

moravian messenger

FEBRUARY 2021



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Lent

The truth is that I wasn't keen on Lent as a child growing up in the Church of England. The imperative to give something up for Lent made little sense. Give up what? Chocolate and sweets seemed to be the popular choice. Not a problem, they were still on ration and I could just keep my coupons until Easter. In reality it turned out like new year resolutions. I either chose something extremely easy, or I failed within days.

Later, of course, I began to understand a little more. Jesus went out into the wilderness to fast for forty days. It was often thought that denying the body sustenance would open the mind to inspiration. Jesus was not the first to do this and he wouldn't be the last.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention the temptations, but only Matthew and Luke have the details. They all agree that it happens directly after Jesus' baptism by his cousin John and before the start of his public ministry. Into the wilderness

he goes, probably with the words of affirmation that he heard from God by the Jordan ringing in his ears, to try and find out what being God's son entails.

At his weakest he is tempted. Firstly by his hunger, 'Turn these stones into bread'. That must have been hard to resist. He was hungry, starving and if he did it nobody would know, there would be no witnesses. So why resist? I think that to give in to this temptation would have been to allow miracles to be the central part of his being and his mission. That would have been the easier path but it might have led him away from God's path, away from his humanity and, maybe, away from the cross.

The other temptations were to test the core of Jesus' being and it was where he discovered that core was to be total reliance on his Father.

So, Lent gives us a chance to try and find our core beliefs. Therefore, for the first time in many years I have decided to

give up something for Lent. I am going to give up some time. I will allocate 30 minutes every day to just sit and think, to contemplate and maybe write down some conclusions, if there are any.

This will be a time away from the daily routine, a time to be alone and a time to let go. I am pretty certain that, at times, I will hear a little voice in my ear saying, 'Well, this is a waste of time, isn't it? You could be painting or playing Football Manager'. Hopefully, however, I might just get a little closer to understanding my relationship with God. I won't have to go out into a wilderness, just into my quiet place, but my hope is that I can learn just a little from the temptations of Christ and be able to recognise those temptations in my life that sometimes separate me from him.

Br Blair Kessler
Hall Green



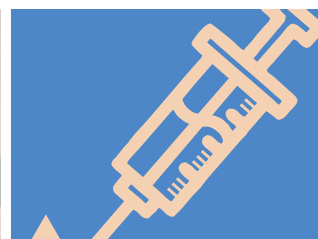
A problem within a problem

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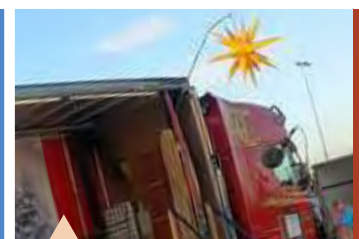
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Editorial

On the 31st January 2020, the first two cases of COVID-19 were identified in the United Kingdom. British Airways had already suspended all flights to China and concern was spreading across the world about this new disease. By the end of February, 23 cases had been identified in the UK and Italy confirmed 1,128 cases and 29 deaths. Italy was beginning to really suffer from the virus. It was no longer just a problem in a province in faraway China.

Something that started so far away went on to directly affect us. We are not separate from the rest of humanity and the suffering of others diminishes us.

In an interconnected world we cannot just dismiss issues in one place and pretend they are not going to impact us. War, persecution, and the poverty of so many people who want a better life become the immigrants we repel at our borders. The still continuing destruction of rainforests in South America and the rapid carbon-based industrialisation of many countries will impact climate change here.

Conversely when we reach out and help others, when we improve things for those who are struggling we not only support them, but we in some way benefit all, ourselves included. When we raise others up we raise ourselves up also. When we recognise the God loved status and humanity of others we are acting as children of God ourselves.

The last week of February and the first week of March is Fair Trade Week. A number of supermarkets have started to reduce their commitment to Fair Trade. This would be a good time to remind them that Fair Trade is an important issue for many Christians and that we will shop in a way that raises people and communities up and does not exclude them in the name of easy profit. We should as people of God, be the change we want to see.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



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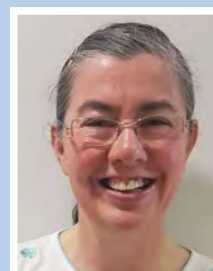
MWA DAY 2021

On 17th April 2021 at 2pm, MWA will host its annual MWA Day service online via Zoom. The service will follow our usual morning service format including the report from Central Committee which will have been held the day before also via Zoom. Sr Sarah Groves has agreed to be our speaker using our current theme of 'Wonder Women! Then and Now. If you would like to join the service - and please note the service is not just for MWA members - you will need an email address, internet access and Zoom on your laptop/tablet/phone. Please email your email address to janet.cooper@moravian.org.uk and then I can add you to the list of people attending. Nearer the time I will send you a link to join the service with instructions.

