

moravian messenger

MARCH 2021



Spring has sprung!



Spring has to be my favourite time of year. Perhaps its because I am an Easter baby (born on Palm Sunday - but it is a moveable feast!). Spring seems to creep up on us but for me the very first signs are seen in our hedgerows and gardens with the first flowers bringing much needed colour back into our chilly, grey lives. Snowdrops are the brave pioneers, nosing through frozen ground as early as January. They are followed by other early bulbs - purple crocuses, aconites and then of course by the end of February into March, yellow daffodils and in the woodlands, celandines and violets. And probably the last of the spring flowers are the bluebells in early May. Another sign is of course birds starting to nest, singing to attract their mates. I always remember this little verse from my childhood (recited in my best 'Brooklyn' accent):

**Spring has sprung, the grass is riz,
I wonder where dem boidies is?**

**Some say the boid is on the wing.
But aint that absoid,
The little wings is on the boid!**

(funny the things you remember!)

Nature never ceases to amaze me as the dormant bulbs and tubers lay in the solid, hard, often frozen ground over winter. Then something wakes them and with a strength I often can't muster with a spade or fork the tiny shoots break through the soil and we get a peek of the bright green promise of Spring.

When someone asks me why do I believe in God my response is often - how can you look at a snowdrop (or for that matter any flower/animal/human) and not believe? I have many other theological reasons of course to reinforce my belief but that perfect, strong, persistent flower was no accident, it was created. It may have evolved over millions of years, but it was created. That perfect little white and green gem gives me hope; hope that

even in the darkest moments of our lives, the Autumn/Winter moments, we have the promise of Spring. In the Good Friday moments, we have the hope of Easter Sunday.

This passage sums up hope for me and embodies Spring:

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these ... your heavenly

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All in the end is Harvest

Lent has started and we are over two weeks in. Some will be dieting, some will be refraining from chocolate, alcohol, others will be trying to do a random act of kindness each day and perhaps some of you will be trying to follow Br Blair Kessler's of giving up 30 minutes of time each day to just sit and contemplate. Whatever we do though is hardly a reflection of the 40 days and 40 nights the Bible records Jesus undertaking in the desert before he set out for his ministry.

Out in the world of medicine and health care many people have had their first COVID-19 inoculation and the round of second immunisations has begun. Rates of infection have fallen and hopes for relaxation of the regulations are high. Schools are looking at how they can reopen and all of us are looking forward to seeing family and friends.

Spring has well and truly started; birds have paired and began nest building; the nights are really stretching out; our potatoes are chitting and seeds are being sown; and few, other than farmers are up in the dark. The race for summer has well and truly begun.

In the Church, we too are desperate for a return to normal, not just being able to worship together in a socially distanced way but to some form of 'normal worship' with hymns, handshakes and coffee after service. We are a church that thrives on fellowship and our relationship with each other is part of our relationship with God. We have grieved that we cannot be with our human families and with our church families. Our children and young people have suffered with no Children's Church and young people's organisations and we have all missed the sound of children in our worship. The desperation for relief that the summer may bring us is very real. 'My heart longs for this more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning'

(Psalm 130:6).

This has been such a hard time, roller coaster of emotions, so much worry and mental distress; jobs lost, businesses destroyed; and healthcare systems and workers stretched beyond what was ever considered possible. None of us want to go back to it or experience it ever again - we have been in internal exile in our own land.

But there have been lessons learnt. In strange ways we, as Christians, have learnt that it is possible to 'sing the Lord's song in a strange land' (Psalm 137:4). Ultimately God has not abandoned us, and we have found new ways to worship and to study. As we hopefully come nearer the end of the first part of this pandemic what can we learn as a Church? What has this desert and exile experience taught us? What should we hold on to and what can we let go of as a Church and in each individual congregation? What are the essentials of our faith and worship, what weighs us down that should be discarded and what should we continue that frees us to work and witness to our faith in a new way? These are deep questions and will not be answered immediately, we will not come to a new position without much heart searching.

During Lent we can take time to think about these things as well as longing for the resurrection joy of Easter. We have time to reflect on the desert time of the past year and hopefully to come to a realisation that nothing that is offered to the Lord and 'for the Lord is ever lost or wasted' (JB Philips translation of 1 Corinthians) and that 'all in the end is harvest.' (Edith Sitwell's poem 'Eurydice').

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



© Sr Sarah Groves

Spring has sprung!

Father knows that you need all these things ... 33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

Matthew 6:25-34 (NRVS)

We spend such a lot of our lives worrying about the future and often miss the joys of the present moment. Sometimes, I am lucky enough to have the opportunity to walk to 'work'. Coming round the corner to Lower Wyke Green to the sight of the paddock and the Church in the background is always an uplifting sight

as the scene changes through the seasons. My favourite has to be the snowdrops and daffodil moments. At Wellhouse, in God's Acre it is the crocuses that stir me.

God came to us in the form of his son Jesus Christ, but he also comes to us in the hope of every resurrection moment in Spring. We need hope more than ever right now; so stop and take time this Spring to look around you, to appreciate the wonderful, created world in which we live. Go look for those boidies!

Sr Jane Dixon
Minister at Lower Wyke and Wellhouse



Letter to the Editorial Team

As a Lutheran I am happy to have been adopted by the University Road Moravian Congregation and regularly receive the Moravian Messenger which, without fail, is full of interesting news and articles. The February issue brought Br Blair Kessler's thoughts on the meaning of Lent which I found most thought provoking. Many people take Lent for a time to give up food and drink - often for dietary reasons and in the hope of losing a few pounds. What a lovely idea to give up time for reflection and contemplation. We can all do with considering how much of our time is often wasted. Spending some of it in quiet thought will certainly be more meaningful and uplifting than giving up chocolate and biscuits!

Sr Monika McCurdy

Report from the youth leaders across the Moravian Worldwide Unity

© Unity Youth Committee



On the 19th December 2020 the UYC (Unity Youth Committee) hosted an online Zoom call for youth leaders across the Moravian Worldwide Unity. The aim was for us to get to know each other, share what we do and learn from each other's experience.

