



## Not in Windsor

*Br Keith Dennis from the Hall Green Congregation was due to go to Windsor on Maundy Thursday to be presented by the Queen with a gift of Maundy Money. The foundation of the ceremony is our Lord washing the disciples' feet. On all other occasions, people receiving something from the Queen go to her: this is the one ceremony where she comes to the recipient!*

Br Keith writes: it would have been wonderful to go to Windsor and share in the Service with the Queen but the Royal Almonry Office, the Lord High Almoner (Right Rev Dr John Inge) and the Queen herself did all that they could to make the day special.

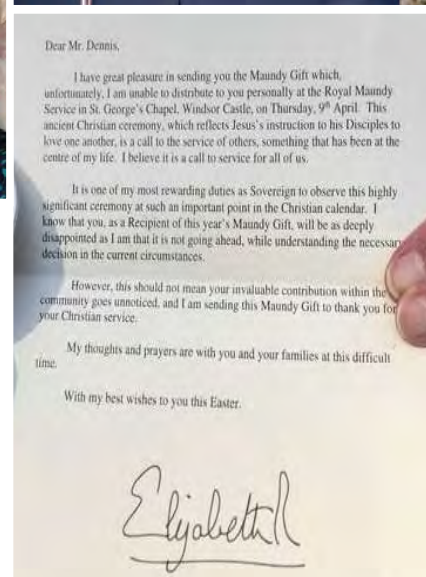
The postman came with a recorded-delivery parcel, with a Buckingham Palace postmark, a letter addressed to me from Her Majesty and the Maundy Money itself. The money came in two medieval-style leather purses. The red purse contained a £5.00 coin commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of William Wordsworth and a 50 pence coin portraying Team Great Britain in the 2020 Olympics. In the past this was an allowance for clothing and provisions. The white purse contains Maundy coins; silver pennies, twopences, threepences and fourpences totalling 94 pence, corresponding to the Sovereign's age.

Maundy Thursday brought us beautiful weather so we dressed up, just as we would have done had we gone to Windsor, watched the recording on the Royal website ([www.royal.uk](http://www.royal.uk)) of the Maundy Money being blessed in the Chapel Royal and had a lovely time together.

Thank you to the Rev Kate Stowe, Chaplain to the Bishop of Birmingham, for her care and to all of you for your love and interest. Kate's last email to me contained this prayer with which I finish.

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.*

**Br Keith Dennis**  
Hall Green

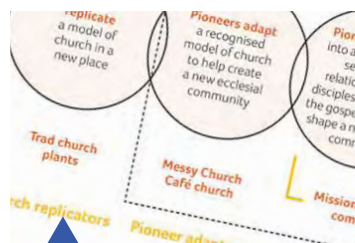


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**Open letter to all congregations**

(page 75)



**Pioneer Mission in Kensington and Chelsea**

(page 76)



**A Shared Egg**

(pages 78)



**Labrador: Off to the Unknown**

(page 79)

### Coronavirus - God's punishment for our wickedness?

Our local paper has been full of letters from Christians expressing the view that the Covid-19 pandemic is God's judgement on society. Just yesterday I was asked by a very gentle believer what I made of Covid-19: was it God's will and what did God want us to learn from it? The very question threw me back years to my theological college days and one of the lecturers saying that the only decent theology that could be expounded in a modern world was post Holocaust theology.

By that he meant that all our theologies and understandings of faith had to be measured alongside the atrocities of the extermination camps. How can we as Christians believe in a God who allows Bergen-Belsen to happen? How does it affect our view of God's sovereignty in the world? Do we believe all the bad things that happen in this world to be his will, his judgement on our fallen race?

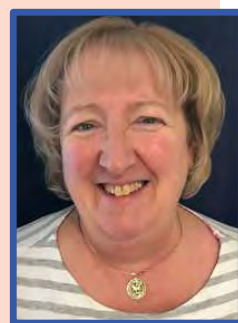
A number of theologians, after the Second World War, attempted to interpret what faith could look like seen through the lens of these atrocities. Jürgen Moltmann, one of the most influential of the post war theologians wrote 'The Crucified God'. In this book he sees God as the one who enters into human suffering, through Jesus on the cross

rather than a God from outside who causes death and sorrow.

It is fitting to reflect on this, 75 years after the liberation of the camps and nearly 75 years after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. God is not remote from but with us in all the worst that nature and humans can do to each other, 'God is on the gallows'. The most powerful exposition of this that I have seen recently is in a cartoon like picture by Caroline Beckett that shows Christ lying out on a hospital bed in a Covid ward, with his arms outstretched, attached to a ventilator with the letters INRI above his head and medical staff with halos, standing by.

God did not send this pandemic to punish or teach people; rather God is in the midst of it and with those who are suffering so badly, here and across the world. And those of us who are not suffering in this way are called to support those who are for 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:40)

**Sr Sarah Groves**  
Editorial Team



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### Letter to the Editorial Team

*I am dismayed by the publishing of Br Ingham's letter in the April Messenger. Br Ingham talks of traditional teachings with the implication that medieval understanding of Scripture cannot be changed by more enlightened study. Some people have compared the 'change' in understanding on same sex relationships to that of slavery. There are essentially seven verses of the Bible that appear to condemn homosexuality yet there are three times that number that appear to condone slavery. Slavery was widely practiced by Christians (even Moravians) for many years and was justified by the Bible. However more enlightened Christians reviewed their thinking and now the practice of slavery is anathema to most right-minded people.*

*Thus, it is so with same sex relationships. Going back to original scripture it is clear that the references to 'homosexuality' are not clear cut, instead they refer to incidences of rape, cultic prostitution, and pederasty. There is nothing to indicate that loving, committed, same sex relationships are condemned in any way. Indeed, the examples of Ruth and Naomi and Jonathon and David both show that close same sex relationships, whether sexual or not, can be celebrated. Additionally, in his healing*

*of the Centurion's Servant Jesus could be argued to be accepting of a same sex relationship as the original words that have been translated to 'servant' originally meant young lover which was a common place occurrence at that time.*

*The sin of Sodom was not anal intercourse; rather it was radical inhospitality, pride and rape. When condemning 'sodomy' or anal intercourse to give the proper name, it has been practiced by heterosexual couples for centuries as a method of birth control and to maintain female virginity! Is it the act himself he condemns or only when it involves two men?*