Sr Janet Cooper

Behind the Mask

*It isn't easy to read a facial expression behind a mask,
But she could see it in my eyes
Her eyes searching mine
My gloved hand held her's as I heard her story.
Time stood still.
Outside there was a clear blue unpolluted sky.
A passengerless train ran to time.
Wildflowers were in bloom and many people had time to notice.
Birds were busy about their nests
Feeding their young in this new quieter world:
They did not need to socially distance.
She did not need to know any of this just now.
I gripped her hand tight
As I explained the likely results of her scan:
No, no not coronavirus
The other 'C' word: most probably cancer.
Her hand gripped mine hard now and her eyes became moist with tears.
Her son arrived with a case.
How dearly sister and I wanted to let him in from the empty waiting room
But rules are there for a reason
So, the case was handed in and he departed
I went back in and yes, tears had been shed;
The phone had been used.
Tissues, tea and more questions ensued
I stayed as long as was needed.
Giving the hug her son had not been able to give.
Outside there was now a rainbow.
She did not see it,
But God was telling us
He'd work this through for both of us.*



Sr Claire Summers

Safeguarding training

OK, so this isn't the most exciting thing on your 2021 calendar, but it is something that needs repeating regularly, a bit like first aid training. The current situation, and some thinking around how to use my time better, has led to development of an online training for the province. This will be at 3 levels, building on level 1 in levels 2 and 3, and is open to everyone. Booking is essential and the links have been sent to your minister, or you can email safeguarding@moravian.org.uk for the links. The plan is to do one level per month, with two identical sessions, one in the morning and one in the evening. The first sessions are January, February and March, the next set will be May, June and July and the final sessions of 2021 will be September, October and November. Each session will have a maximum of 15 people booked on. It is possible to do the different levels, in order, over the whole year but this is not ideal. There will eventually be some face-to-face training but this will be done on a district level not in individual congregations.

If you are unsure what, if any, training you need please check through these roles. If you are still not clear please email me.

Levels 1, 2 and 3:

Junior church/Sunday School leaders (anyone taking responsibility for a group of children), leaders of all work with

children and young people including toddler groups and Messy Church, pastoral visitors, leaders of groups for vulnerable adults, retired ministers with pastoral or regular preaching responsibilities, ministers and student ministers, paid lay ministry workers, members of PEC, summer camp leaders, MyForum leaders, General Secretary for Mission, international volunteers.

Level 1 and 2:

Junior church/Sunday School helpers, Messy church helpers, toddler group helpers, helpers at groups for vulnerable adults, lay preachers, retired ministers with no pastoral responsibility (occasional preaching only), lead chapel servants, bible study group leaders, PYCC members, CSC, Faith and Order, those with a supervisory role with students and ministers or lay workers.

Level 1:

All church committee members, chapel servants (or equivalent), leaders of all groups regardless of whether vulnerable persons attend or not, plus any interested parties.

Others may be added to this list from time to time or requested to attend by their minister the PEC or the Safeguarding Advisor.

Sr Joy Raynor

Provincial Youth and Children's Officer

Worship on the Web

- kicking & screaming into a new future!

With my tongue firmly in my cheek, I am sure that you have heard the question, 'How many Moravians does it take to change a lightbulb?' well, the last 12 months or so provides ample evidence that the answer, 'Change!? Moravians never change' is at best misleading. What the last year or so has proven is that Moravians do change, and not only change but embrace the present and eagerly look forward to the future too.

Over the past year many people have been drawn into action that they may not have even dreamt of in December 2019. Of course, I am talking of such things as Zoom, Stream Yard, WhatsApp and the like. Speaking personally, I have only just managed to get used to Facebook, so these new (fangled, as my late father would have said) platforms have placed me into a position of anxiety, uncertainty, vulnerability and learning. And the learning curve has been steep! Thankfully, we have been more than up

to the task. Even I have managed in a fashion.

The Provincial Board would like to express our great appreciation to all our members and ministers who have made that same journey. Together we have learned new things, responded to the pastoral and spiritual needs of our members and others and continued to be witnesses and ambassadors of Christ and his church. This journey has been something of a challenge for many, and yet, I believe it has been worthwhile. When so much of our society hangs on the knife-edge of uncertainty, our faith and our ability to worship, proclaim the Gospel, pray and share fellowship has continued week by week. Perhaps the only downside has been our inability to sing together. However, I suspect I am not the only one who has taken to singing on my own. It is important that we continue, even alone, in this means of witness and praise.

To those who have played their part in making this journey possible, thank you. We may never know what good we have done. To those who have shared in that journey in your own homes, thank you. We pray that you have continued to be fed, both pastorally and spiritually. And to those who are soon to share in this journey, thank you for sharing something of your faith.

Throughout my years in ministry, I have often remarked that following Jesus is not easy, nor is it meant to be. We are constantly challenged just like those who have gone before have been challenged. And yet, we are more than up to the present challenge. Let us embrace this challenge and our related learning and put it to work in the service of our Lord and His church.

Br David Howarth

Minister at Baildon and Horton Moravian Churches, and Provincial Board

A problem within a problem

Northern
Ireland

Drive-In Christingle Service 2020

The Power of Unity: 'A shining light at the end of a Dark year'

Br Henry Wilson writes the first in a series of articles for the Moravian Messenger about the background to the partition of Ireland in 1921 and the establishment of the Province of Northern Ireland in May 1921

Part 1 Gladstone and Disestablishment

How did the partition of Ireland come about when it was against the wishes and convictions of all the parties concerned? Put very simply the Catholic Nationalist majority wanted home rule for all of Ireland and were to be granted a limited form of Dominion status within the British Empire. However, the Protestant minority, largely concentrated in the North East of the island, did not want this and rather wished the whole island to remain part of the United Kingdom as had been defined by the Act of Union of 1801 which created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Obviously, it is a much more complicated story than this as it was a potent mixture of religion, politics, class interests and social conditions aided by the classic capacity of individuals and groups to entrench themselves into positions that had unforeseen consequences. In April 1829, Lord George Beresford, the protestant Archbishop of Armagh rose in the House of Lords to oppose the Catholic Emancipation Act. The assumption had been held that if Dublin accepted the 1801 Act of Union then a Catholic Emancipation Act would follow.

