



## Everyone In?

Living during the Coronavirus pandemic has presented challenges for all of us: the challenge of staying safe has been even more acute for those without a home.

On the 23rd March, the Prime Minister announced that Britain was being placed in lockdown due to an imminent threat to life presented by the spread of a potentially deadly virus. Not just in Britain, but across the world, the message was unequivocal, we all had to **'stay home to stay safe and save lives.'**

Most people, even those with a home to stay safe in, experienced some sense of fear. There was also, we were told, a need for enhanced hygiene routines and a clear instruction that anyone feeling unwell should self-isolate to prevent the spread of the virus.

A sudden spotlight was shone on the acute vulnerability of those who had no

homes and, in particular, those who were sleeping rough on our streets. Many people who are homeless also have underlying health problems. The often-congregate nature of their lifestyle either on the streets, or in temporary hostels with shared facilities, would make it impossible for them to maintain the strict regimes being recommended by government. Any infection within their midst would spread rapidly. The drop in facilities provided by charities, which they often rely on, were abruptly closed as the risk of transmission was just too high.

There was an urgent need for a response which wouldn't just keep people who were homeless safe but would control the spread of this virus and help to keep

all of us safe. Recognising this, all of the governments throughout the UK sought to ensure emergency accommodation was available to bring 'everyone in' from the streets and to have a single room which would allow them to self-isolate.

The capacity of existing providers of temporary accommodation to respond to this challenge was however significantly reduced.

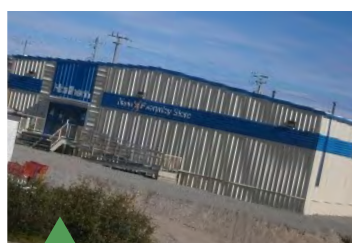
- Social distancing guidelines meant less people could be accommodated.
- This service couldn't be delivered 'remotely'. Charities struggled as staff/volunteers tested positive for the virus or were forced to shield due to health conditions.

*continued inside on page 111*



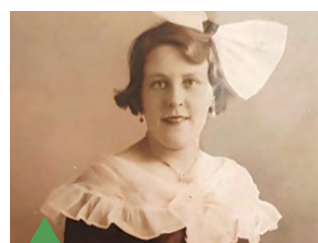
**A meaningful phrase for the greatest mystery!**

(page 113)



**Food Glorious Food**  
- Continuation of Br Hopcroft's memories

(page 114)



**Sr Gladys May Wedgeworth**  
(5th May 1911-29th July 2020)

(pages 116)



**Climate Sunday**

(page 117)

The beginning of the academic year is filled with stress for many: teaching staff, admin, catering, caretaking and that is before you consider pupils and students. This academic year is like none other that has been faced before, and the stress is therefore like none other. The schools are now back in Northern Ireland, and they are just back in England, but things are far from normal for all of them. Students are trickling back to universities and colleges with real concerns over their lectures and accommodation.

As a Church we have to be concerned with the welfare of children. Children are a sign for us of the Kingdom and their wellbeing; emotionally, physically, educationally and spiritually, has to be a priority for us. The pandemic has not only stopped schools, it has stopped all face to face youth and children's organisations since March. This is not only affecting church groups, but also all the other activities which support and develop children.

The Government has appeared to be pitting children against teachers in a bid to get the schools open and there has been more than a hint from them that teachers are perhaps being tardy in getting back to school. This has been further exacerbated by the fact that parents are rightly concerned about their children's education. There is heightened anxiety for those with children facing academic selection tests to get into the grammar schools (a big preoccupation in Northern Ireland if less so in England) and those in examination years. Add into the mix the fact that for many parents, school means hours of unpaid childcare, and that the schools have been shut means that many have not been able to work normally. The pressures for those parents whose children have special needs are even greater.

But what about the teachers? They, like everyone else, have fears about catching Covid-19, and they will be working with large groups of pupils who may be asymptomatic carriers of the virus. They may have their own health issues and will be going home to their own families where there may be elderly parents or spouses or children with health issues. One teacher put it graphically when he said: 'how

would you feel about being with 30 children for five hours without a break and with no PPE?' Those in special schools have been the most concerned as these children may have no understanding of social distancing and need much physical help. Many other teachers have felt deep frustration at not being able to teach and support particularly those students who need a bit of extra assistance. They have been deeply hurt at the perceived anger of parents against them.

Vague statements have appeared from Government, but schools have been given little clear guidance as to how to implement them. At one point, schools were told to plan for 2m social distancing, then 1m social distancing and one school told me the biggest issue was how to arrange regular hand washing in the school toilets for over 400 pupils with social distancing. Now the plans have changed again, and social bubbles will be the model for many pupils.