*I thank God that young people today are free to embrace who they are. They are not 'fallen' and need to be justified and sanctified, they are fearfully and wonderfully made just as God intended them to be. We are told that we should not consider as unclean anything that God has made, he made me as I am and I am not unclean! As a Church we should welcome ALL people and bless all loving committed relationships regardless of gender. The greatest commandment is to love one another.*

**Sr Susan Groves**  
Brockweir

*Biblical Verses used to condemn Homosexuality: Genesis 9:20-27 Genesis 19:1-11; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:10.*

*Biblical Verses used to condone Slavery, some passages contain more than one reference: Exodus 21:2-6; Exodus 21:7-11; Exodus 21:20-21; Leviticus 25:44-46; Luke 12:47-48; 1 Corinthians 7:21; Ephesians 6:5; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:22; Colossians 4:1; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 2:16; 1 Peter 2:18.*

*'Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships' by James V. Brownson*

In these most difficult extraordinary times of going the extra mile for our fellow men (and women) may I point out the imaginative things our PEC and some of our ministers are doing. I for one appreciate the extension of what is being done to try to keep our worship going through Palm Sunday, Passion Week Readings and Easter Sunday. If Synod 2020 does not take place we must remember now the work of our Chair who has worked for so long on her own. We must remember the ministers on PEC whose ideas came into being and we must thank our Chief Elder for inspiring our Church Board.

In Christ's Name,

**Br Alan Holdsworth**

# Open letter to all congregations of the British and the European Continental Provinces of the Moravian Church on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II in Europe



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Lord, let your mercy come to me, that I may live.  
Psalm 119, 77  
Watchword on May 8, 2020

## Dear Sisters and Brothers in different European countries!

The Second World War, the worst human catastrophe of the 20th century, came to an end in Europe 75 years ago. Triggered by the evil Nazi movement in Germany, this war cost the lives of millions, brought endless destruction, refugee misery, and shattered the way people lived together; in addition, there was the genocide of millions of Jews and other minorities in Europe in the concentration camps. We know that, apart from a few members, the Moravian Church in Germany did not resist what was happening clearly enough. All of this gives us reason to commemorate, to grieve, to perceive and admit guilt and to deal with still vivid memories and traumas.

We, as Bishops of the British and European Continental Provinces of the Moravian Church, write to you to remind you of what has happened, to be thankful for the liberation, and to look ahead, having confidence in the forgiveness God grants us. Remembering means: not forgetting and learning for today and for the future so that such catastrophes will not happen again.

We are grateful that although the bonds between our Provinces of the Moravian Church were shaken, they were not broken, over all these terrible events. Sisters and brothers of the Czech Province in particular suffered a lot. The occupation of their country was the beginning of the evil that started from Germany. We are impressed by the writing of Br C.H. Shawe, who was a bishop in the British Province. In May 1945, just before the end of the war, he wrote not only about the upcoming victory, but also about the future task of reconciliation.

Already in 1946, on the initiative of Br Shawe, a first Unity Conference was held in Montmirail, Switzerland, at which suffering and grief were named, and guilt and omissions were acknowledged. This cleared the way for steps towards a new reconciled community in our worldwide church. Soon there were again trips and meetings of individual sisters and brothers, meetings of different groups in our church and more events with the young

generation, who felt the responsibility but did not experience the stressful events of the war. Sadly, this was not possible for all the Moravian Churches as what became known as the Iron Curtain closed over large parts of Europe. Our brothers and sisters along with all the citizens of these countries including East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia and Albania suffered many years under communist oppression and this separation has left lasting scars and the need for further understanding and reconciliation. We recognise that there is still reconciling work to be done here.

We are grateful that - after all that has happened - the Provinces of the Moravian Church in Europe and America were able to reach out to each other. It must remain our commitment to work for the good of sisters and brothers in other Provinces.

In 1995, 50 years after the end of the war, Sisters and Brothers from many European countries met in Neuwied, Germany. Many people have fond memories of this time when people could speak freely about the past. It had taken time for some people to talk about the past which we all experienced in different ways. This prayer was said: "Lord, your grace is immeasurable and your love greater than human guilt. That is why you are the reason for our hope. You give us a new beginning, even if we have fallen so deeply, because who is in Christ is a new creature. ... So, we thank you for the gift of your reconciliation in our Moravian Church."

In Europe, the nations have moved towards each other and found good forms of cooperation, even if they are far from finding agreement on all political and economic issues. It makes us think that in recent times the unity in Europe has suffered from "Brexit".

However, we hope and ask our congregations to do everything to ensure that the unity of our church and its members continues to grow.

In Europe and around the whole world, we are facing new challenges that have been on the horizon for a long time, but we are only now realizing their enormous dimensions. The flow of refugees around the world is increasing. Armed conflicts, but

also the very serious damage to the environment are the reasons for this. Both are caused by global injustice and greed. We hear God's call to do everything possible that contributes towards the healing of all of creation. This includes caring for those in need, but also a resolute commitment against the causes of all kinds of miseries.

75 years after the end of the Second World War, it is clear that we as Christians have common tasks in the different countries of Europe. Brother Shawe wrote back in 1945: "We have to forego luxury so that other nations do not starve." These words still apply after 75 years as they did then. God has entrusted us his earth so that we can work together to keep it habitable.

This year the threatening pandemic has shown us how vulnerable life is in spite of all prosperity. The necessary restrictions on our usual freedom are painful and severely disturb our community life. Many people become lonely and sick, fears awaken, and sometimes we don't even know because we don't meet people. But we also have to think of those who are hit much harder by this time because the health system in their countries is not so well developed. People in refugee camps around the world will be the hardest hit of all.

It now helps us to find new forms of communication and to use them responsibly. We can discover anew that Daily Watchwords, singing and praying with each other and for each other, even in small groups at home, creates a connection with God and with people, even if we can't see each other. We would like to thank everyone who, in this difficult time, is working in various ways for cohesion in their communities and keeping alive worldwide contact in the Moravian Unity.

God's blessings be with you all.

We greet you with a verse from the oldest known song of the Moravian Church dating from the late 15th century in what is now known as Czechia, number 302 in our hymn book.

