



Has COVID changed our perception of Christmas?

Photo from PxHere

'I love Christmas, I love everything about it, the anticipation on the faces of small children ...' These words were the beginning of a sermon I wrote over thirty-five years ago. It was so successful that I used it for every Advent service I conducted for some years! I finally stopped using it when my son came with me to a service and sat in the front row, lip-syncing the sermon! From that moment on I have used new material every week.

However, the truth is that I do love Christmas and Christmas in the Kessler house has followed a fixed plan since our children arrived over 45 years ago.

If there are children in the house, they awake to their Santa gifts, and then after breakfast that will usually involve scrambled eggs and smoked salmon, it is off to church.

The bigger, family presents are placed around the Christmas tree and are not opened until we return and are then opened one by one, with the whole family sharing who got what from whom.

This we did with our children and now with our grandchildren and we love it. Until last year. Christmas 2020 was different for us all. We did manage to deliver our presents to our son and daughter and their families before the

day, but we then spent Christmas at home, just the two of us. We went to church on Zoom, and that was lovely, and we spoke to the children on Facetime which was also lovely. However, no hugs, no kisses and no shared feelings of excitement.

It made me realise two things. Firstly, how lucky we are to have family close enough to visit on special days and secondly, how much I value either spending Christmas with them or having them descend on our house for the festivities. People often say that Christmas is a time for children, but for me it is a time for family. That is what we really missed in 2020.

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Driving home for Christmas

For many of us it is difficult to say where is our home, is it where we were born, where we grew up, our first married home? Is it where we retire to or is it where our grandchildren are or is it where our parents lived? I have moved about England and Northern Ireland because of the calls of ministry, and I find it difficult now to say where my emotional home is. Some in our Church have travelled many miles, as children or adults, to make a new home for themselves in this country and have to juggle not just a new place but a new culture. For others it is easier - they have been born, grew up, married and stayed within one locality.

There is no right way to live - to stay deeply rooted in one place or move and experience new places and embrace new cultures, even within the UK!

Of course, we all need the physical blessings of having a safe roof over our head, warmth, comfort and food, and that should be a right not a privilege. The Christmas narrative in Luke Chapter 2 speaks to us on the level of both homelessness and Mary's emotional separation from the family she knew. The one who came for us, who was given for us, was born not in a home but in some form of animal shelter and laid not in a cot but in a manger.

The emotional sense of home and being at home is so important to us. A secular expression of this sentiment is in the song by Chris Rea 'I'm driving home for Christmas'

which is played endlessly in the run up to Christmas. More poetically there is a beautiful phrase in our Christmas Liturgy which reads 'Father of all, at this time when the solitary are set in families, and wanderers and exiles think longingly of home, we think of you, the home of us all, where all are welcome'.

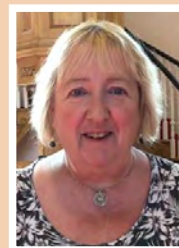
We want to be at home, to be known, loved, accepted and understood and that is what exactly what Jesus offers us. The one who was homeless at birth and a refugee as an infant gives us that possibility. He not only promises that we will have a dwelling place in his Father's house (Luke 2:2) but he also promises that he and his Father will come and make their home with those who love them (Luke 2:23).

Christmas is about coming home, not necessarily physically but spiritually. It is about the God who through Jesus, reaches out in love and forgiveness to bring you and me home to him and with him. And almost unbelievably this homemaking extends to being at home with us and in us.

What shall we do in light of such love?

Accept it as the greatest gift of all and live in that love in such a way that others may know that they too can come home to God with us

Have a wonderful Christmas.



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

The Editorial Team of the Moravian Messenger wish all our readers a happy and blessed Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Has COVID changed our perception of Christmas? *continued*

The story of Christmas revolves around family. Mary and Joseph leaving theirs behind to go to Bethlehem, because of government intervention. Their child being born without the involvement of grandparents and aunts and uncles, presents brought, but by strangers and contrasting messages of glory and portents of fear for the future. The birth of any baby changes the world of that child's parents, but the birth of baby Jesus changed the whole world. That continues to be a story worth sharing and worth celebrating.

As I write this, I don't know where we will be celebrating this year. Maybe at home surrounded by visiting grandchildren or at my son's house in Berkhamsted with

his family. Wherever, it will follow our traditions. Santa presents, church, family presents and lunch with the special stuffing my daughter in law makes.

This year church on Christmas Day will either be Hall Green in person or on Zoom if I am 'hosting'. If we are in Berkhamsted it will be at the local Methodist church where I will remind them, courteously, that Christingle didn't begin with the Children's Society! Wherever we are, Christmas will always revolve around my two families. The extended Kessler family and my church family. Together we will remember the birth of a child born a long way away, born in poverty in a borrowed barn, and soon to become a refugee in a foreign

land. We will remember that, and we'll give thanks for our security, our homes and our family.

Thirty-five years ago, I pronounced my love for Christmas and I love it still. The memories of Christmases past, the sharing of Christmas present, and the hope of those to come. Wherever you are this Christmas I wish you joy and I continue to pray that the song of the angels will be heard across our troubled world: 'Peace on earth and goodwill to all'.

Br Blair Kessler
Hall Green



First in a series of occasional opinion pieces on social responsibility

In our Christian teachings we are encouraged to believe, 'the poor will always be with us'.

In sermons heard by many of us over our lifetimes service to Christ have we ever been told why? Have we ever been told of how many of us should live in poverty in our town, city, country or the world?