The main topic of our conversation was to find out what activities or events people had found to be successful with their youth during the COVID pandemic in each different region. Although originally planned to only last about an hour, the event was so well attended, and the discussion so involved that we actually finished up after about one and half hours - but I am sure it could have carried on so much longer!

I would like to tell you something about what a few of the youth leaders shared about their work in the specific provinces or mission areas and we do truly hope that more will join us for future meetings. I hope what you read about all the youth leader's do in their provinces encourages you and inspires you to reflect on what your youth work looks like currently and how you might be part of the future for your province.

If you would like more information on anything you read about here or would like to become part of our online community and Zoom meetings please get in touch with your provincial youth committee or come find us at the links below:

<https://www.facebook.com/worldwidemycyouth>

<http://www.unitasfratrumyouth.org/>

Now, let's go ahead and see what's happening around the globe ...

Zambia

Zambia has four regions of youth work; the problem is that they are quite far from each other and it is hard to communicate. Despite that, the youth meet once a year for a Youth and Mission Conference. In their regional conferences, they do sports, music, Bible quizzes and teach on gender, illness and other topics. Their favourite activity is praising God and evangelising through songs. Bible quizzes are also very popular among the youth.

Myanmar

In the current situation, only up to ten people can meet in person. The work in Myanmar focuses mostly on spreading God's word to people and evangelising. In December, the youth with their leader went to a market place and shared God's word and the Christmas message and found a great response to it.

Nepal

In the three congregations in Nepal, there is a big mix of ethnicities, which makes it very diverse. In one congregation, the youth have known each other well since their childhood, while in the congregation in Kathmandu, the youth live far away from each other and the church, so it is more complicated to

create a fellowship. That is why during the COVID-19 lockdown, the youth leaders decided to connect these three congregations for virtual fellowships. This helped the youth to get to know each other and open up different discussions and debates on different Bible topics. The Nepali like to sing a lot, so they organised online carolling. The two things that they felt were very successful were Social Issue Nights where they could talk about current issues (such as the overuse of social media) and their impact, and Stress Management Courses where they taught on how to manage stress at this challenging time. In this course, they sat down with each youth and talked to them individually so that they could help them to move forward.

Uganda

The church in Uganda is a young church and there are not yet many congregations. However, there is a youth council set up that is planning for a youth conference. They are working on making sure that the youth are represented in each congregation. At the conference, they want to have youth from all the congregations and appoint youth leaders for each congregation. Before the lockdown, the youth would meet every Wednesday, but when the lockdown started, they had to find other ways to connect using technology. Since not everyone has a smartphone, they used texting as a way to keep in touch. Some of the members became more active during this time and that was what encouraged them to set up the youth council and to hold a youth conference. One of the things that the youth like to do is to make crafts to support the youth work, such as baskets, shoes and sandals.

The European Continental Province (Germany)

The youth have also been meeting mostly online and some of the youth gatherings have been turned into an online version. One of the things the youth leader did was a Moravian Radio that has its own channel on YouTube and you can find many different programs there, such as a cooking show, interviews with interesting or influential people and others. For Easter, the ECP youth leaders created scribble books that contained a variety of activities connected to Easter, but they were not only for sitting down, they also included some physical activities. Recently, they have created an Advent calendar that was not only aimed at the youth, but also at other members of the church.

Czech Republic

The youth in the Czech Republic had to cancel their two provincial events, but some of the congregations could organise their summer camps when the restrictions loosened up. The youth were encouraged to keep in touch and try using more personal ways of communication, such as calling each other, writing emails or sending postcards/letters instead of using social media.

continued overleaf

Report from the youth leaders

Some of the groups get together for practical work to help out in the community or with someone in the congregation.

Barbados, EWI

Each of the islands in the Eastern West Indies work autonomously and has different activities. However, they have a Provincial Youth Camp where the youth from the islands come together and work together.

Guyana

The youth in Guyana have had to be meeting online in the past months as well. They have been organising virtual meetings where one person presents on a character of the Bible and then they have a discussion about it. They focus on a good level of engagement in the meetings. They also organise discussions on mental health and career guidance. For 2021, they hope to organise a youth convo. They like Bible quizzes, sports, competitions and camps.

South Africa

South African youth reacted strongly to the pandemic. Before, they had in-person gatherings on the congregational and national level. Singing has been very important for them since it can connect all cultures and languages. When all the meetings started being cancelled, the Moravian Youth Union of South Africa (MYUSA) reacted with many different online activities and streams aimed at the youth, but also encompassed foreign youth. It is complicated to include everyone in the online work



© Sr. Barbara Gonzales

and it is a challenge to make the virtual meetings work, but they are doing a great job.

Jamaica

There are four regions of Jamaica and each of them has their youth coordinator that work together on the provincial youth board. This January, they are hosting an online event called Youth Award where they award youngsters for their work in the Moravian Church and among the youth. The awards are given to people who are nominated by someone else and then selected by a committee that evaluates the nominations and selects the award recipients. This event is something that happens regularly, but this year it will be hosted online for the first time.

I look forward to hopefully meeting you at some point in the future and I pray for all the youth work your church and your province undertakes currently.

Sr Jiřina Čančíková

Czech Province of the Moravian Church
Unity Youth Committee Desk Coordinator



Our Moravian Treasures

'Our Moravian Treasures' traces its origins to a conference for Moravian

theological educators in Suriname in 2010. The conference identified a number of topics that are of particular importance to the Moravian Church. A task force was set up, with members from Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and North America, to work on a resource for use across the Unity. I first came across 'Our Moravian Treasures' when a complete draft was presented at the Moravian Mission Conference in South Africa in 2017. Before then, there had been no input from the British Province, so I offered to help with the proof reading, as well as adding some British insights. I am delighted that the book has now been published, and I am sure that it will become an invaluable resource for learning about the treasures that we share.

