Sr Freda Micklethwaite who, after a short illness passed away on the 5th December. Freda was a past correspondent to the Messenger. At our Christingle service led by Sr Jane we enjoyed a demonstration of dance by young people from Katie's dance school, and a narrated Nativity play with the young people dressing up and coming in, almost on time, which added to the story. Everyone received a Christingle, along with a knitted angel from the Churches Together in Mirfield.



© Br Kenneth Evans

For the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, Wellhouse hosted the United Service for the Churches Together in Mirfield. Sr Jane led that service and a speaker from Torch Trust spoke about the work they do to help the visually impaired, particularly within a church environment.

After the devastating news that all Church activities must cease, including worship, the letters W.W.J.D. came to mind: What Would Jesus Do in this situation? He would minister to those who needed his help and support. So to that end Sr Jane put together a Church Newsletter with the aim of Celebrating Mothering Sunday even though we couldn't meet together; a message of hope and encouragement for the congregation with prayer to comfort and uplift everyone, even those who because of age and/or vulnerability may feel isolated. Sr Jane is planning to do something similar over the coming weeks/months.

Potted plants had been ordered for Mothering Sunday to be distributed in Church and so instead of cancelling the order two of our isolated vulnerable members took it upon themselves, with Sr Jane's blessing, to deliver these potted plants to the doorsteps of all the sisters and friends of the congregation along with a small ticket of greeting and an invitation to Light a Candle of Hope and join in a National Call to Prayer and action on Mothering Sunday. I think that is W.J.W.D. to uplift the spirits and add some cheer and some joy into the lives of those isolated and feeling vulnerable. Since the plants were distributed and the invitation to light a candle was issued, we have received a number of messages of thanks and the assurance that a candle was lit as a visible sign of the light of Christ's love shining throughout the world.

Br Kenneth Evans

PYCC Challenge 2020

Following the success of the campers article about Summer Camp in last September's Messenger, PYCC are challenging every congregation to send an article produced by a child or young person to the Messenger (editorialteam@moravian.org.uk) in 2020. This is an opportunity for the wider church to hear what the younger members think about the church and society. The article can be words or

pictures, about anything. Suggestions are views about baptism, weddings or funerals, events at Easter, Christmas or other festivals, communion, all age services, Sunday School, youth groups, outings, reflections on wider issues such as climate change, poverty in society, education, housing etc. The experience of children and young people on their faith journey is also of interest.

Please encourage involvement in this. PYCC would love to see what our children and young people think. Articles can be sent to the Messenger editors but please also copy Joy Raynor in (youth@moravian.org.uk) so she can share with other PYCC members.

PS This is not an exercise in grammar or spelling, these can easily be corrected if need be.

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Greetings from the Provincial Board!

A few weeks ago, the Provincial Board wrote to all congregations and ministers regarding the decision to ask all congregations to suspend all regular Church activities, including Sunday and midweek worship until Easter. Due to developments in government advice we will be continuing with this suspension until further notice.

Church House continues to be closed, and members of the Church House Staff are working from home where possible.

As we have already said, now more than ever it is essential to remember that even if we cannot meet together physically, we still remain committed to one another as Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

We have heard of many examples of fellowship being continued in the virtual world or online, and the continued efforts of maintaining links and fellowship with our ecumenical partners. We are encouraged by all that you are doing and commend you to continue, especially as we are currently discerning new and exciting ways of being Church. The Church has been commissioned to respond to the needs of society, and it is a privilege to see how the Holy Spirit is leading us and will manifest into the future.

However, we do not underestimate the challenges in these difficult days. Our history and heritage remind us that, although the particular circumstances are different, we have overcome challenges before. Let us lift all our key workers, decision makers and all in authority in prayer. We also continue to pray for the most vulnerable in our society that they may know God's comfort.

As this situation continues, we again encourage good stewardship, asking everyone to maintain their financial giving. We are sure that each congregation has already discussed how best they can manage both their finances and buildings but would like to assure you of the continued support of the Provincial Board.

Yours in Christ's Service

Roberta Hoey

On behalf of the Provincial Board

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The conference centre at Swanwick has closed until the 31st May and thereafter will consider Government advice. This means that the Ministers retreat scheduled for the 18th May will now NOT take place and is cancelled - please amend your diaries accordingly.

The Provincial Board has also taken the decision to postpone Provincial Synod that was due to take place in July. This has now been rescheduled to the 11th-15th March 2021 but will still be held at the conference centre in Swanwick.

Hope you are all well – remember to look after your own health.

Br Mark Kernohan

On behalf of the Provincial Board

Online Church Service

Moravian church worship in the British Province is now available online. Sunday worship will be broadcast after 10.30am every Sunday on our new Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pg/britishmoravianchurch/videos.