***And in your love may we abide,  
Estranged from none by wrath or pride,  
Among ourselves at unity  
And with all else in charity.***

Bishops from the British Province:

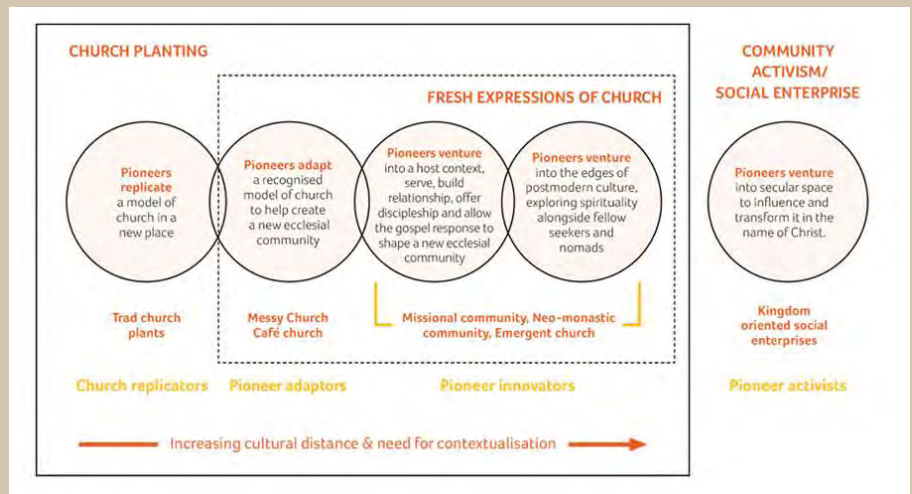
**Sarah Groves**  
**John McOwat**  
**Joachim Kreusel**

Bishops from the European Continental Province:

**Humbert Hessen** (Netherlands)  
**Theodor Clemens** (Germany)  
**Friedrich Waas** (Germany)  
**Volker Schulz** (Switzerland)

# Pioneer Mission in Kensington and Chelsea

**Sr Clare Maxwell gives us an update on her half time calling to work in Pioneer Mission**



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The pioneer ministry I am developing now has a name 'Lambs Way Ministry' based on this passage of scripture: 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Luke 12:32).

Lambs Way Ministry operates in the hope of allowing people to discover and go on their own journey with God including, if appropriate, the discovery of God.

Over the last few months I have been out and about around Chelsea, chatting to people, forming connections and researching informally and more formally through statistics in what direction the Pioneer Ministry that is 'Lamb's Way Ministry' should focus its attention.

Just before Easter I had explained over the preaching or leading worship, to the Fetter Lane Congregation, exactly what I understood Pioneer Ministry to be and where I foresee my Pioneer Ministry going in Chelsea. Although the commission to Pioneer Ministry is separate to my ministry at Fetter Lane, the sharing of information is important, particularly as some members are now looking to be involved in developing the Pioneer Ministry once the Covid-19 lockdown is lifted.

Currently four of us are due to meet after Covid-19 Lockdown. Creating a team around this project was and is important for the longevity and sustainability of the project and also, because it is about recognising that the person commissioned as a Pioneer cannot do everything and because God is in the gathering of two or three.

I want to explain where I understand Lamb's Way Ministry is placed on the model that is called the Pioneer Spectrum.

'Lamb's Way Ministry' currently resides as a Pioneer innovator: 'Pioneer venture into the edges of postmodern culture, exploring spirituality alongside fellow seekers and

nomads'. We are currently working through an art-based ministry.

As you may now be working out, Pioneering covers a broad spectrum and what is challenging is that the Pioneer Ministry that I am working on is less about 'numbers of people' success' but more focused on the value of journeying. The challenges are that we are all naturally inclined to look first at numbers to denote whether anything is successful, whereas this side of the Pioneer Ministry undoubtedly values the depth of engagement. The quality of a conversation for instance is a marker of success verses ten people attending this time. I think this is a counter-cultural but very Biblical based value, however it doesn't make it easier to understand. We grow up in a culture that values 'bums on seats' first and that includes most churches.

Lambs Way Ministry has now found its life very focused on Art. This decision has come from various places. We have had several artists approach Fetter Lane because of its acre of space (Green space is rare in Chelsea). Sharon (the graveyard space) itself has a history of artists which continues today. Furthermore, I, and others in conversations, agree that art is possibly the only thing that will link the community who experience a large wealth divide. On our street of King's Road, we have a social housing estate on one side and million-pound houses on the other. Art has the ability to cross cultures and be accessible no matter your wealth or status or indeed ability to speak English (we reside in a very multi-lingual area).

What is most significant with art from a theological perspective is that there is no 'correct interpretation of art'. This is true for literature too but as you can imagine this is harder for people to grasp. Art has less restrictions verses literature and this is important if we are to curate honest, authentic seeking. Thus, the Pioneer

Ministry is now focused on art.

We were due to have an exhibition of art on display in Sharon beginning in Holy Week which was in collaboration with Chelsea Methodist Church but this has now been postponed. This was to launch one of three art installations this year (the other two were going to be run independently by us) on different Christian themes. We hope we still may be able to do them in some form if not, eventually, the intended form.

Instead we have had to go online (details at the end of this article) and have already had one successful online series for 'Passionweek' with people curating conversations and reflections which is wonderful to see. Beginning on 27th March we launched a new series called 'Christ in Covid' which was made up of various artist's interpretations of the brief. Our audience online is wider than Chelsea but we hope once this time has passed to really focus back on our Chelsea grassroots. The aim is always to Pioneer in context. Our online side will not stop but it will be secondary for 'Lambs Way Ministry'.

I think the most important aspect of a Pioneer Ministry is to spend time listening. Even in amidst the doing. It is about listening out for God's voice. This time cannot be overlooked and so prayer walking and prayer time is vital for this ministry. If you feel inclined, please do add us to your prayer list over the next few months. Lambs Way Ministry hope to be able to share some of the Good News of the Kingdom very soon with those in Chelsea once more.