A vigorous campaign led by Daniel O'Connell finally forced Prime Minister Wellington to bring the Emancipation Act forward despite the opposition of the monarch and the established church. When Lord Beresford spoke, he represented not only the ruling Anglo-Irish elite but also as the head of an established Anglican Church linked to the state by law. He foretold what he saw as the beginning of a whole new era if the act was passed. Roman Catholics would be allowed to sit in Parliament and would use that right to promote other rights. They could, as a body, hold the balance of power between the parties in parliament. He saw it critically for what it was: a significant transfer of power making which would commence the end of the old Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. Like dominoes he saw that as one line was crossed and fell another would come under threat until all had been swept away.

Protestants in the North East noted that O'Connell had forced the government into granting Emancipation by harnessing two new powers in Ireland: mass public opinion and the growing influence of a resurgent Catholic Church closely linked to nationalism. By and large the protestant population of Belfast was against the measure and when O'Connell came to speak in Belfast it led to public disorder. It was made plain to employees of Protestant companies that if you went to the meeting or supported O'Connell you would be dismissed. The opposition to O'Connell and emancipation was led by Dr Henry Cooke, whose statue still adorns the city to this day.

Belfast was even then a divided town with severe rioting being

the norm at election times with sectarian elements clashing on religious and political grounds. Almost yearly the military were called out to quell disturbances especially in the Pound area where the Protestant Sandy Row adjoined the Catholic areas of the town.

The Great Famine which swept the country in the late 1840s led to a collapse of the population with many people fleeing to America and importantly to major British and Scottish cities such as Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool. They were not welcomed as they competed for any work, taking lower wages. The established Roman Catholic community in these cities were also not very welcoming to the immigrants as they were by this time more socially accepted and enjoyed a higher-class position. So, faction fighting and sectarian bitterness began and continued in those cities over the years - politically these immigrants were to favour a Nationalist Ireland, a factor that later UK governments had to consider. Is this forgotten history? Go to a Celtic and Rangers football match and you will still find traces of this while the traditional Whit Walks in Manchester were segregated with Protestant children one day and the 'Mickey Tuts' the next!

Prime Minister Gladstone was convinced that real reform of the political and social structure in Ireland was called for. The Anglican church in Ireland was the state church established by law just as the Church of England is today. The Anglican Church in Ireland ministered to the spiritual needs of 800,000 people. This was actually little more than 10% of the population. The Church had an enormous endowment income sustained by the hated tithe system that all denominations were compelled to pay. It was concentrated in the North East of the island and its members were generally descendants of the English settlers who came to the area at the Plantation of Ulster in the reign of James 1.

So, in Ireland everyone, regardless of their religious background had to pay for the Anglican Church in Ireland's upkeep although in many areas not one member lived in the parish. The overhaul of the tithe system during Gladstone's 1868-1874 Government and the disestablishment of the Established Anglican Church in Ireland was a relief to protestant Dissenters as well as Catholics. The field beside Ballinderry still has the title of the Tithe field and Ballinderry Moravian Church has a Bible presented to mark the end of the old system. Following disestablishment all the property of the Irish Anglican church was taken over to be used for charitable purposes and to pay annuities to the clergy who had lost their privileged positions.

The Church of Ireland however kept the historic old churches and burial grounds. This led to the situation where they had two mediaeval cathedrals in catholic Dublin and no cathedral in largely protestant Belfast until St Anne's Cathedral was build.

In addition to Church reform, Gladstone was determined to proceed with new Land Legislation: security of tenure, compensation for improvements and fairer rents. The landlords in Ireland were frequently absentee and their agents wrung the maximum profit with a minimal investment. There was little security of tenure and sub-division of land amongst a number of children rendered many farms unviable. Irish tenants have been described as the most impoverished tenantry in Europe. The North East of Ireland in part enjoyed a different system known as 'the Ulster Tenant Right' which gave some tenants more rights against the landlord. In many cases this was an agreement not a legal right and it did not cover the whole province. Weaving was a major home industry with the Ulster farmers and that gave them extra income which also defined the area in relation to the rest of the island.

Writing to Queen Victoria, Gladstone noted that 'Only now by a long and painful process have we come to the conclusion that Ireland is to be dealt with in all aspects as a free country, and is to be governed according to the sentiments of the majority and not its minority'! Fine words for London and Dublin but already it was a sentiment that had little traction in Belfast. From this period there was a growing feeling of a promoted National identity developing: a separate identity expressed in literature, history, clerical building/decoration and the attempt to revive the traditions and speech of an older 'Celtic' country.

Br Henry Wilson
Ballinderry



2020 was a challenging for everyone around the world. It has made all of us rethink our priorities. We have had to let go of things that have been part of our daily lives, things that we have taken for granted, little luxuries like sipping a coffee in a café just to read or work or waste time watching the world go by. We have changed how we celebrate birthdays, engagements, christening parties. We can no longer relax in a pub with the 'gang'. Even things that are sacred to us have had to change: weddings and funerals, church services, and formative education for our children. Fundamental things for our basic functioning as human beings reduced to the bare minimum. We have all had to struggle through this year, but the one good thing that has come out of this is that during the struggle to get by; we have been challenged to change how we engage with the world around us. We have had to rethink everything and let go of the things that are truly mere luxuries, and hold on, even harder to the core things that really matter.