Br Michael Newman
Fulneck

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Moravian Synod of the British Province, 10th-13th June 2021

You will be aware that the Synod scheduled for 2020 was delayed until March of this year. However, this has also had to be postponed, due to the ongoing Covid-19 restriction. Following discussions with the Synod Chaining Panel, the Clerk and others, the Provincial Board has started preparations to hold Synod online from Thursday 10th to Sunday 13th June 2021.

The Provincial Board is aware that this is a significant step for our Province and that it will take a great deal of organising and logistical planning. Discussions have been taking place over the last few months, in order to determine the feasibility of an online Synod and how it would be carried out. It has been determined that such a Synod is possible, but only with certain conditions being met and suitable training for everyone who will be taking part.

In putting Synod 2021 together, full consideration has been given to various matters, including procedures concerning speaking and voting, the taking and reading of minutes, the length of online sessions and the technological abilities of delegates and deputies. It has also been noted that there may have to be new elections for delegates, given the change of dates and circumstances. In addition, the dates of submission of reports and proposals will have to be amended once again.

The Provincial Board would like to thank you for your patience and for your cooperation. We are very grateful for the planning team that has come together to help make this work. More details will be published in the near future and we will keep you informed of future developments as they happen.

Together we can make Synod 2021 a success and continue the collaborative and dynamic nature of our Moravian Church.

Yours in His Service,

Sr Roberta Hoey
For the Provincial Board

Care4Clergy Care4Clergy

I became the minister at Cliftonville and Ballinderry at the end of 2018. At my welcome service at Cliftonville I met a number of local clergy, and it was then that I became acquainted with Fr Martin Magill who is the priest of St John's Parish on the Falls Road, Belfast, which is not far from Cliftonville. Fr Martin and I struck up a healthy conversation which led to another conversation and yet another conversation. At some point he invited me to become a part of a group centered around offering care and support to clergy. I wasn't exactly sure what this would look like, what I could offer, or what work would be required of me, but I went along and found myself quickly embraced by a group so supportive and caring that I knew something special was going to happen. They had vision, they had a great team, and they recognised there was much we could do to help. As we explored ways that we could meet the need, we have found it to be rewarding and important work.

Care4Clergy is a group of clergy dedicated to caring for one another and has evolved into something much bigger than the original intent. As we gathered and shared our experiences in ministry with each other, we began to realise how much need there is in the wider faith community for ministers to have this kind of support.

As the Care4Clergy website states: 'As we shared our own experiences of parish ministry, and sought the views of colleagues, we have begun to articulate both the ways in which stress impacts those engaged in ordained ministry, what some of the main causes of that stress might be - and where we may need to go next, in order to bridge the gap between 'stress' and 'care'.

It is our intention - or at least our hope - that we can enlighten, encourage and equip by beginning the conversation, by giving voice to the concerns, and by seeking the answer to the very question which began our deliberations, 'Who pastors the pastor?'

Once that question was asked, we began to explore ways that it might be answered. As the group explored the needs of clergy in Ireland we developed a website, a Facebook page, and a YouTube channel as ways to engage with the needs of clergy.

'Care4clergy is a cross-denominational group of clergy with a passion for clergy care and mental health, and for working out how best to support clergy in the modern church. We aim to provide a 'safe place' where clergy and church workers can talk about problems, share stories and seek solutions.

We are mindful of the struggles, pressures and challenges faced by our colleagues, and how many of our problems arise from what we have called 'the burden of expectation' - the expectations placed upon us by congregations, society, peers, church hierarchies and by ourselves.'

The work continues to grow, as does the awareness of the needs of clergy. 'There has been a changed understanding of the role of clergy in today's world. Stress comes from the lack of resources then, but also the lack of understanding of the role of clergy. There is a strangely contradictory attitude - the expectation of the 1950s priest cycling round the parish - who is also adept at Facebook, Twitter and social media.

It is difficult to be a Christian, a person of faith, in a largely secular, pluralist, society. To be an ordained Christian leader, puts us 'out there' as the public face of Christianity, and as the focus, at times even the target, of anti-Christian or anti-church sentiment. The modern-day priest is no longer on a bicycle - but is also no longer on a pedestal and has lost the respect which was automatically given both to the role and the person.

To be clergy in the current climate, to speak and preach and live out the Gospel message, is often to be deeply counter-cultural. To stand for any values and principles which are not being diluted for the popular vote, puts us automatically in the firing line, and under fire.

That applies in the ordinary, day to day business of the church. But when more controversial matters of ethics or behaviour or belief come into the public forum - the abortion debate, same sex marriage, child abuse cases, whatever the outcome, the scrutiny, the challenge, sometimes the backlash, on clergy, can pile stress upon stress.'

We work to give context to the issues that clergy face. We offer a place for people to come to when they need someone to talk to. Our Harbour Team offers a safe, caring space where clergy can come anonymously, or not, in person (when safety allows), over the phone or by email. We offer Wednesday Wisdoms, inviting people from a wide variety of backgrounds to offer moments of reflection, panel discussions, and webinars, as well as sharing resources on mental health, spiritual care, and support opportunities. As well as addressing the practical needs of clergy wellbeing we are also working hard to raise awareness of the great need for clergy support and try to help remove some of the stigma attached to clergy seeking the support they need.

It is a big undertaking and there is much still to do in this area, and we are doing good work in our group.

It is exciting to be a part of a new enterprise doing such good work. I am delighted to be a part of it and look forward to seeing where God is leading the group into the future.