**Sr Claire Maxwell**  
Minister at Fetter Lane Congregation

Facebook: search Lambs Way Ministry <https://www.facebook.com/lambswayministry>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WayLambs> - Twitter Handle is @WayLambs  
Instagram: Lambs Way ministry - Handle is lambswayministry

# One Plus One

(A United Reformed Church Publication)

The sixth article  
on understanding  
marriage in 21st  
Century:

## Marriage and Sexual Relationships

Both within the church, and in the world outside the church, we encounter people in a variety of different sexual relationships. We may know people who are single and are sexually active. There are heterosexual and same sex married couples. We will probably know or encounter people in a sexual relationship who are living together. Those who are cohabiting may be saving up to get married and buy a house. Or they may be cohabiting for other financial and/or practical reasons. They may be testing out living together before they commit themselves to one another in marriage. They may be a couple who see no reason to marry to cement their relationship. How should the Church respond pastorally to these relationships? Should the Church be condemning, tolerant, understanding or accepting? And if the Church is accepting of these relationships, does this undermine the institution of marriage?

In one of the personal reflections in 'One Plus One', the writer of that reflection asks if marriage is primarily about the relationship, or about undergoing the right ceremony and entering into a legal contract. The writer says, "If the couple are committed to each other, care for each other, respect and nurture each other, (why) do we need to ask further questions or make further demands of their relationship? Why should the Church - or Christians - be concerned whether a couple have entered into a legal contract, which in itself has nothing to do with faith? Are we suggesting that God cannot accept or recognise the relationship unless and until a couple have gone through a man-made legal ceremony?"

Some may describe a cohabiting couple as 'living in sin', i.e. living in an immoral way. The author of the reflection, firstly, understands the word 'sin' to refer to evil or wrong-doing, and asks, "but where is the evil, or who is wronged, when a couple live and love faithfully together?" The writer goes on to say, "Secondly, I believe the term 'living in sin' is the language of faith, and only really has meaning in a spiritual context. So, the question becomes: 'How can a legal document address or alter a couple's spiritual state?'"

For the author, this naturally leads on to reflecting on the spiritual dimension of marriage, and the emphasis on the couple acknowledging their relationship before God and asking God to bless and be an important part of their life together. However, the writer points out that in church life the question, 'Are you married' is rarely followed by, 'Where or how did the marriage take place?' This is something we noted in a previous article in this series, i.e. that in the Moravian Church today, along with many other Christian churches, we accept a non-religious civil wedding as valid and do not require the couple to undergo any additional religious ceremony or blessing (see the April 2020 edition of the Moravian Messenger). The author of the reflection points out that it can so easily appear that "If you've got the certificate, you're OK. If you haven't, you're not."

The writer then asks, "How often do we celebrate the longevity of a legal marriage rather than the quality of the relationship?" The point is made that there may be married couples continuing to live together, even though they are unhappy and virtually living separately, because they believe it is the 'Christian thing to do'. Also, how do we reconcile the situation where an unmarried Christian couple who are cohabiting may be thought to be living in sin, whilst a non-Christian couple who choose to have a non-religious civil wedding are accepted as being married?

The reflection goes on to argue that when thinking about marriage and cohabiting couples, it is the relationship and commitment of the partners that matters. The writer says, "To love, honour, care, respect and cherish must surely come about through the commitment of the couple rather than through a legal document. Similarly, I believe their 'rightness' with God comes about through their relationship with God and their relationship with each other."

Personally speaking, we the authors of this article both still believe strongly in the institution of marriage, and this should involve the couple asking God to bless and be part of their life together. However, we believe we need to recognise, and give thanks for, the goodness and presence of God that is experienced in other relationships as well.

What do you think? How would you define marriage? Is it, first and foremost, a legal contract? Or is it, first and foremost, a relationship?

Is the Church too accepting, or not accepting enough, of sexual relationships outside of marriage, especially cohabiting couples? If the Church is too accepting of such relationships, does this undermine the institution of marriage? On the other hand, if we are too condemning in this regard, will it make it harder for the Church to connect with cohabiting couples and, therefore, more difficult to help those couples contemplate the possibility of marriage?

Should the Church lay greater emphasis on the need for a couple to have their wedding blessed by God - either when they are actually married, or at a later date, if the wedding is a non-religious civil wedding?



**Brn Martin Smith  
& Philip Cooper**  
Ministers at Royton,  
Salem and Fairfield  
Congregations



# A Shared Egg

In 1980 there was a Provincial Synod at Harlesden and during that week Beth took Ian and our niece, Gwynneth, to see her father and step-mother, Pat and Autumn Craig who were living at Springfield in Jamaica. As Westwood minister I could not miss Synod to travel with them and having been elected again to be Provincial Youth Secretary I was to lead the Summer Schools at Fulneck before I could set off for Jamaica.

When I did get to Heathrow I learned that Hurricane Allen had caused my flight to be cancelled!

So, wondering what to do I phoned Fred and Olive Linyard and arranged to stay with them in Muswell Hill. With time to spare and not knowing what to do in my frustration I cut the lawns at Creighton Avenue. Lawns I was to cut regularly in later years when we lived there.

The next morning, I was at Heathrow very early and managed to get a seat on a British Airways flight travelling via Bermuda to Jamaica. Our plane arrived after the currency changers had closed so I had no Jamaican dollars and had to beg to be allowed to make a phone call. I chose to call Bishop Hastings and fortunately Selwyn and Pansy could offer me a bed and he drove to the airport to pick me up.

Before breakfast I remember Pansy asking me if I would share an egg with the Bishop! I don't remember whether it was poached or fried but I soon learned that there was a great shortage of regular supplies with very little on the supermarket shelves. It was called panic buying because of the proximity of Castro's communist Cuba. Not wanting to go into the politics I will just say I was very grateful to Pansy for giving up her half egg so that the guest could have breakfast.

The journey from Kingston was memorable for the variety of vehicles. First a minibus to Mandeville, then a car to Santa Cruz, followed by a van to Middle Quarters and finally the Springfield Special bus for the last stage. What a lovely welcome from the family members who had no idea how or when I might arrive.

The uncertainty of this tale is not unlike our current situation in the pandemic where we have no idea of when things will happen or if they will take place or for how long they will go on.

Many of us have seen empty shelves and may have bought a few extra supplies. Some will have lost loved ones and others wonder what would happen about a funeral and everyone is affected in some way or other by the lockdown. We have to stay in and wait for someone to bring us supplies of food and we must keep a safe distance apart. Isolation is not really in our nature but it has to be practiced. We are so grateful for all the dedicated N.H.S. and care staff and friends for their love and care.