For we Moravians, celebrating Christmas was a non-negotiable and congregations around the province, and indeed, around the world, found creative ways to celebrate this truly special season of light and love. The one birthday party this year that was absolutely not going to be canceled was this one. At the heart of our Christmas celebrations in the Irish District, and for many Moravians around the world, is our Christingle service. After the year we have had, we felt that having a full-on Christingle service was vitally important and worth investing considerable resources in to see it done well. As soon as the idea for a drive-in Christingle service was conceived, it was brought to life through the energy, creativity, and dedication of a committee drawn from the churches across the district. All of our churches contributed something to the service: time and participation, equipment, and financial support. The committee added hours of hard work onto their already busy schedules to make sure that everything was perfectly in place. The risks were thoroughly assessed and an extremely detailed plan was put in place. The service

offered serious logistical concerns, each concern was discussed and a solution sought. Piece by piece, for well over a month, the committee pulled it together, taking it from a dream to reality.

On the night, when all of the pieces came together, it was an absolute miracle to see it come to life.

This service brought the entire district, and many from the province closer together. It has garnered international attention with people watching from around the world. It struck a chord with the broader community, outside the Moravian Church in Ireland. One newspaper headline proclaimed that this service was: 'A shining light at the end of a Dark year', as people from all around the community joined in. For many of the people who I spoke to after the service, even for those

who were not able to join us in person who participated from their homes said that it made their Christmas come to life.

2020 was not a fun year, it was a pretty miserable year, and it is a true joy to see that the light of Christ shines so brightly in the darkness, and that, as a church, as a community of faith shining our Christingle light in the darkness this year made a real impact on the hearts and lives of so many, more than we can ever count, more than we will ever know.

God has given us the creativity to overcome the problems that come our way, the courage to face the unknown, and the desire to share God's love with all who need it so much. Above all, God has given us each other, and together, called to be God's light in the darkness, there is no end to what God is calling us to do, no place God is not inviting us to share this light, this Christmas, next Christmas, and every day in between. Let us seek to find new ways of shining this light in the darkness.

Br Jared Stephens
Minister at
Cliftonville and
Ballinderry Moravian
Churches



A Christingle crocheted by Sr Jane Dixon, one of the Moravian Crafters

© Sr Jane Dixon

Jesus' ministry was in large part about healing



- vaccines offer us a way to follow his example

It is almost now cliché to say that our lives changed forever when COVID-19 hit the UK in January 2020. Over the last year our lives have become about living through 'peaks', forming 'bubbles', and following mottos such as 'hands, face, and space'. As we enter a new national lockdown I wanted to take the opportunity to write, from my personal perspective, about how we can return to some semblance of normality, and follow Jesus' example of healing, through getting vaccinated when we are offered the opportunity to take it.

The development of vaccines to combat COVID-19 has been nothing short of a modern miracle. I remember when in 2002, a year since I travelled to Shanghai on a school exchange trip, SARs hit the headlines, and everyone feared that the new disease would spread throughout the world. Fortunately, on that occasion that virus did not develop into a pandemic, although it and its' later cousin MERs are still in limited circulation, even in the UK today. If it had developed into a situation like we are currently facing, then we would have perhaps had to wait a decade for a vaccine. Many people do not realise that the science behind vaccine development has increased rapidly in the last few years because of joint international efforts to combat other epidemics such as the Ebola, AIDS, and Malaria viruses. As such, vaccines to help prevent us getting sick from coronavirus have been able to be developed in record time, often with different parts of the process happening in parallel which would usually take a lot longer when done one after another, to speed the process up. Let me be clear, no corners have been cut, and the overwhelming evidence is that vaccines save us from preventable illness and death.

The development of vaccinations from 1796 heralded the end of much human suffering that mankind had experienced throughout history. It is hard to

understand today, that as recently as the 1930s, epidemics and widescale death were commonplace in people's lives. The Spanish Flu of the post-First World War period caused more death and arguably misery than the First World War itself and is interestingly part of the reason that the NHS develops an annual flu jab to protect people from the deadliest flu strain each year. Undeniably, vaccines protect us from diseases which our ancestors would have suffered and died of routinely. The COVID-19 vaccines offer us protection from the latest of a long line of preventable disease.

Living in the Manse at Fetter Lane Congregation, I look out on the oldest Moravian burial ground in Britain. I often read the names on the gravestones, along with their ages and dates when they died and wonder if these people would have been alive for longer if science had progressed further in the time that they were alive. Particularly I think of Nunak, one of the Inuits who travelled with Moravian missionaries to England in 1787, but tragically died when he was just 18 years old of smallpox, which even though he was faithful - he had no immunity for, and tragically was still nine years away from a development of a vaccine which would have protected him from the disease.

Vaccines have become a topic where everyone seems to have an opinion on the effectiveness, politics, and risks of getting vaccinated, with many on social media, often accidentally, sharing false information.

Many people, often while trying to do their best to make the right decisions for family members, have become concerned about the effects of vaccines on our loved ones. I would never want to belittle anyone who is genuinely trying to understand the risks of a medical procedure and is asking questions in a search for the truth.

What I would suggest is, much like our

own faith has sources of truth, such as the guidance from the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and church tradition, the current conversation on vaccines has its own sources of truth which we can follow for better guidance on understanding the issues at hand. Truth can be found in the advice of the Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which rigorously reviews all the evidence and tests before they approve a vaccine for use. Another good source is the BBC's series on understanding COVID-19 and the vaccine. These are all sources which use confirmed facts as the basis of their evaluation and advice, and most importantly do not have any vested interest in spinning a tale. Remember, anyone can express an opinion on social media, whether it is true or not, whereas the MHRA, BBC, and science-based research has to be rigorously questioned and proved before it can be published as truth to the public.