We know that online learning is no substitute for the classroom experience. The ones that do well with it are those who have access to good internet and equipment, ideally one screen per child and were already doing well in school and have a supportive adult who can help and keep them on track. It takes ages to prepare online resources and Zoom teaching is very different from face to face. I speak with some feeling on this having been part of a holiday Bible club that was on Zoom for 1 1/2 hours a day for one week. It took so much preparation time, we had to deliver physical resources and we could only cope with a small number of youngsters online at a time.

Wouldn't it be great if as Christians we could all try to understand each other's issues and bear each other's burdens? Please pray for schools and their staff, for parents trying to juggle it all and most of all for the children and for our churches too that we will be able to provide good Christ centred provision for children soon.

**Sr Sarah Groves**  
Editorial Team



© Sr Sarah Groves

# Everyone In?



- There were difficulties over sourcing and distributing sufficient PPE to ensure staff and resident safety.
- Some hostels were even forced to close for a time.

Collectively these issues meant sufficient capacity simply didn't exist to bring 'everyone in'. Block bookings were made for empty hotel rooms. Previously busy with business people and tourists these were brought into use to provide a place of safety for some of the most excluded people in society.

Beyond the most visible problem of those sleeping rough on the streets there were many thousands more who lived precariously, in insecure or overcrowded housing. Often referred to as the 'hidden homeless' they include sofa surfers i.e. people who move between friends/family often spending only a few days at each place and then moving on. During the first month of the pandemic the number of people contacting our already busy Housing Helpline quadrupled. Many were calls from people in this situation who were now living in cars, garden sheds and tents; again, not environments conducive to staying safe and saving lives. Also notable were the high number of calls from people living in privately rented accommodation who had been asked to leave. This included people affected by the virus; key workers who because of their exposure were seen as 'high risk' and people who had lost their jobs who landlords/housemates feared would be unable to pay their rent.

Without further government intervention it was clear there would be a great deal more people losing their homes during the pandemic, placing further pressure on already stretched services. Emergency laws were passed to place a temporary halt on evictions. Additional allowances were made available to help people meet their housing costs. Those with mortgages, including landlords, were offered payment holidays, initially for three and then for a six-month period.

## Did it work?

Credit must be given for the concerted and genuinely collaborative effort which has taken place. Throughout lockdown, the respective authorities and charities came together to dramatically reduce the number of people who experienced homelessness during this time. Homelessness teams were supported by dedicated nursing and health services who provided bespoke services to the homeless population. Together they successfully protected some of our most marginalised families and individuals and they undoubtedly saved lives.

In other countries across the world many thousands of homeless people have died. Here in the UK, official statistics suggest the number is less than twenty and in NI (where our own charity is based) there have been no deaths amongst the homeless population. This is an outcome which all of those involved in the provision of health and homeless services in UK can feel rightly proud of.

As a society, we should feel less proud that there were people sleeping on our streets and living in such poor quality, insecure accommodation that emergency intervention was necessary to keep them, and the wider public, safe from coronavirus.

## Back to business as usual?

As hotels revert to business as usual and their rooms are reclaimed for their normal occupants the worry is that, as emergency measures are phased out, the crisis will return and worsen. Some people are already beginning to return to the streets, creating a demand for drop-in services, many of which are still unable to safely re-open.

Our Helpline is taking calls from an unusually high number of people who find themselves homeless as their relationships have broken down under the additional pressure imposed by lockdown. The temporary protection for renters and homeowners will be phased out and the anticipated economic

downturn will amplify an already developing situation. All households will be affected however, as before, rough sleepers and struggling renters who were under most stress before the pandemic are at the greatest risk.

Lives have been saved, evictions and destitution have been avoided in the short term, however coronavirus is still out there and there is no guarantee of a vaccine to bring the threat it poses to an end. A public health emergency has issued a stark reminder of the importance of having a home and the spotlight has been placed on a system which fails too many people in this regard.

The determination which characterised the crisis response needs to be maintained moving forward. The previously missing ingredients weren't just additional resources (homelessness and poor housing costs the Treasury millions of pounds each year), it was political will and genuine collaborative working between charities and all the relevant authorities which made the difference. It was recognition also, that the underlying problems of insecurity and affordability had to be tackled.

For decades many have known homelessness is not an inevitable nor intractable problem. It took just a few short weeks, faced with arguably the worst public health crisis in over a century, to show what can be done.

There can be no return to business as usual. The biggest challenge is yet to come: how to maintain the momentum to deliver the changes necessary to support people in the longer term and to provide enough secure and affordable homes to bring 'everyone in' for good.