Some have said it is like living in the Second World War and that may be true but there are differences. I started in the Kindergarten at Fulneck when Miss Currie was Head before war had been declared. I remember the worried looks of my parents as we listened to the wireless and heard the Prime Minister say we are 'at war with Germany'. It was soon after that that we were all issued with gas masks to wear whenever we heard the air raid sirens and we were supposed to keep them on until we



heard the 'all clear'. Mine came in a small square brown cardboard box which I could hang around my neck when going to school. I think I wished I had been given one like my little brother's which had a very rubbery Mickey Mouse face. Our iron railings were cut down and any metal things like pots and pans we could spare were needed for building ships and planes, and all road signs disappeared in order to confuse an invading army.

It was a relief to hear the 'all clear' siren for we knew we had not been bombed or gassed that time, and could come out of the air-raid shelter which my father had built in the cellar of the house where we lived. My father was an essential worker, being a doctor, and had to look after the patients in three practices as his two partners were called up to serve in the army medical corps. When petrol was rationed my father had a big bicycle in readiness to be used for visiting patients in case he could not use the car. He had a big black 'tin' hat which he wore when out on air-raid duty.

I do remember going to see Dr Rusby's surgery with a corner of the building all missing where a bomb, probably meant for the tank factory in Armley, had hit. We were fortunate in Leeds compared with the reports we heard from the other cities but we did grow up with a sense of fear.

Not knowing how or when the enemy would strike. The fear grew when Japan also became the enemy although that was a long way away but some of the men had to go and fight in the Far East. Rationing of food, yes and sweets, did cause the creation of some very unusual recipes but it did mean that everybody had a share - even if there were no bananas. Nor were there any oranges. For Christingles our candles were stuck in rock buns. We were encouraged to use our gardens for growing food and had to 'Dig for Victory'. Clothes rationing tested the needle work skills in 'making do and mend' like darning socks that had holes and letting down hems and I do remember going to a knitting group and knitting squares with which to make soldiers' blankets! In a strange and wonderful way, the nation and commonwealth came together more closely to work for the war effort and beat the Nazi propaganda.

There are similarities throughout these experiences and while there are differences too, there has been one constant to encourage and support and uplift us all, and that is our faith and trust that God gives us through Jesus. The Risen Lord of the church shows us that while things may be difficult now we will come through - and hopefully we may continue to work together for a better world for all people.

**Br John McOwat**  
Fulneck



# Labrador: Off to the Unknown



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The outbreak of the viral pandemic over the past weeks has changed our daily lives dramatically. It has meant, amongst other things, a great deal more time in the house seeking out things to occupy the many hours now at our disposal.

The forced isolation has put an end to regular grocery shopping and we have had to think ahead to what we will need and this prompted me to think of our time in Labrador almost 50 years ago where we had to plan what food needed to be ordered in to see us through seven months of winter, isolated from the outside world but in a very different way.

## The Adventure Begins:

Wendy and I were married at Ockbrook Moravian Church in August 1971 by her father, Ivor Packer, followed by a three-day honeymoon in Bath and a few days at home. We left a week later to go to Nain, Labrador, Canada, to teach in the Jens Haven Memorial School. How we acquired the jobs and what set those wheels in motion is a story for another day.

We were due to fly from Heathrow airport, the first time in a plane for me, though not for Wendy. All the family (and I mean ALL the family) wanted to see us off. We said our goodbyes to family members and left them to find their way to the observation deck while we made our way to board an Air Canada DC8 bound for Montreal. Three weeks later we received a letter from Wendy's mother telling us that they were sure that they had actually seen us waving through the

plane windows as we departed. The reality was that our plane was grounded for more than three hours because of



© Br Robert Hopcroft

engine problems and the family members were probably back in Ockbrook and Stafford while we were still on the ground in London! Three quarters of the way across the Atlantic we were informed that unfortunately there were still minor problems with an engine and we would be landing at Gander International Airport in Newfoundland for an overnight stop and a flight would be arranged for the next day to Montreal. The following morning, we arose after a few hours' sleep and I flung back the curtains to look out upon a wheel-less tractor sitting in a barren landscape for as far as the eye could see. Welcome to Canada!

Late at night we collected our matching pair of blue antler suitcases (his and hers) and were checked into a rather seedy motel near to the airport and told to report to the Air Canada desk the following morning.

We arrived, checked in for an afternoon flight to Montreal and whiled away our time at the airport. All went well and we arrived in Montreal (covering 900 miles) too late to catch a flight to Goose Bay, Labrador and had to spend another night in a motel. If my Canadian geography had been better at the time I should have realised that we could have caught a flight direct from Gander to Goose Bay (about 300 miles) thus avoiding travelling 900 miles west in order to return 600 miles east the following day!

Upon our arrival in Goose Bay we were met by the Superintendent of the Labrador East Integrated School Board, Mr Frank Roberts, who informed us that because of the delay in arriving in Goose Bay the next flight to Nain, our final destination, wasn't due to leave for another two days! While we were waiting for flights we were at least able to visit the Moravian Church in Happy Valley/Goose Bay to where Br and Sr Dickinson and family had recently moved.

We were fine, married for less than two weeks arriving in a foreign land with no idea what the Nain Community would be like - but it was the start of an adventure which changed our lives!!

**To be  
continued ...**

**Br Bob  
Hopcroft**  
Fulneck



# The Church's Mission to Urban Estates

In January, 2020, the Provincial Faith & Order & Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Provincial Mission & Society Committee sent out a joint letter to all the Church Committees in the British Province of the Moravian Church concerning urban estates. This letter was prompted by a letter that had been received from the Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Burnley and Chair of the Church of England Estates Evangelism Task Force.

Bishop Philip wrote that there has been a slow withdrawal of the mainstream churches from urban estates throughout the nation. This has not been a deliberate strategy of the churches, but is due to the difficulties involved in ministering on these estates. He writes: "Our research suggests that of the 1,500 largest estates in the country, over 400 do not have an obvious Church of England worship centre ..." The bishop does, however, recognise that many of these estates will be served by churches of other denominations.