As I am a relatively young person in my 30s, I will not be offered the vaccine for a while, however as soon as I am offered it, I will take it! It will protect my loved ones and myself against the disease that has ravaged our world over the past year and allow us in time to return to normality again. This is the key point though. It only works if enough of us are vaccinated so the virus cannot take hold and pass from person to person. So, I implore you, to follow Jesus' example of both healing and being 'the truth' for both yourself and others.

Br Steve Maxwell, although writing in a personal capacity, currently works for the NHS in London's Emergency Planning, Resilience and Response team, and is husband to Sr Claire Maxwell, Minister of Fetter Lane Congregation.



Behind the scenes at the Irish District Drive in Christingle

Well, it was such a mad idea that it might just work was the consensus view. So, a committee was formed with Br Jared Stephens, Br John Cooper from Cliftonville, Br Henry Wilson from Ballinderry, Sr Lynsey Cunningham from University Road, Sr Roberta Hoey from PEC, Br Raymond Kitson and myself from Gracehill. Ballymena Show Grounds was selected as the venue as it was used to hosting Drive in Services and a site visit was organised.

Br Raymond managed the work at the showground, Sr Lyndsey was invaluable with her experience of event hosting, I held the nativity play portfolio and Br John kept us in order! Weekly planning meetings were held by Jared and others were drawn in to help as needed. Br John Law came up trumps by loaning us a 40ft lorry bed which he drove up on the morning of the Drive in and back home that evening. Eventbrite was used for people to book tickets and to pass on information to those who were coming. A nativity play was arranged, and people were cajoled into taking part in it. Insurance cover was sorted, and risk assessments written. Sr Roberta Gray was in charge of advertising and Br Jared organised a radio interview on Radio Ulster.

A large Moravian star was ordered. This took some time to arrive because the star factory in Herrnhut had shut because of COVID-19 but it eventually arrived! Br Chris Jones took on the task of making a giant Christingle for the stage in the back yard of the Gracehill Manse. Br John filled the Christingle packs in the Cliftonville Church Hall, which was a huge task! The packs contained an orange, frills, sweets etc. and free pens from Kilwarlin, Christingle leaflets, a new leaflet specially printed to introduce the Irish District, a history leaflet and an order of service. It took several van loads to get all the filled Christingle packs up to Gracehill ready for onward shipping to the Showgrounds.

Ballyduff Silver Band were booked to lead the singing. Not long before the Drive in we heard the welcome news that the number of band players could rise from four to 15 so a glorious sound would be heard. A local firm was contracted to set microphones and FM radio transmission so folk could hear it in their own car radios. Radio Cracker came and set up the live stream for the Provincial Facebook page. The nativity play rehearsal was held on Zoom!

On the big day, the lorry and portable toilets arrived. Raymond and sons spent all day at the Showgrounds decking out the lorry with backdrops and straw bales and sorting out the electrics and lighting. A gazebo was erected to hold the tables where volunteers could pass out Christingle packs to the cars as they

came in. A large, borrowed van brought over the Christingle packs and much of the other equipment.

The afternoon got colder and darker - would anyone come, and would it work?? Volunteers turned up as promised and set to work in the car park. The band turned up and started to play. Our only walkthrough rehearsal for the nativity play was held. The giant Christingle was set in place and the huge Moravian star started to glow in the darkness.

By four o'clock we were freezing cold but raring to go. People were welcomed to the Drive in by Br Livingstone Thompson. Br Jared led the prayers and readers read the Bible passages. Then came the nativity play, with Br Greg Cunningham as the innkeeper and Sr Lizzie Corsby the narrator who both made the play come alive. A Christingle talk was given by Br Mark Kernohan and as he talked the giant Christingle was put together on the stage. When it came to lighting the Christingle, people were asked to switch on their car lights and torches and the world seemed to light up. After prayers the District Chairman, Br David Johnston, thanked everyone and wished all safe home and a happy Christmas. A bucket collection was taken up as people left.

Of course that was not the end - everything had to be taken down and packed away in the cold. Much was brought back to Gracehill for further sorting. Borrowed items had to be returned and donated money had to be counted. The unused Christingle packs were sent back to congregations and were distributed to those who were unable to be with us. We were all frozen but happy and relieved by that stage.

The bucket collection was to be given to charity and a donation of £100 has been made to Radio Cracker and the remainder, £741, will be sent to the Hurricane Eta and Iota appeal. We were so grateful for the donations of money from individuals and congregations that enabled this huge venture to be put on. We know that over 100 cars came to the Drive in, over 300 Christingle packs were given out and there have been over 3,600 views of the Drive in Christingle on the Provincial Facebook page from folk across the Province and the Moravian Unity.

It was a huge amount of work, but the Irish District came together to put on some Christmas cheer at a dark time. Thank you to everyone who helped and particularly to Jared whose brain wave idea this was.

Sr Sarah Groves

Minister at Gracehill Moravian Church



Bath (Weston)

On a bitter cold day and waiting to hear if we are going to have another full lockdown again, church life will be staying quiet for a while yet. Zooming and FaceTiming are keeping us all in contact with one another, definitely not the same, some like it, some do not! Looking forward to the time when we can all go back to church and sing our hearts out. We have missed singing the Carols at services this year. We did manage one Christmas service and that was Christingle held in the car park. Sr Brenda played the piano by the door, Br Paul and Sr Patsy led the service between them, but we were able to sing outside with our masks on. Unfortunately, due to a windy late afternoon, it was a trying time lighting the candle! Every time we had a flame it went out, but it was enjoyable just to have a service and contact with people we have not seen for a while, keeping our distance of course! It was also quite funny as with everyone wrapped up and with masks on we did not recognise people. It was bitter cold though - I had to have a glass of sherry when I got home to warm up. Due to the restrictions of numbers etc., the service was not advertised to the rest of the community, as normally we have 70-80 people attend. This year it was



© Sr Jacquie Naish

20!! The Provincial Services are most enjoyable, so thank you to all the churches who have taken the time to put these together for us, hopefully for a lot longer yet! Sr Enid Brain has been busy in her extra spare time at present, by knitting and sewing for family and friends. The photo shows some of the items she has made: Mr & Mrs Frosty (middle Mrs Frosty is waiting for her skirt) and an Advent Garland.