Other updates will be published on our Facebook page and on the Moravian Church website under the 'Coronavirus Update' for now which can be found on the home page of the website: www.moravian.org.uk and also under the 'Provincial Life' menu at the top of the home page.

Baildon Beer Festival 2020

The Baildon Beer Festival due to be held 1-2 May has been postponed. We hope to find another date later in the year.

From Church House

Provincial Diary for May

The PEC are continuing to work remotely, with daily online meetings to ensure continuity across our entire organisation: Church, BMB, Schools & Property. Provincial Committees are meeting online where possible. Faith & Order met in April. PYCC are due to meet online on 16th May. Sr R Hoey was due to go to Star Mountain on 12th May to represent the BMB at the Unity Mission and Development Board but this has been postponed.

Congregational Register

Received into Membership

8th March 2020	Stephen Brown	Gomersal
8th March 2020	Joanne Brown	Gomersal

Deaths

26th February 2020	Chieftain Clifford Hackshaw	Harold Road
2nd March 2020	Wright Platt	Royton
4th April 2020	Janet Flood	Ockbrook

8	75th anniversary of VE Day
10-16	Christian Aid Week (www.christianaid.org.uk)
19	Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power/Destiny) - Muslim
21	Ascension Day
23	Eid-ul-Fitr - Muslim
	Ramadan ends
29	Shavuot - Jewish
31	Pentecost

Dates to remember!



From the Sanctuary

Recently, I walked into my dentist for my six-monthly check-up. I reported in at the reception and was told to go into the waiting room. As I entered the waiting room, I noticed that it had recently been decorated, and as my eyes scanned the room, taking in the changes in colour, I was drawn to a new picture on the wall. It was the famous photograph of the lighthouse surrounded by waves, taken by Jean Guichard.

It was one of those moments of 'Wow'. For me, the picture encapsulated a time in my life when my world felt like it was on the edge of falling through. I had felt like the person, standing in the doorway of the lighthouse, not sure if I would make it inside to safety, or be washed over the edge and drowned. Although the context may be different, I'm sure that many of us have been to that edge and wondered if we would be swept over, lose our footing in life, and possibly drown.

Yet, throughout all of that, I had a sense of being held by something greater than me. I felt loved, closely connected with God, cared for, strangely secure and surprisingly at peace in myself - not lost in the flood of life that was going on around me. Maybe I had disassociated with the reality of what was happening, but the love of God, through others, was my constant. And when I sometimes forget and get caught up in anxiety and fear (as I sometimes do), I have that picture to remind me of the truth of God's promise - that whatever life throws at us, the essence of who we are - our spirit - will never be destroyed. God will always be present in the midst of our problems. That doesn't mean that times won't be tough, and that life as we know it may change unrecognizably, or that death may even be our path. But God's presence will be there with us, if only we can be 'grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love'.

Br Peter Gubi
Dukinfield



Photos from International Women's Day & Rajpur Congregation
© Sr Roberta Hoey

Unity Prayer Watch is a global Moravian ministry, where over the whole year each Province ensures continual prayer and intercession for the Unity and the World. This year our Unity Prayer Watch allocation will begin on 26th June-9th July 2020. Roberta will send out district allocation and the World Mission Committee will send out Prayer notes in the coming months. Especially at this time we keep our whole Unity in prayer as each Province deals with the impact of Coronavirus.

productive time and wonderful to spend time in fellowship with our brethren in Rajpur and Delhi. Br Joachim Kreusel was due to spend an extended period of time in Leh, Ladakh with Br Erdmann Becker (Berlin, ECP) but this has been postponed. We look forward to sharing more details of the BMB trip soon and future plans.

The BMB are continuing to keep in touch with our brothers and sisters in India, Nepal and Western Tanzania: all are experiencing various forms of

restrictions on daily life and unable to meet together for worship each week.

Many Moravians in these areas, as in the British Province, continue to work on the frontlines as medical staff, in food production and in ministry. We pray for the 37 alumni of Moravian Institute in Rajpur who are working as Doctors, Nurses, Lab Technicians and Pharmacists and nine nursing students.

Like brothers and sisters here, the Moravian Church around the Unity have found different ways of being together, including meeting online and to continue ministry in all forms through Passion Week and Easter. We have heard from Moravian Church in Shey who have been able to contribute ₹200,000.00 to the relief fund for Ladakh.

Sr Roberta Hoey
British Mission Board

BMB (British Mission Board) News

The Moravian Messenger

Official Journal of the Moravian Church in the British Province.
Published monthly by the authority of the Provincial Synod.

Advertisements and all communications concerning distribution and supply should be sent to the Editorial Team.

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editorialteam@moravian.org.uk
Contributions for the Messenger should reach the editorial team by the 7th day of the preceding month.

Design & Artwork
David Bull
dave@redragdesign.co.uk

Printed & Distribution
G. R. Walkden
Tel 01253 681338