The letter from the above two Provincial committees asked four questions:

1. Do you consider your church to be situated on or within working distance of an urban social housing estate? If your answer is 'yes', please answer questions 2, 3 and 4 below.
2. How involved in the life of your congregation are the people who live on these urban estates?
3. What activities, including worship, does your congregation provide for these communities?
4. Are there ways in which the Province could support and help you in this work? If there are ways in which we (the two committees mentioned above) can help, we will try to do so.

The responses to the letter roughly fell into three categories. The first was those congregations who answered, 'no' to the first question. The second category was those congregations who answered 'yes' to the first question, but were not involved in the urban estates nearby, or only in a limited way. Sometimes this limited involvement was due to the Church Committee feeling that their congregation was doing all it could and had no spare capacity. Sometimes it was because there were other churches, in closer proximity, already engaging with these estates. The third category was those congregations that answered 'yes' to question one and were involved in the urban estates nearby. It should be noted that in all three categories, in some cases, people from these estates were members of or attended the church. Two Church Committees said that the letter had encouraged them to think about how their congregation might engage more with the urban estate(s) nearby. None of the Church Committees asked for any specific support or help, but it was pointed out that prayer and financial help is always welcome.

All Church Committees stated that their congregation's worship services, activities and events were open to all people. These activities included Bible study groups, prayer groups, uniformed groups, parents, carers and tots' groups, a Toddler and Tinies' Church Service, Pioneer Ministry, art-based ministry, Busy Fingers, youth groups, community lunches, a Green Fingers Plant Swap Coffee Morning, an annual free party (with entertainment and food), a monthly film club, men's fellowships, women's groups (including the Moravian Women's Association circles) and groups working around the area of dementia. In addition, many of our church premises are used for community activities and occasional events, such as birthday parties, etc.

One congregation runs a hamper project in collaboration with the local Social Service Department and local housing forums to provide help to those who are struggling to provide for their families, e.g. food, clothing, toys, etc. I know of at least one other congregation that ran a similar project over the Easter holiday period. Many of our congregations also support foodbanks.

In his letter, Bishop Philip North acknowledges that these estates can be difficult to live on and minister to, but are places where the church needs to be, speaking a message of hope and standing up for justice. Bishop Philip points out that in the synagogue at Nazareth, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus said that his mission was to proclaim good news to the poor. Thus, this a Gospel priority. He writes: "If we are serious about renewing a nation for Christ, we need to find ways of reversing years of withdrawal from the estates."

Congregations need to be realistic and sensible about how much they can do. As one Church Committee quite rightly commented: "There is always more that we can do, but we feel that it is important to do all that we do, well ... we focus with joy on what we can do, rather than on what we aren't doing, and we consider ourselves to be truly blessed, and to be a blessing in our local community."

So, let me finish by thanking everyone who took the time and effort to respond to the letter from the two Provincial committees, and a very big thank you to all of you who are serving God and your communities, through the life, witness and activities of your congregation. If the Provincial Faith & Order & Ecumenical Relations Committee or the Provincial Mission & Society Committee can be of any help, please contact us.

**Br Philip Cooper**  
Minister at Fairfield Congregation



## Baildon

'It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good'

To a greater or lesser degree, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, resulting in The Great Lock Down, has affected us all. Mostly for the worse! However, one quite extraordinary thing has happened! The different ways of communicating with each other that have suddenly sprung up. Online church services we can all join in, with WhatsApp and Zoom groups we can not only communicate with one other person, but with groups of friends and not just hear but see them! People are starting to write letters again and never forget my beloved phone!

Yesterday morning a message on the church WhatsApp commented that because we had had to cancel the Spring Tidy Up Morning in March the grass was growing fast and if not cut soon could cause a problem. The result? By seven o'clock last night the mowers had been picked up and taken home where someone who knows about the mysteries of mowers had got them working, fuel bought, two strong young men and a girl enlisted to help by a redoubtable mother and low and behold ... the grass cut! The wonderful smell of fresh mown grass enveloped the village when we all went out to clap for the NHS at 8pm. A big thank-you to the Sykes Family from us all ...

As I write this I feel surrounded by a 'great cloud of witnesses' of men and women and youngsters who down the years have laboured in our lovely grounds to keep them tidy and welcoming. Some of their names are very dear to me but best not name them for fear of forgetting someone, so I'll end with the little verse that's on our seat next to the Garden of Remembrance.



© Sr Clara Sykes

***A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!  
Rose plot,  
Fringed pool,  
Fern'd grot -  
The veriest school  
Of peace; and yet the fool  
Contents that God is not -  
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?  
Nay, but I have a sign;  
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.  
Thomas Edward Brown (1830-1897)***

***Sr Libby Mitchell***

## Fairfield

Sr Sarah Haldane came up with the idea of an Easter Hamper project to help local vulnerable families and women in crisis. Contact was made with Tameside Social Services who agreed this would be helpful to many local families in Droylsden. As the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic became evermore serious Social Services then



© Sr Denise Lee

asked if we could help more families as by this time Droylsden had no food banks open. Srs Sarah Haldane and Denise Lee then sent out the call for donations; never had they expected their call to be answered so generously. Of course, the congregation responded, but they also received donations from Fairfield Tots Time, Manchester Road Primary School, Parfitt's Cash and

Carry and Reddish Vale Football Teams. They then received an amazing boost of goods to the value of around £300 from the local Morrisons store and more still from The Lazy Toad landlord Alan and staff of around another £300. All of which meant that 15 local families who couldn't reach a Foodbank received parcels not just for Easter but again the following week. Within those families each of the 43 children also received a chocolate Easter Egg. A social worker collected and then distributed the parcels and everyone who donated can be assured that their donations made a difference.

During this period of staying indoors, each Thursday at 8pm Br Anthony Torkington rings the church bell whilst Fairfield residents stand on their doorsteps and clap for the NHS. On 30th April, the bell was rung 100 times at 7.55 to mark the 100th birthday of Captain Tom Moore, followed by the singing of Happy Birthday.

Each Sunday the residents have come to their doorsteps at 10am to sing together two well-known hymns followed by the Lord's Prayer, and they can then be inside in ample time to follow the 10.30am service on Facebook.

Of course, not all residents in the Square have a garden so it is good that people are able to use the College gardens to exercise, relax and play with their children whilst complying with the social distancing guidance. A timely reminder to us all to value and care for the open spaces we have and give our wonderful planet a chance to restore itself.