Br Jared Stephens

Care4Clergy and Minister at Cliftonville and Ballinderry Moravian Churches



¹ <https://care4clergy.com>

² Rev. Lynne Gibson: "Notes on Wednesday Wisdom"

³ <https://care4clergy.com>

Notice

Introduction

In the book, *Through Five Hundred Years and Beyond*, Allen W. Schattschneider and Albert H. Frank tell the story about an enslaved youth and the missionary Frederick Martin, who arrived in St Thomas, Virgin Islands in 1736. Frederick invited the youth to his house where the message of the gospel was shared with him. The curious thing is that even though the enslaved brother was brought into the setting of Frederick's home, there seems not to be any recounting of whom this enslaved brother was. This encounter led Fredrick to develop a missionary strategy of bearing witness of the gospel to the enslaved individuals on a one-to-one basis. After some 600 hundred converts were recorded, there was a baptism in which the first three baptised were given the names Peter, Andrew, and Nathaniel. We do not know whether that first enslaved brother, whom Frederick had invited into his home, was one of them. In any case, these baptismal names function also concealed the identify of these brothers.ⁱ

In re-reading Moravian Church history, we see this pattern again and again, where the names of our enslaved forebears are excluded from the stories. The exclusion of the names contributes to the minimisation or even exclusion of the roles and contribution to the Moravian Missionary cause, to the point where the stories of their lives are lost. They are bunched together in terms like, 'slaves', 'negroes', or even 'heathen'. This loss of individual identity is tragic not only for our dear enslaved forebears but also for us who 'follow in their train'. Is it possible that we can recover the lives lost in the pages of Moravian history and give voice to those who up to now have been voiceless?

Re-Visiting Moravian History

Unearthing lost lives and giving voice to the voiceless is one of the tasks to be undertaken by the History taskforce which was set up, with the support of the PEC, to revisit aspects of Moravian Church history. There is value in a continuous review of our church history. It gives opportunity to each generation of researchers and members to uncover new knowledge and new perspectives of what we might already know. Such review must be with the view also to provide inspiration and fresh impetus to propel the church into a new direction.

Several events in the UK and internationally provide the impetus for the British Province of the Moravian Church to consider its own role in the events and what they mean for how we read our own history. The first is the Windrush Scandal in which immigrants of the 1960s, especially from the Caribbean, were made to feel unwelcome in the UK. It is not clear how many Moravian families might have been directly affected but there are obvious sentimental connections and shared anxieties about the impact. We believe that these individuals and their families might have a story to tell.

Impetus also came, secondly, from the protests related to the Black Lives Matter Movement following the public killing of George Floyd in the USA. The international outcry has led organisations of all descriptions, educational institutions and governments in general

to think about their role in perpetuating racism. Churches also are re-visiting their past to come to terms with their own role, not least in the enslavement of people. We love to tell the story, for example, that the missionaries sold themselves into slavery to bring the message of the gospel to our enslaved brothers and sisters. What we sometimes do not hear as much about though, is that the Missionaries', like Dober in St Thomas, Virgin Islands, were given favours and 'ate at the Governor's table'.ⁱⁱⁱ Dober, however, seemed to have found that the favour of the Governor was at odds with the missionary endeavour and soon left the Governor's house. We also hear little about the fact that the missionaries themselves kept people in enslavement. Referencing the situation in Suriname, Jessica Cronshagen notes that, 'the missionaries created a specific economic ethic, which included slavery. Their status as slaveholders made them - whether they liked it or not - representatives of colonial power.'^{iv} Re-visiting the situation in Suriname is particularly revealing because it shows that Dutch colonialism was much more direct and overt in its intention to use the Moravian Missionaries as agents of the colonial project, which was to gain riches through subjugation and enslavement. With similar aims the British colonial project in the Caribbean was more adept at stealth and indirectness.

A third impetus for the review of Moravian Church history is the forced removal of statues and the questioning of the meaning of monuments and the integrity of holding certain historical artefacts. Questions are being raised about the ethical implications of museums and archives in the UK holding tangible and intangible artefacts harvested from the labour of enslaved people and used without their involvement. There is a growing recognition that there is a need to change both the narrative and the perspective from which history is written.

Decade of Evangelism 2022 to 2032

Revisiting accents within Moravian Church now is opportune: the Moravian Church is approaching the 300th anniversary of the 1722-1732 decade of rebuilding of the Unitas Fratrum. The Provincial Board is giving consideration to making 2022-2032 a decade of evangelism and has commissioned the history review in the context on that ensuing anniversary. The researchers include the Archivist, Lorraine Parsons, Ian Foster, a specialist on Hans Sloane and a descendant of those enslaved on Foster-Barham estate in Bogue Elizabeth Jamaica, Professor Pedro Welch, a historian based in Barbados and Livingstone Thompson, a Jamaican who is a member of the British Provincial Board. The history research team is looking to grasp the opportunities presented by the 300th anniversary and will present its work at some point during the decade.

Br Livingstone Thompson
Minister of University Road (Belfast) and
Kilwarlin Congregations, and member of the
British Provincial Board



For the first time, Synod 2021 will be held online from 10th - 13th June 2021. Synod was postponed from 2020 in light of the pandemic and it is hoped that we will be able to meet again for our Synod in 2022. However, the planning team are working hard to ensure that Synod 2021 is a success and more information will be coming out in the coming months.

The timetable for submission of Credentials, Memorials, Nominations, Proposals and Reports is as follows:

1. Congregation Deputies' Credential Form (if different to already that advised) or confirmation of Congregation Deputy (email will suffice) to be at Church House by 28th February 2021 (2.3.a.3).
2. Class A Proposals * must be notified to the Provincial Board by 11th March 2021 (2.3.b.1).
3. Class B Proposals * must be notified to the Provincial Board by 22nd April 2021 (2.3.b.2).
4. Reports and Memorials must be sent to Church House by 22nd April 2021.
5. Nomination Forms for Provincial Board and Provincial Committees to be at Church House by 29th April 2021 (2.4.i.5.i).

Note: The deputy election for 2020 synod is still valid. A new election does not need to take place unless the deputy or alternate is unavailable to attend.

Synod Papers will be distributed sent out all those attending by 14th May 2021.