Wishing you all a healthy 2021 and keep smiling.

Every Blessing.

Sr Carole Young



© Sr Sue Groves

or within the wider community. I have also been reminded of something Rev. Dennis Monger used to preach quite regularly 'I'm not bothered about religion', he used to say, 'but I do care about having a right relationship with God and with one another'. He put this belief into practice by becoming a Moravian minister, an Anglican priest as well as a Baptist minister. Community matters - perhaps the labels are not quite so important.

Brockweir

*'The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers ...'*

2020 has been quite a year for all of us and we can only hope and pray that 2021 is an improvement. However, before we consign 2020 to the dustbin of shattered hopes and dreams, like most things in life it had some positives. It has inevitably led to change, services via Zoom - enabling people who would not have attended church in person to join the church community. We've also got to know our wider Moravian community. Will this be a new Moravian tradition? If so how do we develop it when 'normal' life returns?

The power of community and our interdependence has also been demonstrated when we work together as small groups

Most of our services during 2020 were online but our Christingle service was held outside the Sunday School and was led by Sr Sue Groves. Despite appalling weather 17 adults, five children and four Zoom viewers enjoyed a very happy service. Sr Groves and her elves had packed and delivered do-it-yourself Christingle kits with an explanatory sheet to various houses in Brockweir. We were delighted by the response for it really was a night to stay by the fire!

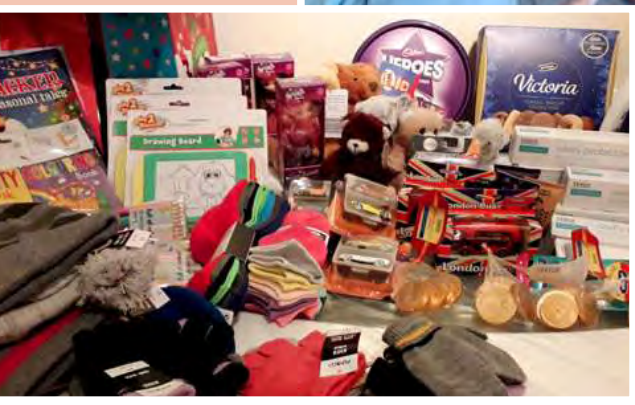
Our Christmas Day service was in church and it was good to be back even if we were all masked and socially distancing. Hearing the bell ringing made me think of the continued witness at Brockweir for almost 200 years and how we are all part of that historic chain. Sr Groves again took the service, and the Christmas liturgy was a great way to start the day and remember what Christmas is really about.

Sr Judith Ashton

Cliftonville

How does one sum up a year like no other? In 2020 we learned to accept lockdowns and a different way of life, adapt to worship and Bible Study on Zoom and appreciate the opportunities to see and chat with friends and feel as though we had left our homes for an hour. With the arrival of Covid-19 vaccines we begin to hope for a less restricted 2021 and future.

We celebrated Christmas; we enjoyed the tree and church decorations on one Sunday and for a Blue Christmas service that had in mind those for whom Christmas has painful memories. In addition to 80 gift shoe boxes, three large bin bags of children's sweaters and 53 blankets organised by Vivienne and Lorraine and friends for needy children, donations

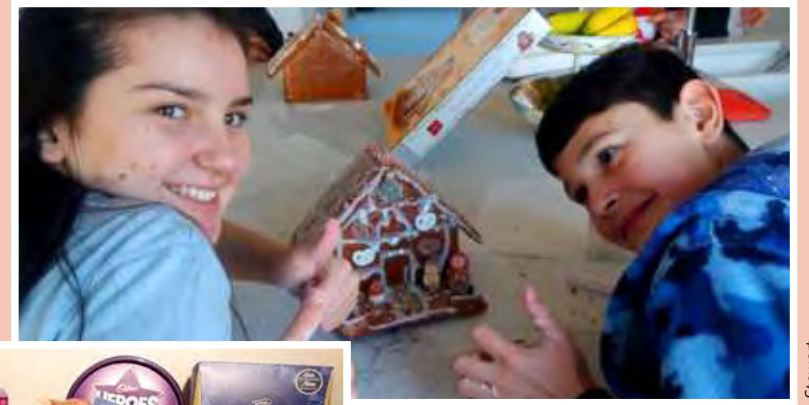


Gifts for Women's Aid Refuge

enabled gifts to be purchased for a local Women's Aid Refuge. Among other social events we made and decorated Gingerbread houses online. We co-operated with the other Irish congregations in the very successful Drive-in Christingle in Ballymena Showground by packing the Christingle kits, and met on Zoom on Christmas morning.

Since Christmas we welcomed guest preachers, the Reverend Roger Purce, a friend of Br Stephens, and the Rev. John Rights, a Moravian minister in Bethlehem Pa.