**Sr Janet Wray**  
Gracehill





# One Plus One

(A United Reformed Church Publication)

The ninth article on understanding marriage in 21st Century:

## In the Image and Likeness of God?

Months after the day of Pentecost, Peter undertook an extensive journey. He was encouraging churches and individuals, equipping them for mission and no doubt collecting up to date stories and statistics to report back to headquarters in Jerusalem. While staying in Joppa he had a vision that turned his world view upside down. On the surface the vision appeared to be about Jewish food laws, although it was actually about accepting hospitality from Gentiles. (And Mark's gospel tells us that Jesus had pronounced all foods 'clean'. (Mark 7:19)

In response to the voice which urged him to kill and eat unclean food, Peter said, 'but the Bible says I mustn't. It's all there in Leviticus chapter 11.' The voice as good as says, 'You are going to have to review the way you interpret the Bible, in the light of the new things that God is doing. The death and resurrection of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the church, extends salvation to the whole of humanity, not just to the Jews, because God loves everyone equally and passionately.' Within moments Peter was receiving an invitation to step much further out of his comfort zone than even when he had stepped over the side of the boat to walk on water with Jesus. He was invited to go and stay at the home of a Gentile Roman centurion who wanted to know more about Jesus.

This story gives us a glimmer of light into the continuing debate about how we interpret the Bible in order to be faithful to God's word in our daily lives here and now. Biblical fundamentalism began in North America in the late 19th century and argues that the Bible is literally, factually and historically true and contains no errors because it is directly inspired by God. 'Modernism' or 'liberalism' argues that the way we interpret the Bible needs to be reviewed constantly in the light of a growing understanding of the way the world is, offered by history, archaeology, literary theory, new knowledge of biblical Hebrew and Greek, scientific discovery and the contemporary context in which we try to make sense of how to be faithful to God's word.

In this series of articles, we have flagged up some important issues concerning marriage, relationships and sexuality. We have taken care to explore topics and ask questions, without taking any particular position in asserting what is right or wrong, what people should believe or how they should behave. We have found it helpful to explore and summarise points raised in the United Reformed Church's document 'One Plus One'.

Correspondence published in the Messenger recently has ignited debate on the importance of open dialogue about what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God, where

matters of sexuality and relationship are concerned. The correspondents had radically different views which reflect the range of opinion on this issue. This exchange illustrates the importance of holding conversations which seek to disentangle fact, opinion, revelation and biblical interpretation in discerning how God is calling us to be a 'light for the world', in responding to the pastoral needs, issues and demands of the contemporary world, and remaining faithful to the Word of God.

There are likely to be around two million people in the United Kingdom who are exclusively attracted to other people of the same sex. Some of these are actively committed Christians. Many have been turned away from church, the gospel and Christ by homophobic persecution inflicted in the name of the church. Some have found companionship, security, joy and fulfilment in sharing their lives with a same-sex partner. This is not about what they do with their bodies to express affection and satisfy desire, it is about human flourishing. All of us are loved by God.

Within churches there has long been a debate about whether being homosexual is a lifestyle choice, a political statement, a sickness, the affliction of an evil spirit or a 'given', an expression of who that person truly is, made in the image and likeness of God. Some christian organisations also have a long history of failed attempts to 'cure' homosexual people, through prayer ministry, exorcism, punishment or therapy. The view is increasingly widely held now that it is part of a person's core identity and cannot be changed. Although some people have experienced deep and lasting transition from homosexual to heterosexual orientation as a consequence of the grace of God at work in their lives, this is the exception.

Few of us are likely to change our point of view by force of argument. What is important is that we learn how to respect the viewpoints of people we disagree with. If we cannot love our neighbours as ourselves, can we expect the Holy Spirit to lead us into 'yet more light and truth'?

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



## A meaningful phrase for the greatest mystery!



Reading my June copy of Progressive Voices a phrase sprang out and hit me so much so that I am indebted to Ian Lovett for writing his Lockdown Thoughts, in which he was encouraging his readers to look to a future beyond the Lockdown. The phrase that really hit hard and made me stop reading was where he wrote: 'The notion of God as a verb and not a noun, can open up a new horizon for spirituality.'

I have heard many descriptive phrases attributed to the God we honour and try to serve. Our lecturers at Manchester University and the theological colleges did their best to teach and to get us to understand something of the nature and being of God. It became clear that so much of what we learned had been influenced, some things more strongly than others, by the various theologians from different schools of thought. Each generation produced its own. So often it was a case of the men of the Church (and it was almost always the men) producing new teaching to strengthen the fight against heretical belief or to promote theories that explained away difficulties or at least attempted to encourage some kind of understanding of the mysteries. So much has been said over the years to get us to understand and accept the person and teaching of Jesus. The quest for the historical Jesus continues and any attempts to get back

to the original are debated continuously.

From the old catechism used in Jamaica years ago we were teaching that God was omniscient, all-powerful, ever-present and everywhere. In more recent years 'He' has become 'She', depending on how one regards God and whether one finds it necessary to think of Him/Her in anthropomorphic terms of personality.