Note *:

1. Class A - Proposals affecting Sections 2 or 3 of the Book of Order of the Moravian Church in the British Province.
2. Class B - All other proposals (i.e. which are not to be incorporated into the sections 2 or 3 of the Book of Order).
3. Proposals which have not been

duly notified under the Book of Order 2.3.b.2 above will only be given a place on the Agenda paper if:

- a. They are regarding matters which have arisen since the last date for the submission of proposals, or
- b. They are in response to issues current at the time of Synod, or
- c. They arise at Synod, and
- d. Synod agrees by show of hands that they be included on the Agenda paper.

Provincial Elder's Conference (Provincial Board)

The PEC serves as the governing body between Synods. As a six-person board, they are elected as Trustees of the Trusts and Company Directors of The Choir House, Fulneck School, Ockbrook School and the Moravian Union Incorporated which includes the management of the Moravian Church, the Estates Property Portfolio and the British Mission Board.

The upcoming vacancies on the PEC are as follows:

One stipendiary (full time) member for three years

One stipendiary (full time) member for one year

Two non-stipendiary members for three years

The full-time roles are based in London and housing is provided in the North London area. If you are interested in serving on the PEC and would like more information please contact the current Chair, Sr Roberta Hoey - roberta.hoey@moravian.org.uk.

Provincial Standing Committees

The upcoming vacancies are as follows:

Church Book Committee: This committee advises on the Book of Order, which is our constitutional governing document. The Committee is responsible for drafting and incorporating changes

made to the Book of Order at each Synod as well as preparing resolutions being brought to the floor of Synod for discussion.

One member for three years

Two members for one year

Finance Committee: The Church is a charity and has investments and trusts that require advice and management. The committee welcomes in particular members who have a financial background.

Three members for three years

Church Service Committee: This committee supports the Provincial Board in all areas of Church Service and plans and organises continuing training for ministers and lay workers.

Two members for three years

Provincial Youth and Children's Committee: This committee invites anyone who is interested in promoting youth and children's work and activities in all its forms.

Two members for three years

One member for one year

Faith and Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee: This committee advises the province on questions of faith, Church order and ecumenical matters.

Two members for three years

Mission and Society Committee: This committee deals with items of home mission in the UK, renewal and social responsibility. It has recently looked at issues such as child poverty, climate change, social media, Community Engagement and Mission in our congregations.

Two members for three years

One member for one year

World Mission Committee: This committee supports the British Mission Board in its mission and efforts in South East Asia, Western Tanzania, Star Mountain, Elim Home in South Africa and other mission projects.

Two members for three years

ⁱ Allen W. Schattschneider and Albert H. Frank, *Through Five Hundred Years and Beyond*, Bethlehem, PA: The Interprovincial Board of Christian Education, 1956, 71.

ⁱⁱ Maureen Warner-Lewis', *Archibald Montheith: Igbo, Jamaica, Moravian, 2007*, recovers the story of Aniaso, later Archibald Monteith, an Igbo boy from West Africa who, after conversation to Christianity, became a member of the Moravian Church. He was enslaved on plantations in St. Elizabeth and Westmoreland, Jamaica until he purchased his freedom in 1837. His recovered life story highlights the extent of loss in the concealment of enslaved identity.

ⁱⁱⁱ Schattscheioder and Frank, 67.

^{iv} Jessica Cronshagen, "A Loyal Heart to God and the Governor": Missions and Colonial Policy in Surinamese Saramaccan Mission (c.1750-1813)" in *Journal of Moravian History*, Vol 19, No.1, 2019:4.

A problem within a problem

A series of articles about the background to the partition of Ireland

Part 2 The Celtic Revival

Northern Ireland



Christiansfeld Moravian Church

World Heritage Listing and the Moravian Church

© Br David Johnston

Across Europe in the late 1800s there was a growing revival of older traditions and national stories. This can be seen in the Czech homeland then under rule from Vienna as well as nearer to home in Scotland with thistle and tartan. In many places near myth became accepted historical truth. In the north west of the Province of Ulster, the county of Donegal and in the North East in the Glens of Antrim people looked to nationalist roots. The rest of the province of Ulster started a movement which emphasised their roots in Scotland, with its Presbyterian worship and its covenanting zeal. Strangely little effort was made to link with the traditions of the settlers from the English Midlands, Somerset and Devon etc.

Ireland had been given a national education system - the National Schools - quite a time before the rest of the UK so literacy rates were high and a flood of leaflets, papers and books fuelled the national debate spilling out into the religious and political areas. The churches of all denominations still had considerable influence through their control of the appointment of teachers, the control of the management and the local government boards. This was true especially of the Catholic Church with its teaching orders and local boards unwilling to challenge the church's role in education and moral teaching. A divide was slowly but surely opening up.

Even in sport, divisions were soon to emerge. In 1884 the Gaelic Athletic Association was founded to sponsor the playing of 'Irish' games such as hurling and to avoid the foreign sports such as football, tennis, cricket and rugby. These Gaelic Games were played on Sundays to enable all classes of society to attend and this alone caused great offence to Protestants who saw it as a desecration of the Sabbath. At a local level, the games were frequently controlled by the parish priest which was another cause for concern to Protestants. Horse racing for some bizarre reason was regarded as neutral ground even at the height of the War of Independence and the Civil War - a betting man seemed able to overcome the prejudices of the time.

The 'Celtic Revival' in literature forged a new nationalist identity with the poetry of Yeats, the plays of Synge and his promotion of the native culture of the Aran islands. However, social prejudice derived from the intense conservative morality of the Catholic church led to friction. 'The Shadow of the Glen' - a play about a young woman, (put on at the Abbey Theatre), who leaves an arranged marriage with an older man, caused a furore in Dublin. Nationalists said it was a libel and Irishwomen were always chaste and pure. Reality did not mix well here as the Abbey Theatre was beside the 'Monto' slum streets that made up Dublin's infamous red-light district. Patrons of the theatre frequently met ladies who were out shopping without their shopping bags. The solid Protestants of Belfast had little to gloat over as the Magistrates courts at the time had to constantly deal with the scenes of drunken disorder on Sunday afternoons

as the pubs emptied.