We thank Br Stephens and all the ministers and lay people in



Gracey and Aaron Stewart with their gingerbread house

© Sr Beth Stewart

the Moravian Church who worked so hard preparing the congregation and Provincial services. Each Sunday morning, I forward links for the Gracehill and Provincial services to seven Moravians who appreciate the content.

Sadly 2020 ended with the deaths of two members, Russell Leathem and June McGrath. Russell lived some

distance from Cliftonville for many years but in earlier days he was an active member of the church committee and played his part in the work of the congregation. Our love and sympathy to his relatives. June was connected with the congregation most of her life and at one time was a GB officer, she was regular in church attendance, a member of the church committee and a ready helper in whatever work needed doing. She will be sorely missed by her family and friends and we surround Jim and daughters, Susan and Jennifer, and their families with love and sympathy.

Sr Edna Cooper

Gomersal

What difficult and unprecedented times that we are all going through.

Following the service in Church on 1st November, the country went in to lock down and all services were cancelled. This continued afterwards for us as West Yorkshire entered Tier 3 at the end of the lockdown. It had been wonderful to be able to see friends and worship together in Church, but we have had to revert to services online. We are very thankful to the many people who have contributed into making and participating in these services.



© Br Michael Newman

On Sunday 20th December we held our Christingle Service on YouTube. This was a wonderful service - really good to hear the carols sung, thanks to the Moravian Singers. The Nativity was brilliantly performed by our young people telling the Christmas story with the help of Lego, which they had made into different scenes. It was a credit to them all.

Prior to the service we were able to collect a kit from church to enable us to make our own Christingle during the service. Sr Claire Newman read the story of the first Christingle that had been written and illustrated by Br David Dickinson. Br Michael then demonstrated how to make the Christingle at

home, using the kit we had collected, with very clear instructions. The lights were then turned off and we sang Morning Star. It was very touching, adding a bit of normality and familiarity to our service.

Peace and goodwill from the Gomersal Congregation to all our Brothers and Sisters wherever you are.

Stay safe.

Sr Norma Machell



© Br Anthony Torkington and Sr Janet Warr

Fairfield

With advent upon us what could we do with our limited resources to bring the spirit of Christmas to those around us?

The residents of Fairfield Square certainly did their utmost in this regard. The Moravian stars were in abundance and some of the window displays were quite magnificent; so much so that pictures have been shared on Fairfield Old Girls Facebook site with some lovely comments as to the happy memories they brought back of the times spent at the Carol services held by the school in the church. This year some of the residents also decorated a magnificent tree whilst others displayed homemade reindeers, all of which provided a beautiful backdrop for

anyone strolling through the square, especially in the evening when all the adorning lights were on to add to the tranquil ambience.

On 13th December we held a Zoom Service of Carols and Lessons - Br Phil Cooper had put considerable effort into preparing this and it was a resounding success. Sr Janet Warr is hosting fortnightly Zoom coffee mornings, another way of keeping in touch and giving members and friends the opportunity to catch up and share news.

Of course, for those of us not living locally we don't get to see the windows and decorations or more importantly fellow members and friends going about their daily lives. It is in these extraordinary times that I, and I'm

sure many of you, have come to appreciate the value of different types of communication: Christmas cards dropping through the letter box have been extra welcome this year, an email with congregation news attached or hymns for the weekly Sunday Morning singing on our doorstep, a telephone call out of the blue just to see how I'm doing and share news, a text or a WhatsApp message sharing news of friends. All of these things are reminders that out of sight does not mean out of mind - we are church family and we care, and that is the message all these communications bring and they are sincerely and deeply appreciated during these isolating times.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe

Harlesden

This is a historical photo of the West London society, that was supplied by the late Avis Allison. In the photo some of you will recognise some of the brethren of faith who strengthened the Moravian Church in London. See who you can recognise - I will name a few of those in the photo: the late Sr Barker in the front row, the late Rev Bruce in the back row (L/S), Sr Bass of Chelsea in the front row, Sr Jacobs, the late Sr Allison in the front row. Sr Allison's funeral was held on Friday 15 January 2021.



© Sr. Avis Allison

Br Edwin Quildan



© Br Joachim Kresuel

Ockbrook

As we were not able to hold our usual Summer Garden Party or Autumn Fair, we decided to organise a Take-away Festive Tea at the end of November, which boosted church funds considerably.

In the run-up to Christmas, a talented team put together a beautiful window display which was much admired and photographed.

On Christmas Eve we held a Walk-through rolling Christingle service, with take-away bags containing everything needed for a DIY Christingle. An amazing 150 people visited, and a good sum was raised for a local hospice.

Sr Julie Hague

Notices

ALL VIRTUAL: April 20-24, 2021

The 7th Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music

All Presentations, Panels, Lectures,
and Concert will be accessible online.

REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 1, 2021:
moravianconferences.org | 610.866.3255

THE WALTER VIVIAN MOSES LECTURE IN MORAVIAN STUDIES

Dr. Jon F. Sensbach

MORAVIAN MUSIC FOUNDATION CONCERT

Beethoven in Bethlehem

MORAVIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY KEYNOTE LECTURE:

Dr. Jenna M. Gibbs



*The conference is sponsored by the Moravian Archives, Moravian College, and the Center for Moravian Studies;
in partnership with the Moravian Music Foundation, Moravian Historical Society, and Moravian Theological Seminary.*

From Church House

Following the new lockdown introduced in England, the PEC are now asking that all congregations suspend physical worship from Sunday 9th to 24th January (inclusive). In Northern Ireland, services should remain suspended during this period.