***Sr Margery Sutcliffe***

## Harlesden

We thank our God for His grace and mercies. Our prayer is for all congregations, that you become stronger and closer to God; as we pray and interact with the various ways of praising our Lord from home and battle to overcome the effects of the coronavirus / lockdown.

Rev Edward Sanniez returned to Harlesden as the preacher at the Men's Fellowship anniversary on 20th October 2019. The Rev Dr Livingstone Thompson of the Moravian Church led our Harvest service on Sunday 29th September 2020. The Rev Dr Andrew Prasad, the URC Moderator led the Church Anniversary service on Sunday 3rd November 2019; where he advised that, he would be retiring in February 2021.

We have four active lay preachers and a retired minister who lead services throughout the year on a rota basis. The local ecumenical Advent service was held at St. Matthew's Parish church on Sunday 1st December at 4pm. It was very well attended by all Churches.

The Christingle service was well attended by the relatives and friends of the children. Sr V D'Oyley was able to attend with her nephew Trevor, after a long spell away. Sr Christine Emmanuel stood in as the worship leader during the Christmas Day and Watchnight services.

We welcomed Sr Victoria from the Salvation Army Fellowship who had a short placement with us in November / December 2019.



© Br Edwin Quillan

## News of the Congregation -

We welcomed into membership Sr B Davis and Br E Bruce by confirmation and accepted Sr E Johnson by reception.

We celebrate all birthdays by singing the 'birthday song'. The church presented a bouquet of flowers to Br S Wilkie and Sr O Elliott, as they celebrated their 80th birthdays.

Bible Studies is scheduled on Wednesday at 7.30pm. Our keep fit class is held on a Wednesday at 12.30pm and is now in its 14th year under the leadership of Sr L Henry.

We continue with our Intercessory prayer session on Friday at 1.15pm. Additional to this we hold a prayer meeting on the 1st Saturday of the month.

We thank the Lord for the vast amount of colourful flowers displayed each Sunday and on special occasions within the Church by the flower team. We thank all those who have contributed towards their special occasions and those who have just donated something towards the flower fund.

Junior Church: on 15th December a group of children and young people visited Covent Gardens to see the lights and to have a meal. It was a wonderful occasion for those who attended. The Junior Church chose the

Trussell Trust as the charity which they wanted to support because of their quest to address the challenges that poverty imposes on children and their families. Through the efforts of everyone we raised a total of £300; that was presented to the local Trussell Trust in Harlesden.

**Geneva Adjai**

## Tytherton

As I bring you my annual contribution to the Messenger from the beautiful and peaceful surroundings of East Tytherton, it is hard to imagine the turmoil that engulfs the world at this moment in time. While we all make sacrifices and thank those who protect and look after us, perhaps it is of comfort and reassurance that, in spite of the church's closed doors, we have just celebrated Easter with its message of love and hope.

It seems an eternity since it was harvest festival. This occasion was really well supported and so many commented on how lovely it was to take part in a traditional service with lots of amazing produce, much of it produced locally. (The previous day it had been the annual Ride & Stride with many participants watching the decorating and flower arranging as they enjoyed well-earned drinks and biscuits!) Our speaker this year was the Vicar from Bremhill and surrounding villages, Lynda Carter. She opened her message with Genesis, chapter 1, verses 11-13, which begins, 'Then God said, Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds'. She followed this by a very thought-provoking talk on the environment and the impact our lack of concern for the earth will have for future generations. A sale of produce followed while the congregation enjoyed coffee and homemade cakes.

In October we had a Heritage Weekend. Nigel Pocock welcomed many visitors in our Church room, in which he had displayed a lot of interesting documentation. We held one of our 'burial ground' days the same day, when volunteers come and give a hand to burn all the debris, cut back vegetation and clean the ancient stones.



Burial ground, Easter 2020

© Sr Anne Waldron

On the 19th October our church was used to host a music concert. The five musicians played flutes, violins, violincello, organ and harpsichord. In the second half the Soprano, Janet Coxwell, enthralled us as she sang, Bach, Haydn and Mozart. It was a wonderful evening of the kind of music that would have

been played in the Moravian Church in the early years, including that of the Moravian minister, Christian Ignatius Latrobe. Born in 1758 in the Fulneck Settlement, he was also an artist and a musician and actually visited East Tytherton in 1797. He died in 1836 in Fairfield. Once again, the church was congratulated on its wonderful acoustics. The concert raised over £200 at the door and a donation of £100 was given to the church.

As always, our church was full for the village Christingle service and, once again, we thank Nic Pillow for organising this wonderful event that brings the entire village together.

On 5th February 2020 we welcomed Belle Aurora Anne Johnson to the world. We congratulate our tenants, Jessie and Jack on the birth of their daughter, a sister for Oscar.

As we look forward to opening our church doors again we thank all those who support us throughout the year, with a special thank you to Paul Gubi, who comes over from Bath twice a month to take services, and his wife Maureen.

**Sr Anne Mellowes Waldron**

# Spanish Flu 1918

The world witnessed another pandemic in 1918 - one that lasted from January 1918 to December 1920. During that time the infection reached no less than 500 million. The pictures of the masks above are eerily reminiscent of the ones worn one hundred years later.

My grandfather was Henry James Nixon. He was a survivor of the Spanish Flu and died when I was a baby. My memories of him are formed from the pictures and stories that I have had shared with me. Apparently, I commented that he looked rather like Kojak (if you are of an age to remember him!). Henry was similarly bald but without the signature lollipop and 'who loved ya baby' phrase that is so associated with the actor.

According to my Aunt Mary (who will be 98 in July), he only ever spoke of the pandemic once. He had thought he was going to die, and various members of his family attended to him with large quantities of wet cloths. He survived, but many of his friends did not. The disease was particularly prevalent amongst young men in their twenties to forties.



© Sr Kathryn Dunn

The one time that he did speak about it he is reported to have said 'Thank God you will never witness anything like this in your lifetime'. Sadly, for Aunt Mary, and indeed for all of us, he was wrong in this assumption.

**Sr Kathryn Dunn**

*Diaspora*



© Sr Sarah Groves

## Moravian Church Residential Property

The Moravian Church regularly writes to congregations asking them to publicise from the pulpit any notices including vacancies for tenants in houses owned by the church primarily in Moravian settlements.