The doctrine of the Trinity has caused endless difficulties for some Christians and also for those of other faiths as I discovered in India when friends were trying to understand the Christian teaching about three in one, and one in three, and I suppose there have been just as many attempted explanations as there have been problems. I do remember one given by a lay preacher who was an electrician and he spoke about a three-pin plug and three wires, positive, negative and earth - all three being needed to provide one source of safe electricity. That seemed helpful.

The historic Creeds were produced to provide a way of knowing about God that could be learned by heart if not always understood by mind and even the most basic, whether Apostles' or Nicene, became a cause for division. The many creeds and doctrinal statements were drawn up by those ancient councils of the church in an attempt to promote universality of belief and be a symbol of Christian unity.

So what do we have today? I would suggest we have a real mix up of ancient and modern, of old-time and progressive thinking. I accept the need for each generation to work out its thinking and understanding about the nature of God. Even the Bible, our word of God, is the basis on which some depend for literal truth and its teaching was produced over many centuries and often throws up disagreements and has little or nothing to say about modern day problems.

Now in this mix up of newer thinking and half remembered, and often outdated, teaching it is not surprising that so many give up on the church and some, sadly, even on God. I do appeal for a growing simplification to succeed the years of complication which developed as teachers of Church doctrine produced all their attempts to define God. The old, and original, creed said simply, but very acceptably, 'Jesus is Lord.'

From my studies of grammar I learned that a noun is a naming word for a person, place or thing and a verb is an action word or something one can do. I believe many of us have put God in the noun category as a majestic being, high and lifted up - and out of reach - when we should have been thinking of him as a verb, living and active in the hearts and minds of all his people.

**Br John McOwat**  
Fulneck



# Food Glorious Food

© Br Robert Hopcroft

## Continuation of Br Hopcroft's memories of his call to Labrador in 1971

© Br Robert Hopcroft



Government  
Store

Haynes  
General  
Store

We discovered that there were two stores in Nain. Haynes Store was a small wooden shack which was filled to the rafters and carried a selection of staple food items, fishing gear, spare parts for stoves and miscellaneous items. It also had a sweets counter, a magnet for children on their way to and from school as it was situated near the centre of the community and run by Mr Hayward Haynes himself.

The second store was the Government Store, operated by the Newfoundland and Labrador Services Division (NLSD), and was a large warehouse style building stocked with all food items, stove oil, paint and all manner of basic household goods.

Within a week of being there the store manager phoned to ask whether we wanted to order our winter supplies in by boat. Dick and Bobbie had told us that this was the best thing to do since, although the store was well stocked in September, by December some goods would be unavailable and a new supply wouldn't be in until the first boat sometime around May/June time. Also, because of the frantic nature of the unloading of the freight boats when they arrived, the cold storage of the goods was somewhat haphazard and if the pork chops were at the back of the storage area they might not be available in store when you fancied them or indeed, for weeks. We were therefore convinced that this was the right thing to do. We were told to remember that all goods came in cartons of 12.

So we sat down and tried to figure out how many chickens, pork chops, toilet rolls, dried milk powder (fresh milk not available), eggs, bacon, breakfast cereals, etc. we would need between October when the order arrived, and June when the new supplies came in. I should add here that we were a little disappointed to discover in this new land in which we found ourselves that Mr Heinz and Mr Kellogg had already been here for some time!

Again, Dick and Bobbie were a great help as we hadn't got a clue! Breakfast cereals were a point of discussion. Wendy enjoyed Shredded Wheat, I liked Weetabix, and we both liked corn flakes, so we ordered a carton of the first two and two cartons of corn flakes. You can't get too many corn flakes, can you? The order

was placed on credit to be paid when our teachers' salaries came in. After all, as the store manager said 'Your credit is good. You can't disappear anywhere without someone knowing you've booked a flight out!'

We were excited when we got the call several weeks later to say that the supplies had at last arrived. They were brought up to the apartment in the pick-up truck (one of only three in the community) a half mile from the dock and unloaded into our basement. It was like an advert in a magazine 'A man and his wife will eat this much food in seven months'.

We had purchased a 20cuft freezer for the frozen meat and vegetables and I had built shelving for the dry food goods, and everything was going really well until we got to breakfast cereals ... We had 12 boxes of Shredded Wheat, 12 boxes of Weetabix, but corn flakes came in cartons of 24 - so we had 48 boxes to get through! We had them for breakfast, we had them as tray-bakes with chocolate on, and we had them crushed up to make bases for flans and cheesecakes. From recollection, it took us three years to get through them all. We used Carnation Milk powder as fresh milk wasn't available, but providing we mixed up a quart jug of it at night and put it in the fridge we soon got used to it.

I often smile when we hear the debates about 'use by' and 'best before' dates on food. We had a box of 12 dozen eggs in the basement, and each week it was my job to turn the cartons over to stop the suspended yolk from touching the shell and we were still able to eat them months later - although they did get a bit rubbery towards the end.