Politics and religion were now getting dangerously intermingled with the politics being the dominant factor. Ulster responded to the literary output in the south by producing its own publications, many promoting the special individuality of the North East and its literary and social links to Scotland. Books such as the 'Ulster Scot' set out the claims for an area quite distinct by culture and tradition from the rest of Ireland.

Newspaper articles, indeed, separate newspapers reflected the combination of the religious and political aspirations of their readers. When a local theatre was founded in Belfast it was called the 'Ulster Literary Theatre' and put on what can be best described as local kitchen sink dramas.

It is important to note that a serious attempt was to by-pass what was perceived to be the absorbing of the old Irish Sagas by nationalists. One of the most famous of the old Irish Sagas was that of 'Cuchullin - the Hound of Ulster' and a saga 'The Tain' recording the battles of the Ulsterman against the other Kings and provinces in Ireland. This idea of a separate state was re-enforced when the 'Battle of Moyra' was studied and the Ulstermen were seen to be aided by Eochaid Buie King of the Dalriad of Scotland. There was even a vast earth fortification still traceable in parts of Ireland today. Known as the 'Black Pig's Dyke' it linked the lakes across the border forming a defensive line from the rest of Ireland.

The Gaelic League was led by Dr Douglas Hyde who felt it should be non-sectarian, but events overtook his hopes and he resigned when it became clear that that two strands of opinion, nationalist and unionist were working against him. Many unionists felt that you could not be a good Unionist and support an organisation that acknowledged a separate Irish tradition while nationalists felt that only an independent Ireland could protect Irish culture. In 1915 Dr Hyde resigned when the backers of Sinn Fein made a change in the constitution committing the League in supporting an Irish Republic. A predictable 'I told you so' was the sentiment in the North East.

When the prosperity of Belfast was at its height, Belfast City Hall was built and opened in 1906, but careful observation will show that its pediment was graced with a large figure of Hibernia looming over Queen Victoria. When Stormont was built only about 30 years later it was Britannia and imperial lions that crowned the facade with a statue of Carson acting as a central pivot to the main drive.

Br Henry Wilson
Ballinderry

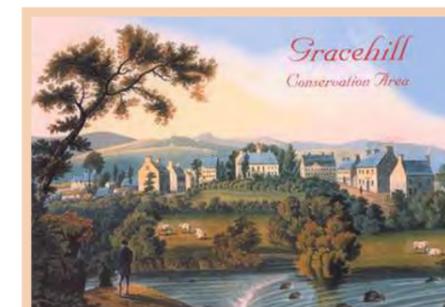


Maybe you have never wondered how sites get chosen to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list and so become World Heritage Sites. It is now quite a process. A potential World Heritage Site has to be recommended by the Government of a country to the World Heritage Secretariat before 1st February for consideration in the following year. The conditions for sites being considered for listing have tightened considerably over recent years. Sites now have to prove that they have outstanding universal value, not just for their own country but for the world and they have to prove that these sites are sustainable and that plans are in place for their preservation.

Every ten years the UK Government, and other Governments, prepares a list of the sites that may be considered to be put forward for World Heritage listing. This is the Tentative list and consists of the sites that have the potential to be submitted to the World Heritage Secretariat for consideration to be inscribed or listed. However, the UK Government also has a list of sites that could be considered for inclusion on the Tentative List, this is the pre-Tentative list and Gracehill Moravian Settlement is on this list.

So why is this coming into the news again? In 2015 Christiansfeld, a Moravian Settlement in Denmark was inscribed as a World Heritage Site. This was the culmination of many years work that

started in 2003 when Christiansfeld, Bethlehem, a historic Moravian settlement in Pennsylvania USA, Gracehill in Northern Ireland and Elim Moravian settlement in South Africa decided to work together to get what is called a transnational World Heritage listing. This listing would be of linked Moravian settlements that demonstrated the transnational nature of the Moravian Church with its faith tradition, culture and architecture. These sites would also show that the settlements and values of the Moravian Church had Outstanding Universal Value.



A painting by Joseph Molloy (1798-1877)

Gracehill Old School Trust (GhOST), who have already renovated the Old School and the Square in Gracehill is the body working on behalf of Gracehill. GhOST are currently renovating the old shop in Gracehill to convert it into holiday accommodation and a café.

In the last few years Herrnhut Moravian Church and Town have joined Bethlehem and Gracehill in working towards transnational inscription. The Government in Saxony has backed Herrnhut's bid enthusiastically and they have paid for World Heritage consultants to visit Gracehill. The Saxony Government also sponsored the book about Moravian Settlements in Europe that was published in 2018. So Herrnhut, as the mother congregation of the renewed Moravian Church, is actively working to be part of this World Heritage grouping.

Bethlehem had been put on the United States Tentative list in 2012. On Monday 11th January, the Department of the Interior of the US asked people to comment on which sites on their Tentative list should be put forward to the UNESCO World Heritage Secretariat for consideration for listing. A letter in support of this move has been sent from Herrnhut, signed by the minister of the congregation and the town mayor. A similar letter of support for Bethlehem has been sent by GhOST in Gracehill.

Things in the World Heritage world move slowly and it often feels like wheels within wheels. But the increased recognition of the faith tradition of the Moravian Church and the wonderful values of its historic settlements in so many different countries is a prize worth striving for.

Sr Sarah Groves

Minister at Gracehill Moravian Church

World Day of Prayer Service: 5th March 2021

Written by the women of Vanuatu (an archipelago in the Pacific), this year's service will be very different from services held in the past. Obviously, because of the pandemic, services cannot be held in church buildings so organisers will have to explore meeting together on Zoom, Facebook or other internet platforms. Not all church groups will have the wherewithal to arrange online services so alternatives will have to be considered. Perhaps your service could be rescheduled for later in the year, when meeting face-to-face is permissible, or service booklets can be delivered to homes so that individuals can read the material at the same time as services are taking place.

If interested, as I hope many of you will be, please look at the WDP website for information about how to join a Zoom service. After the event it is hoped that recorded live-streamed events will be posted on the website for you to watch at a later date. With Zoom you can pick and choose your service (as long as

you register with the organiser beforehand).