The Provincial Board will meet week beginning 18th January to review this position for the period from Sunday 31st January. We are mindful of congregations who are keen to gather and we will continue to monitor all available government advice and data. We have made this decision to ensure we continue to minimise the risk of transmission during worship but are determined that we continued to be together in other ways.

Provincial Diary for February

Meetings are continuing to be held online wherever possible.

- 9th PEC
- 11th Finance Committee
- 17th BMB
- 20th Yorkshire District Conference (Online)
- 27th Irish District Conference (Online)
- 27th Midlands District Conference (Online)

Congregational Register

Deaths

14th Aug 2020	Zevon Thomas	Harold Road
10th Dec 2020	Enid Benham	Ockbrook
12th Dec 2020	Roy Alan Davidson	Fairfield
19th Dec 2020	Enoch Williams	Hornsey
20th Dec 2020	Cecilia Leigh	Fairfield

1-7	World Interfaith Harmony Week
11	World Day for the Sick
12	Chinese New Year
14	Racial Justice Sunday (www.ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-2021/)
	Valentine's Day
16	Shrove Tuesday
17	Ash Wednesday
21	Church Action on Poverty Sunday (http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)
22 Feb - 7 March	Fairtrade Fortnight (www.fairtrade.org.uk)
26	Purim - Jewish

Dates to remember!



© Br Edwin Quildan

St Margaret's and St George's United Reformed and Moravian Church - Harlesden

Introduction

St Margaret's and St George's United Reformed and Moravian Church, Harlesden has a long and distinguished history. Back in the 16th century Harlesden was a rural area near London. As London expanded it encompassed the village of Harlesden.

Past

The Church booklet 'The Story of Willesden Presbyterian Church 1874-1925' Miss E M Inglis notes:

By the year 1873, the village (of Harlesden) had begun to be recognised as a desirable one for residential purposes. It was delightfully unspoilt, yet very near town. Some who came to live in the District found one thing lacking. It was ill-provided with facilities for religious worship to which they were accustomed, and the Parish Church was a considerable distance.

A number of meetings were held, and it was decided to build a Church (meeting place) in Harlesden. A patch of land was found and purchased at a cost of £650, in the middle of a field. A Lecture hall was duly built to accommodate 150 people that opened on the 25th October 1874. Later the members considered which denominations would best suit their worship needs. Proposals were made and following a vote it was decided to commence discussions with the Presbyterian Church. As numbers continued to rise, it became imperative that a larger building was a necessity along with a minister. The cost of building the new Church was £3,700 and work commenced in September 1875. By April 1876 the Memorial Stone for the completed structure was laid. The hall was taken down and rebuilt to allow the Church building to be enlarged.

Key dates

1954: Br Earl Claxton, a Moravian from the West Indies made contact with many other

West Indians who had come to London to live. Many were Moravians from the Caribbean who were spread far and wide around London. They were encouraged to rekindle their membership with the Moravian Church.

1960: West London Society was formed with Rev Kirby Spencer as their first minister. Initially the society met in private homes until their numbers increased, when they sought larger premises and used various church premises.

1965: St George's Presbyterian Church in Brondesbury was in danger of closing and the Moravian society asked if they might use their premises.

1966: Brondesbury Society was linked to the Fetter Lane congregation which at that time was also supervising the Upton Manor congregation and Brixton Society. Br Rex Williamson was appointed to be minister in charge of both the Moravian and Presbyterian members.

1967: Upton Manor and Brixton formed a unit with their own minister and Fetter Lane and Brondesbury remained a unit.

1972: The Presbyterians became part of the United Reformed Church and a legal union was formed with the West London Society in Brondesbury to become St George's United Reformed and Moravian Church on 26th July 1972.

1974: Discussions commenced about the possible merger of St George's with St Margaret's. It was decided that St George's would close and the united congregation would move to join St Margaret's United Reformed Church at Harlesden. The congregation became known as 'St Margaret's and St George's United Reformed and Moravian Church'.

1976: The link with Fetter Lane was discontinued and ministry at Harlesden alternated between the United Reformed Church and the Moravian Church.

Today

As at 31st August the total members and adherents totalled 108 with 11 children. Prior to the lockdown our regular worship was held in Church each Sunday at 11am. The children and young people take part in the main worship then leave part way through for their classes.

The Moravian Women's Association circle was formed in 1977 and meets on the third Sunday of the month after service. The Men's Fellowship was formed in 1990 and meets on the third Thursday of the month.

A house group is held each Tuesday evening in the Greenford area and a Bible study group meets each Wednesday evening in Church. Both have continued on Zoom since the lockdown.

A keep fit class was held for many years each Wednesday afternoon, but is on hold at present since the lockdown. A prayer meeting is held each Friday at 1.15 pm and continues on Zoom since the lockdown. The congregation enjoy the richness of activities from both denominations.

Our social outreach is limited to assisting/supporting the foodbank at the local Methodist Church. It was hoped to have a theme of Evangelism during 2021. There is a strong Churches Together focus in Harlesden, as many denominations have planted Churches in Harlesden and Stonebridge. Resources are pooled as necessary. Normally, during January the 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' a service is held at 1pm in a different Church each day in the area. On the first Sunday of Advent an afternoon service is held in one of the Churches.

We are also twinned with Amersham Free Church and hold an annual pulpit interchange plus support each other's activities.

Br Edwin Quildan

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Editorial Team, Church House, 5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ
editorialteam@moravian.org.uk

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Design & Artwork
David Bull

dave@redragdesign.co.uk

Printing & Distribution
G. R. Walkden

Tel 01253 681338