Altogether, we were able to eat very well with the occasional gift of freshly caught arctic char, trout or salmon, with locally sourced caribou and ptarmigan from time to time. The food lasted through the winter and we never ran out of toilet rolls!

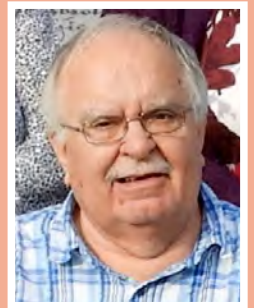
**Br Robert Hopcroft**



## STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

3

A Study for personal  
or group use compiled  
by Br David Newman



There are many examples of environmental problems caused by greed (e.g. farming and forestry practices, extraction of minerals and fossil fuels), poverty (e.g. Third World debt resulting in growth of crops for export instead of subsistence, rainforest clearance, over-population) and armed conflict (e.g. the use of depleted uranium in armour-piercing shells). Greed, poverty and violence are all linked, and are fundamental causes of environmental problems.

How can our small planet sustain this triple attack? How can humanity achieve a more equitable distribution of the earth's resources? Are we prepared to cut back our economic standard of living? That is a question that has been asked of us by the Covid-19 crisis.

A simplified lifestyle should grow out of the realisation that creation is good, and a precious gift of grace to be cherished. However, it is difficult to lay down rules about simplicity of lifestyle. The aim of this study is to look at what Jesus has to say about our attitude to money and material wealth and to help people to consider changes to their own lifestyle, starting from where they are now.

### Read 7: Luke 12:13-21

This parable is a clear demonstration of the folly of materialism. The attitude of the rich man is not only common in our society, it is actually encouraged by those who profit from it. What are the links between this and environmental problems?

(23) In what areas of your life do you behave like the rich man in the story? Why do you behave this way?

(24) Is it valid to apply the parable at a national or international level as well as at a personal level? If so, which widespread attitudes in our society are being challenged?

(25) How does the obsession with accumulating wealth affect the living environment?

### Read 8: Luke 12:22-34

Here Jesus provides the answer, at least on a personal level, to the problems caused by the rich man's attitude in the previous passage. The advice is blunt and is hard for us to take. How literally should we be applying this to ourselves? If we really believe that God is who Jesus says he is - a loving father - we should live without anxiety for the future.

(26) How can Jesus set us free from our obsession with possessions?

(27) How easy is it to apply this teaching to your own life (see especially verse 33)? What lessons can be learned from people you know who are more successful in applying this teaching to their lives?

(28) In the light of your last answer, think back to your response to question twenty-three. Is there anything you would now change?

### Read 9: Luke 3:10-14

'What should I/we do then?' is a question you should by now be asking. John the Baptist challenges people to change their attitudes and lifestyles in different ways appropriate to them. What needs to be changed in your own lives? Try to be specific.

(29) What are the general principles for

living which John gives to these people?

(30) Why do you think he gives different answers to different people?

(31) What would John say to you if you were to ask him 'What should I do then'?

(32) In what specific ways would you change your lifestyle? Pick several actions you could take.

### Read 10: Luke 10:38-42

This is a passage about priorities and how we easily get bound up in things that are peripheral. As Christians, we attach great importance to listening to Jesus, yet we so often get bogged down in the 'preparations' surrounding it. How and why does this happen and how can we break free from it. Perhaps you might like to consider:

- Moderation - only having what we need and being willing to give the rest away;
- Discipline - being detached from possessions and refusing to attach undue importance to them;
- Sacrifice - being willing to share everything we possess and even surrender it completely if and when God calls us to do so.

(33) Comparing Martha with Mary, what are the distractions that stop you from changing your lifestyle?

(34) Is adopting a simpler lifestyle more than just giving up this or that? Are practical actions required?

(35) What attitudes are needed to achieve the Christian discipline of simplicity?



Sr Wedgeworth in her costume for an operetta called, 'Florodora', c.1932.



© Sr Christine Enright

## Sr Gladys May Wedgeworth (5th May 1911-29th July 2020)

Gladys Wedgeworth (née Waite) was born in Little Horton, Bradford to Clara and Christopher Waite. She was the youngest of six children: one brother and four sisters, one of whom died in infancy. The family became members of Horton Moravian Church, where she was baptised, confirmed and married. She continued to worship at the church until 2013, when in December of that year, she became unable to look after herself. She then moved into the care of Rastrick Hall.

She married her husband John Wedgeworth (Jack) in February 1939, and they lived in Wibsey, Bradford. Jack was then a Police Constable with Bradford City Police and was unable to get leave for a honeymoon. With the outbreak of war in September 1939, all leave was cancelled. When Jack eventually got leave, Michael, their son (born in 1940) accompanied them to a farmhouse near Baildon for a few days. Christine, their second child, was born in 1942. As Jack was in a reserved occupation, he was not called up until 1943, when he joined the RAF, completing his basic training in Canada. Gladys was thankful for the visits she had from her brother and sisters. There was always a great deal of fun when they were around.