The way the allocation was completed has recently come under some scrutiny from GDPR. The Estates board committee which has a representative from each settlement were to meet to discuss a new way of advertising and allocating property to tenants. Due to the scourge of Covid-19 this committee was not able to meet. Therefore, the Provincial Board have taken on the allocation of some properties but they still require to be advertised, so would appreciate if Church Secretaries and Ministers responsible for congregation newsletters could advertise the following:

If any member or any member knows of a person or family who may like to rent a Moravian property they can place themselves on a register of interest with our Estate manager Mr John Forrester by contacting him by: Tel: 01772 421566 or Email: [info@johnforrester.co.uk](mailto:info@johnforrester.co.uk)

There are currently two properties available for rent and details can be obtained by contacting Mr Forrester.

1. **189 Quarry Road, Gomersal, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire.**
2. **Serendipity, 1 Fulneck Settlement, Pudsey, Leeds.**

## From Church House

### Provincial Diary for June

- 4th June Church Service Committee (Online)  
26th June-9th July Unity Prayer Watch (British Province)

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.

## Congregational Register

### Deaths

28th March 2020	Reginald Walter Knighton	Fairfield
31st March 2020	Nona Winifred Harvey	Fulneck

1	Whit Monday
5	World Environment Day ( <a href="http://www.worldenvironmentday.global">www.worldenvironmentday.global</a> )
7	Trinity Sunday
15-21	Refugee Week ( <a href="http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk">www.refugeeweek.org.uk</a> )
17	Renewal of the Brethren's Church: beginning of the building of Herrnhut by the immigrants from Moravia in 1722
20	Summer Solstice
21	Father's Day
22	Windrush Day
26	International Day in Support of Victims of Torture ( <a href="http://www.un.org/en/events/torturevictimsday/">www.un.org/en/events/torturevictimsday/</a> )

*Dates to remember!*

## MORAVIAN PROVINCIAL MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Can you see the light at the end of the tunnel or even the keyhole in your door when it's dark?

**No?! ...then why not buy a handy little torch today?**



Ideal on a keyring, in or on a handbag.

Just there when you need it.

Only £2.50 inc. batteries.

Support the Provincial Men's Fellowship as they continue to raise funds to support their annual projects.

To purchase a torch or torches just contact Rev K. G. Evans on **01924 496967** or alternately **k.evans10@ntlworld.com**

Thank you for your support.



# From the Sanctuary

I was thinking the other day, whilst looking at a beautiful rainbow, that the word 'Minister' is a strange word. 'Minister' is a word that can mean two opposing things at the same time. It can mean both 'chief' or 'head of' (as in Government - Prime Minister), and it can mean 'servant' (one who acts in subservience to the will of another).

The other day I was working at my desk and there was a knock on my office door. It was 'Ged', the man who cleans my office. I stopped what I was doing, swung my chair away from my desk to face him, and we had a friendly chat. We 'encountered' each other. Ged had been an engineer for British Aerospace and had been offered early retirement - which he took. Now, he cleaned the offices, corridors and toilets of the building that I work in. I have always been struck by Ged's peace and contentment with life, and he and I talked about how 'at peace' he was with his lot. It shone through his presence and impacted on those of us around him. It certainly impacted on me - and I envied him - and I told him so, which made him smile. When he left the office, I got to thinking about the fact that I couldn't do my job without Ged (or the work he does), and yet he wouldn't be employed without me (or the work I do). We were dependent on each other, and each of us served the other. We both 'ministered' to each other, indirectly through our work, and directly through our encounter with each other.

In Matthew Ch 20: 26, we read, 'Among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all.' Those are powerful words, and words that are sometimes difficult to see lived out in the politics of Church life. Yet, our interdependence on each other means that the terms 'great' and 'servant' (and even 'slave') are cancelled out, as the spiritual reality is that we are all of equal worth and of equal value in service of each other, and in the sight of God. That does not mean that we are all the same - but nonetheless, we are equally 'of value'. Indeed, our difference is to be celebrated. It is no accident that the rainbow is a symbol of celebrating difference, as well as a symbol of hope.

Sometimes the Church loses sight of this truth about celebrating difference, as it gets caught up in unimportant discussions about the ordination of women bishops and practicing homosexuals, or the authenticity of apostolic succession that is supposed to give theological credibility to Bishops. Our competence in ministry lies in recognising the value of each other and responding to that value with humility, empathy, compassion and love, by responding from God's love for us in our encounter with each other as God's children, seeking to value, and connect with the Divine within the other. That is what ministry is really about - and we are all Ministers.

*Br Peter Gubi Dukinfield*

## Young Peoples Missionary Association (YPMA) Update

Dear brothers and sisters, as I write this update, during the first week in May, I am in self isolation due to the Coronavirus epidemic. Our church buildings are closed and we are unable to meet together with our friends in Sunday school, church and other group activities.

Because of the internet we can still keep in touch with one another and worship God together. I enjoy the service each Sunday.

However, by not meeting our brothers and sisters each week it is easy to forget things which we normally do when we see them. One of these things may be giving your YPMA money to your YPMA Secretary each week, if this is what you normally do, please save it up at home and hand it in when it is safe to do so.

YPMA contributions are vital in order that the work among those less fortunate than our selves can continue. So, during these times of 'lock down' please continue to support YPMA.

The following is a reminder of the projects carried out in 2019 and this year's project.

### YPMA Projects 2019

- Chikton and Khalaste: to provide educational materials.

- Rewa Society, Ladakh: work with disabled children in Ladakh India.
- Sikonge Hospital, Tanzania: new laboratory equipment for use in the treatment of children born with HIV.
- Elim Home and Star Mountain: donations to help them to continue their essential work into the future.
- Lasanji Bible College, Western Tanzania: three new computers for use by students and staff.
- Aquaboxes: five Community Filter Boxes to provide clean drinking water wherever the need is.

### YPMA Project 2020

- Binnakandi, Asam: to contribute to a transport initiative to support children getting to school from surrounding areas and help with structural issues associated with the school building.

**Br Paul Greenhough**

*General Secretary, Young Peoples Missionary Association*



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**Printed & Distribution**  
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