I would love to know how many of our Moravian churches are involved in WDP each year. Being an ecumenical organisation, you may be working closely with other churches in a group like Churches Together or a local Council of Churches. If you are hosting a service perhaps you could write about it in the Congregation News section of the Moravian Messenger. Please remember that World Day of Prayer is not a one-day wonder but a whole year of daily prayer and contemplation, something familiar to all Watchword readers.

Sr Maureen Colbert

Moravian Representative on the World Day of Prayer National Committee



Swindon

Here we are a year on from the first lockdown with so many restrictions and changes, but we have adapted and learnt many new ways of worshipping and serving. Services, Bible study, MWA, Rainbows and social evenings have all continued weekly. Worship on the web and the ability to join with others in the district has kept us in touch with our fellow Moravians. Services in Bath and Brockweir, and even an ordination in Fetter Lane, all without leaving home!

The pandemic hasn't stopped our charity work either, only how it's done. Mary's meals back packs and FSCI shoe boxes have been filled at home. The drop off day for the Medaille Trust (a charity providing refuge and freedom to victims of modern slavery) brought in numerous donations. Handbags have been collected and filled with items for the Nelson Trust (a scheme providing for women in times of hardship and/or homelessness), and food parcels have been delivered to families who are struggling financially.



© Sr Sandy Mundy

An online market has been a successful way to sell the many items that have been sewn, knitted and crafted, and has raised hundreds of pounds for various charities. Before the third lockdown, we held a 'Christmas stall on the steps', moving our Christmas fayre outside, in line with COVID rules and social distancing. £500 was raised and split between the hurricane Eta appeal and a local save our children's sight appeal.

Harvest supper and Christingle both took place over Zoom. DIY Christingle kits were delivered prior to the service.

We have heard so much about churches being closed, but the church has not closed, we have just stopped worshipping in our building for a while. It has reminded us that the building is not the church. What is needed is love, compassion and the presence of God.

Sr Sandy Mundy

Ballinderry

In spite of restrictions this year Br Wilson managed to organise the drive-in presentation of bibles to the pupils transferring from Ballinderry Primary School. £500 was collected for the food bank in Lisburn and this went towards the purchase of gift vouchers for Christmas. £200 was raised to help with the district Christingle Service held in Ballymena ... another drive-in event! Br Wilson also helped to collect £160 for the Mayor's Toy Appeal.

Three hundred pairs of thermal socks were received from Sukdev in Birmingham for the homeless and recently arrived refugees.

We did miss the Christmas decorations in the church this year and our usual Christingle Service, but Br Wilson kindly provided a chocolate orange and a candle for all those who attended the service before Christmas.

Sr Brown managed to get a grant from the local council for the church and the community. Part of this went towards the provision and distribution of gifts and security guidance to around fifty households of elderly people in the village. The Community Police Service had hoped to take part in the distribution but unfortunately were not able to do so.

The drive-in film show on the 19th December was also supported by funds from the grant. Br Stephens played a major role in the organisation of this event. It was a small beginning but very successful in spite of the cold blustery weather. Sr Jackson was also a great help in the organisation process. We hope to use more of the grant money in other community activities in the future.

Sr Marilyn Marshall

BMB (British Mission Board) News in Brief

Unity Prayer Day Offering

In 2021, the funds raised from the Unity Prayer Day Offering will be going to support the work of the Moravian Church in Malawi for a Church House.

They have requested financial support:

1. To offer a space for worship and fellowship in the capital city, Lilongwe, especially as there is no current congregation there.
2. In addition to being the capital, Lilongwe is also central to the rest of the country making transportation easier. Additionally, it is close to the seat of Government and other institutions.
3. The building will aid the work the church is undertaking at Dzaleka Refugee Camp. This is less than 30 minutes drive from Lilongwe.
4. Set down roots and help grow the church economically.

The cost estimate for establishing the centre including buying of land in a semi urban area would be about €30,000.

Building a Moravian Centre in Lilongwe, Malawi

The Moravian Church in Malawi became a full Unity Province in 2012 with around 5,000 communicant members. As well as congregations and projects in towns and villages the Church in Malawi works near refugee camps supporting people from Burundi, Somalia and Rwanda.

However, there is no land or building where Moravians can meet and worship in the capital city of Malawi, Lilongwe, despite many Moravians coming into the area. Therefore, funds raised through Unity Prayer Day, on 1st March 2021, will go towards the construction of a centre that will serve a congregation, the community and the Provincial Board in Malawi. Such a construction will go towards strengthening

collaboration with ecumenical and other aid partnerships and it will respond to local Government requests for building upon charitable work already committed.

Land will be allocated through consultation with the government and the Unity Appeal seeks to raise \$50,000 to support the building work.

If you would like to support the appeal you can do so in the following ways:

Card payment: please telephone Church House on 020 8883 3409 who can take payment over the phone.

Cash: donations to your local congregation.

Cheques: should be made payable to Moravian Union Inc.

Bank transfer: 40-52-40 Acc # 00023436. Please use reference: Unity Prayer Day Malawi

Book Review

Our Moravian Treasures

I have just finished reading my much-enjoyed copy of the long-needed book entitled 'Our Moravian Treasures'. It is written by a team of experts, who consulted serving ministers and church workers in the writing process, and it is edited by Br Peter Vogt, and together they have provided a resource that has been lacking from our bookshelves for too long. The book has been prepared and produced mainly for theological students for, as the sub-title indicates it is 'A Manual of Topics for Theological Education in the Unitas Fratrum', but I would suggest it would be appreciated by and benefit a wider readership.

The seven main chapters cover the customs and practices in our church life from many different Provinces around the world including sections on the Unity and those things that bind us together. There is a brief but important look at

Moravian theology and what it is to live in community and to be serving one another. Also there is a chapter on Moravian worship and one on the mission work of the church and then it ends with a look toward the future.