Like many other women of her generation, she had no paid work when her children were young, but spent her time as a housewife, bringing up her children and performing household tasks. When they were teenagers, she worked part time in a local post office for a few years. Her favourite occupations were baking and cooking. She baked her own bread until she was 100 and only stopped then, because it was not possible to buy fresh yeast, and she 'reckoned nothing to that dried stuff.'

She sewed clothes for her children, on one occasion, soon after the end of WW2, unpicking the seams from one of her old coats, turning the fabric and making a coat for her daughter. She went to a dressmaking class and made dresses with smocking. There was always a new dress for Christine to wear at the Sunday

School Anniversary.

Gladys was a leader of the Life Boys, the junior section of the Boys' Brigade, before her marriage. She was a member of the Married Ladies (later to become known as the Women's Fellowship) and the MWA. In her younger days, she took part in operettas, which were performed in the Sunday School building, and she was a member of the church choir and the Yorkshire District Choir.

For many years, she was a dedicated Sunday School teacher, and became Leader of the Primary Department and later, the Senior Department. Together with Jack, she was a Summer School Leader for several years in the 1960s.

When Jack had a severe stroke in 1992, Gladys was determined to look after him herself. Against advice, at the age of 80, she cared for him until his death in 1998. From 1992 until 2013, the church Bible Study Group met each Friday morning at their home. Gladys always ensured that there was a supply of home-made ginger biscuits for coffee time!

Gladys lived through the reign of four monarchs and 26 Prime Ministers. She had a fulfilling life, including the joy of two children, Michael and Christine, seven grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren, the latest of whom was born on Good Friday this year. She reached the ripe old age of 109 on 5th May this year 'with all her chairs at home.' She could recite poems that she had learned when she was ten, refusing to write down the words for anyone, because she had been sworn to secrecy by her teacher.

Gladys died on Wednesday, 29th July 2020. She was the 23rd oldest person in Britain, at 109 and 85 days. We give thanks for her life of love and faith.

**Sr Christine Enright**

## Climate Sunday



Climate Change will affect everyone, in fact it is affecting everyone now. Weather events that were once every 100 years seem to be occurring more regularly. News of flooding from places across the world and close to home are saddening e.g. Brockweir in the West Country to Urvira in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We cannot ignore it as individuals or as a Church. Our aid agency Christian Aid, along with environmentalists have been warning us and governments of the effects of climate change for years. It will bring more extreme weather events and make agriculture in many countries much more insecure and homes much more vulnerable to events like flooding.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) are calling for concerted action by the Churches to raise awareness of the issue and to increase the pressure brought to bear on politicians by ordinary church members. They are holding a Climate Sunday initiative beginning on Sunday 6th September prior to the UK hosting the United Nations Climate

negotiations in November this year.

The Climate Sunday initiative asks all churches to hold a climate-focused service on a convenient date any time during the coming year beginning on 6th September 2020. At this service congregations will be encouraged to make a short and simple commitment to greater action to address climate change in their own place of worship and community, and to urge bolder action by governments. A variety of service materials and other resources can be accessed from the Climate Change Sunday website <https://www.climatesunday.org/>. CTBI want churches and church members to see this issue as part of their normal discipleship and Christian mission. They want Christians to make a significant contribution to the national and international action on climate change.

The Mission and Society Committee of the Moravian Church sees the issue of climate change as being a matter of urgent concern and urges congregations to act on this. We have discussed a

Sunday when we could hold a Climate Change Sunday within the Moravian Church. The date we have chosen is Sunday 9th May 2021. This Sunday is known as Rogation Sunday in rural areas and the tradition used to be that the parish boundaries were walked (beating the bounds) and prayers were asked for the crops in the fields and gardens. This still happens in some rural areas.

Rogation Sunday is a very appropriate date to consider climate change and commit to action considering the damage climate change is already doing to agriculture across the world particularly in poorer countries.

So please sign your Church up on the Climate Sunday website and let us know what you are planning to do.

**Sr Sarah Groves**  
on behalf of the  
Mission and Society  
Committee



## CONGREGATION NEWS

### Bath Weston

#### Isolation?

How would we have coped, and still are, without loving family (from a distance), the internet and caring neighbours?

Family helping with supermarket deliveries; the butcher, fish company and vegetable stalls delivering to us, and the immediate neighbours and volunteers from the village residents' group on the internet collecting prescriptions or bringing free plants for the garden ... I know my God has a hand in all that.

Here in our village in North West Bath - in Domesday book 1068 - we have missed so much over the past few months: Church groups, coffee

mornings, lunch clubs and, of course, our times of worship ... but worship is now on the internet for us older folk to see and hear a service any day of the week. We are therefore so grateful to the ministers of those churches who have worked so very hard to keep in touch with congregations and share worship with us.

Was it isolation? Or just accepting a change in our orderly lives? Never lose hope, there is light at the end of the tunnel and God is always with us to guide and protect us.

**Sr Thelma Gardner**

### Changes at Fulneck Choir House

Heading towards retirement 31st August saw Br Ron and Sr Ros Davey reading their last water meter, accompanied by their 'apprentice'. Br and Sr Davey have been Administrators of Fulneck Choir House for nineteen years. During this time, they have faced many challenges, the most difficult, they say, was having to register the Choir House as Homes in Multiple Occupancy and having to comply with all of the regulations, some of which were very costly!

On behalf of the Choir House residents, thank you Ron and Ros for looking after the property and making sure H M O guidelines have been followed. Enjoy your sunny retirement days in the garden.

**Br Ian Haggas**  
(the 'apprentice')



## Ockbrook

Here at Ockbrook we have been doing what we can to support one another and the local community during lockdown.

We are very fortunate to have received weekly online services on YouTube, as well as the Provincial ones, plus fortnightly bible studies and church committees via Zoom. A WhatsApp group of Settlement residents was a lifeline during the early weeks and enabled us to get to know our neighbours a lot better.

Members continue to help one another with cooked meals, shopping and the collection of prescriptions, and one of our Sisters has been holding exercise classes on the church lawn, which has also drawn local people together. We have supported the local prayer network and food bank.

On Easter Sunday, Br Kreusel played two hymns through a loudspeaker out of a window of the manse, and this became the pattern for several weeks, together with ringing the church bell during Clap for Carers, while that continued. A strong new sense of community developed.

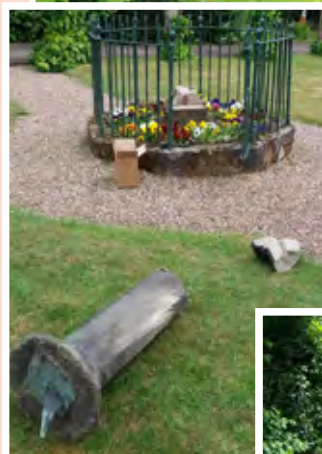
At the beginning of lockdown, like several other Moravian churches, we put up our Advent Star and at the time of writing it is still up, a sign of hope and light in the darkness. We put our bunting up for the VE Day 75th celebration, and several local people commented how it cheered them up.

For several years, our historic sun dial had lain in storage, broken into several pieces by centuries of rain and rust. We were unable to find a stone mason willing to repair it, so we did it ourselves in May.



Afternoon service

© Sr Julie Hague



Sundial before...



...and after

In July we organised a Take-Away Afternoon Tea, which was so popular that it sold out! Together with a raffle for a fantastic indulgent chocolate cake baked specially by

one of the Settlement residents, we were able to raise approximately half of what we would normally expect to raise at our Garden Party, which was of course cancelled this year.

On 2nd August we were able to hold our first service since March, outside on the church lawn, which was very well attended, with all the necessary precautions taken. We hope that we will be able to hold more services outside, but the church is risk-assessed and Covid-ready if we need it. Online services are continuing at present, and we are very conscious that a lot of the changes we have been forced

to make will prove valuable to continue into the future.

*Sr Julie Hague*

## Baildon

At the onset of lockdown Sr Wendy Huggan had the idea to create a Blue Collage of knitted flowers to put on our church gates which are on the main road into Baildon as a thank you to the wonderful NHS. The idea was posted on a local Facebook site and soon our gate was adorned with lovely Blue flowers.

The picture is taken from a card we had and sale of the cards has raised over £200 which is to go The Martin House Hospice.

*Sr Liz Simpson*



© Sr Liz Simpson

## Cliftonville, Belfast

During three Sundays in July to enable Br Stephens to have two Sundays vacation, we were privileged to have three ministers from different parts of the world to lead our online worship. On the 5th, Rev David Boopalan, born in India but now the minister of a Baptist church in USA, and on the 12th, the Rev Ginny Tobiasson of Home Moravian Church, Winston Salem also kindly agreed to join us at 6am U.S. time. Afterwards she told that she appreciated our UK liturgy and used some of the prayers in her Home Moravian service later the same morning. On the 19th Rev Elwyn Jones of a Presbyterian church near Edinburgh led the service.



© Br John Cooper

The scene was set for Cliftonville's return from lockdown exile on 2nd August: the church was cleaned thoroughly, the seats were rearranged two metres apart, and the congregation waited in their cars until the minister arrived from Ballinderry before donning masks and moving into the church socially distanced, then one person occupied each end of the benches; married couples were able to sit closer together. Zoom was available for any unable to attend. We are happy to be meeting again in the church but grateful that the past four months challenged us to use opportunities to worship online.