There are a number of pictures and illustrations throughout the book, together with a few questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. There are references to the history of our church and important documents such as the Ground of the Unity and the main points of the Brotherly Agreement are included. One very special thing that I do not remember reading about (but I may have just missed it!) is the Covenant Hymn, used in many Provinces, sung with the right hand of fellowship being shared immediately after taking the Communion. Always a special moment and a great treasure.

I would like to thank Br Peter Vogt and his team of writers for their much-needed work. It is a good-looking book, good to hold and handle, and provides the information which deserves to be more widely known about our 'Treasures'. So for those who know something about our church and would like to know more I commend this book to your attention.

To produce such a book at this time of the coronavirus pandemic when most of our congregations are unable to meet together for worship or normal social activities is quite an achievement, but it has been some ten years in preparation and it certainly comes now as a welcome reminder of what we are called to be.

Br John McOwat Ep. Fra.

This book is available to purchase from the Bookroom at Moravian Church House for £7.

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 need an email address, internet access and Zoom on your laptop/tablet/phone. Please send 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

From Church House

Provincial Diary for March

Meetings are continuing to be held online wherever possible.

- 2 Church Service Committee
- 4 Finance Committee
- 7 Unity Prayer Day
- 12 Unity Mission and Development Board
- 20 Lancashire District Conference
- 20 Western District Conference
- 23-24 European Youth Conference (Online)
- 25 PYCC

Congregational Register

Deaths

- 11th January 2021 William (Bill) Craig Gracehill
- 31st January 2021 Joan Horsfall Gomersal

1	Founding of the Brethren's Church in 1457 St David's Day
5	World Day of Prayer (www.wwdp.org.uk)
8	International Women's Day (www.internationalwomensday.com)
11	Maha Shivaratri - Hindu Isra and Mi'raj - Muslim
14	Mothering Sunday
17	St Patrick's Day
20	Spring Equinox
25	UN International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade (www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/)
28	Palm Sunday First Day of Passover - Jewish Summer time begins
29	Holi - Hindu

Dates to remember!

Queens Park Moravian Church - Bedford

Introduction

Queens Park Moravian Church, Bedford, has a long and distinguished history. In 1890 the area of Queens Park Bedford, was being developed into a residential area. St Peter's Moravian congregation had a vision to establish a school in Bedford that could also be used for worship on a Sunday. This was to celebrate their 150th Anniversary in 1895. Money was collected to buy the land. By the time sufficient funds was available a decision was taken to build the Church buildings and forego the plans for a school. The land was brought in 1893; the work commenced a year later.

Past

In 1895 the congregation of St Peter's sanctioned the building of the Hall. It was agreed to host the Provincial Synod in Bedford in 1895 and the new Church building at Queens Park was officially opened with all Synodals present, although the building was not fully complete. The first minister was Rev Harold Mumford. It is noted that St Peter's congregation continued to support the new Church that they had planted. In 1905 Queens Park Bedford was officially recognised as a regular congregation of the Moravian Church. The current Church was built between 1911 and 1912. The new building left the Queens Park Congregation with a large debt. The First World War followed, and that made things very difficult to service the loan. Although the Church was situated in a residential area and has seating capacity for 200-300 people, the Church found it difficult to attract a congregation of over 100 people.

Key dates

- 1893: The Bedford congregation in St Peter's Street had a 'mission' to celebrate their 150th Anniversary in 1895.
- 1911: The church was built onto the hall and opened for worship.
- 1963: The Queen's Park congregation formed a unit with Kimbolton and Riseley.
- 1966: Riseley closed and Kimbolton had its



© Br Edwin Quildan

faithful congregation. Many in the congregation would say 'God has a purpose for our Church in Queens Park'.

On the third Wednesday of each month a 'Praise and prayer' meeting was held each month, unfortunately this activity was cancelled due to the lockdown and pandemic in March 2020. Friends from the Rutland Road Church would join us for the 'Praise and prayer' meeting.

There is a strong and active Churches Together focus in Bedford known as the Shalom Group. Normally during January, the 'Week of prayer for Christian Unity' service is held in one of the Churches. During 'Lent' the Shalom Group will normally arrange a 'Lent' course that is open to all the Churches in the area. On the first Sunday of Advent a service is normally held in one of the Churches.

The congregation would normally hold an open day in August and would also host a number of 'bring a friend' services. A fortnightly newsletter is produced for the congregation.

Half of our congregation do not have internet access, so the production of services on CDs was a necessity, to compliment the electronic version that is sent out.

Our hall is rented to a dance class and a Pentecostal Church, who are the regular hirers. Occasion hirers also book from time to time.

Future

We will have a theme of Evangelism for 2021, to explore different ways of reaching out.

The text for the day, for Easter Sunday 2021, can encourage each of us, as we seek life after the pandemic:

The Lord said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest'. (Exodus 33:14)
Jesus said, 'Because I live, you also will live'. (John 14:19b)

Br Edwin Quildan

own minister for one year. The Queen's Park congregation formed a unit with Birmingham for one year.

1967: The Queen's Park congregation became a unit with Kimbolton again.

1992: Kimbolton closed and the unit with Kimbolton came to an end.

1996: The Queen's Park congregation formed a unit with Woodford Halse.

2003: Woodford Halse closed and the Queen's Park congregation became a unit with the Leicester congregation.

2010: The minister at Queen's Park also assisted at Leicester from 1st July 2010.

2013: The Queen's Park congregation formed a unit with the Harold Road congregation.

2018: The Queen's Park congregation formed a unit with the Harlesden congregation.

Today

As at 31st August 2020, our membership was recorded at ten members and adherents. We occasionally have visitors who will join us for worship.

Before the lockdown and resulting effects of the pandemic, our regular worship was held each Sunday at 10.30 am, which was followed by refreshment. Thanks are extended to Sr Janet and Sr Cathy for leading worship on the Sundays that the minister is not available. Thanks are extended to the visiting preachers who have led worship over the years. Thanks are also extended to our property team and

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