Br Stephens requested comments about lockdown that he wove into his sermon. It reminded someone of when the early Unitas Fratrum members were exiled from their place of worship, yet unlike us their worship in their homes was in secret, but descendants kept the faith and years later when refugees settled on the estate of Count Zinzendorf the old Unitas was renewed. Another comment was that church buildings are important and treasured, but it was noticeable how lockdown made the members even more caring for each other, reminding us the church is the people and not the building.

We record our gratitude to Br Stephens and to all who were involved to date in the Provincial services each Sunday, we are pleased they are continuing. In the Irish District, there was also the opportunity to share inspiring online services from Gracehill, led by Sr Groves and assisted by members in many ways.

*Sr Edna Cooper*

### Congregational Register

#### Deaths

31st July	Pauline Margaret Richards	Brockweir
2nd August	Robert Hamilton Cooper	Gracehill

**1 Sept-4 August** Ability Sunday  
([www.abilitysunday.org.uk/](http://www.abilitysunday.org.uk/))

**11-20** Heritage Open Days  
([www.heritageopendays.org.uk/](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/))

**13** Education Sunday  
([www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234838/Home/Resources/Education\\_Sunday/Education\\_Sunday.aspx](http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234838/Home/Resources/Education_Sunday/Education_Sunday.aspx))

**13-21** World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel  
([www.worldweekforpeace.org](http://www.worldweekforpeace.org))

**21** UN International Day of Peace  
([www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace](http://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace))

**22** Autumn Equinox

**28** Yom Kippur - Jewish

*Dates to remember!*

### From Church House

We are delighted to announce that Sr Christine Emanuel has received and accepted the Call of the Church to serve the Harold Road congregation from 1st September 2020.

Sr Emanuel has recently completed her studies at Northern College, and we wish her all the very best as she enters a new chapter in her ministry with her call as minister in charge of a congregation.

We are also pleased to announce that Br Woolford has received and accepted a revised call to serve Hornsey congregation in a full-time capacity with additional sacramental duties in the Eastern District. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Br James Woolford for his ministry over the last four years at Harold Road.

Please keep Sr Emanuel, Br Woolford, their families and congregations in your prayers at this time.

#### Provincial Diary for September

The PEC are continuing to work remotely, with regular online meetings to ensure continuity across our entire organisation: Church, BMB, Schools and Property. Provincial Committees are meeting online where possible.





# From the Sanctuary

The end of September is the time when we traditionally celebrate Harvest. It is a time when we bring into focus our thanks and appreciation for all that God has provided in our lives and in the lives of others. However, our grateful attitude of Harvest should really be a daily activity in our lives, as God is always giving to us. In a way, that is why grace is a vital part of mealtimes, in that it keeps our daily attitude of gratitude to God alive. How many of us say 'grace' anymore?

The only edible thing I have in my garden, apart from my herbs, is the apples. This year, I have had to make some difficult decisions about one of my apple trees (I have two in my garden). After years of having a climbing rose growing in one of them, which always looked beautiful, one half of my apple tree was struggling. In fact, it was nearly dead. Yet, the tree itself wasn't dead. I noticed last year that half-way down the trunk, a new branch had started to emerge. So, after much angst, I made the difficult decision to remove the climbing rose and cut off the deader half of the tree to give a chance for the tree to channel its resources into the more living parts. Having taken my saw to a significant part of the tree, I noticed that what remained truly started to flourish. My actions made the tree look somewhat lop-sided, but it seems to have been the right decision to have made as, within the year, what started out as a six-inch budding branch has become a four-foot new branch (not yet able or strong-enough to bear apples). It should grow

even more next year and give me some more apples.

It got me thinking that it is sometimes like that in life too. Sometimes we have to lop-off things in our lives - perhaps things we have always done and felt were important - to make room for new things, relationships and opportunities to grow, and for us to grow spiritually. Sometimes, we hang onto things and relationships which have become 'diseased', but which we keep out of some sense of duty - but which (if we are honest with ourselves) have run their course and no longer nourish us (and sometimes they even cause us angst) - simply because we feel we 'ought' to keep them going out of a sense of duty, or because of a 'should' that we carry in our psyche. Sometimes, we hold onto things which keep us busy, but (if we are honest with ourselves) the busyness prevents us from being present to other things that really matter, e.g. being fully present to others or to God.

So, at this Harvest time, whilst we give grateful praise to God for all that He/She/It provides, can I invite you to use Harvest as a time to reflect on if all of the things that we 'do', and all the relationships that we have, are really 'that important' to us; and if they aren't, can we afford to do some lopping in our lives to give room for something new and more vibrant to emerge? For God may be in the lopping - however painful that may be.

*Br Peter Gubi* Dukinfield

## 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.**

**Editorial Team**, Church House,  
5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ  
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