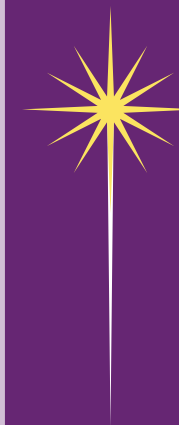
There are many questions emanating from the question which needs answering by our local councillors and our government instead of accepting some biblical character's words, which most of us do. Was the country or world in which those words were said a poor one or was it rich, like ours? Were the poor referred to be kept or made deliberately deprived for a reason, maybe to help the unpoor feel they are doing Christ's work for the poor by giving.

How rich does the UK have to become to be able to eliminate poverty if it wanted to? When consideration takes place of the UK's end of second world war's poverty in 1945 we have become astronomically rich, enough to be number sixth richest in the world, with enormous gold [ever increasing in price] and internationally convertible currency reserves. And yet our country is in a financial immoral crisis.

Our national beneficial application of capitalism's practices have become usurped by holders of large amounts of capital to the grave disadvantage of our working poor. Three times in the last six years investigative journalists worldwide have exposed the tax avoidance schemes exercised by offshore shell company banks and how this continues to affect our nations deprived.

This Moravian Church has a mission to our society and its ever present poor because the UK is rich enough to eliminate at least poverty in childhood.

Br Alan Holdsworth



A Star of Bethlehem for Me

*Dear Lord, I pray there'll always be
A Star of Bethlehem for me;
Like that same Star whose glorious Light
Gave guidance on the Holy Night.
For through our lives we're journeying
Like them, to find a Heavenly King.
Like them we have a road to tread,
Like them, must follow where we're led.*

*Sometimes, we'll find our days may hold
Sweet happiness as pure as Gold,
Or toil, which leaves no recompense -
Like drifting smoke from Frankincense,
And longing for the days that were
With the bitterness of Myrrh.*

*Then, when our path through forest lies
And tangled branches hide the skies,
Remind us, whilst we strive to see -
Our Saviour's Cross was once a Tree.*

*When hidden thorns bring pain and stress
And fill our hearts with hopelessness,
And we stumble on, with spirits down -
Remind us - thorns were once a Crown.*

*And sometimes we have useless pride,
And try to walk without a guide,
And sometimes from the path we stray
And find that we have lost our way..*

*So this is why I pray there'll be
A Star of Bethlehem for Me.*

Sr Barbara Crompton
Baldon



Date: 1st-5th August 2022
Place: Beverley Friary Youth Hostel
HU17 0DF
For: young people ages 10-17
Availability: Limited spaces
Cost: £130 each

Summer Camp 2022 will have a new format meeting for five days in Yorkshire. There will still be all the usual fun and games, bible studies, etc.

To register an interest and to obtain your booking forms first register at:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/summer-camp-2022-tickets-209093011827>

More information to follow and forms will be available from early 2022.

Report from Camp Aramis



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Thursday

A group of us gathered at Ockbrook Settlement for 'Camp Aramis' originally created due to the sad reality of the Greenbelt Festival being postponed nationally once again. Wonderfully, Camp Aramis promised its own identity. It was smaller and more intimate with some fun flexible workshops and trips out in the offering. Our camp base was the beautifully quiet Michael Rea Memorial Garden just paralleling Ockbrook's God's Acre.

We gathered from all corners of the U.K. ranging in age from seven months to those into their thirties. Some of us had camped before and others were complete novices. I think it is fair to say that we all came a little bit nervous, a little excited and all really looking forward to spending time together. I don't think anyone knew everyone and so, as we gathered that first evening after we had all pitched a tent to varying degrees of success, we just wanted to get to know one another as best we could.

Food is always a good way - and so our first group meal of 'pizza' began, catering for all dietary requirements. We filled our hungry tummies as we each began to learn a little about one another. All of this was overseen by a toddler who kept watching and learning about how this might in some way relate to 'being church'.

Some of us retired to bed earlier than others who stayed up

playing games and making merriment in Ockbrook Church's Hall, our not camping 'base' where over the next few days we would eat, reflect and pray together.

Sr Claire Maxwell, Chelsea

Friday

On Friday, we began our day by eating breakfast together and joining in with morning prayers.

After prayers, we played some outside games. I thoroughly enjoyed becoming competitive and learning new games that I can share with others to enjoy in the future. The games involved teamwork, laughter and spirit.

A guided take time meditation led by one of our campers enabled me to feel relaxed. During this meditation it involved relaxing our bodies, listening to a story about God and having the opportunity to speak to him! After this experience, we took time to reflect on what we spoke to God about and which part of the meditation we enjoyed most.

In the afternoon, we ventured out to grab some ice cream. During the walk, all campers engaged in conversation and

reflecting on our personal experiences for example university, work and church experiences. I tried some wild berries along the way and was pleasantly surprised at the sweet taste. At the ice cream shop, there were so many flavours to choose from! I ended up with a tub full of raspberry and white chocolate ice cream and wild berry sorbet. I have never experienced these ice-cream flavours before, but I thought it was fitting that I should try something new.

In the evening, my favourite part of any day is dinner time! Especially when it is one of my favourite meals ... chilli! Homemade by Kathy Singleton, who is an excellent cook. Dinner time is my favourite time of every day due to spending time together, reflecting on our day and learning more about each other.

Later that evening, we had a campfire which involved marshmallows ... yummy! Being around the lit fire felt relaxing and mesmerising, I enjoyed watching the fire and seeing the flames grow. All campers sat around the campfire in a circle and we enjoyed each other's company. We shared and listened to each other's stories and joined in with conversation.

This experience allowed me to fully relish what nature has to offer. As a newcomer I felt very welcomed and enjoyed sharing this experience and have made new friends and developed lifelong bonds.

After having a year of isolation and anxiety of socialising with others, this felt like a perfect way to ease into socialising again and develop my knowledge of God.

Sr Sophie Jackson, Ockbrook

Saturday

Our plan continued on in its laid-back fashion throughout Saturday. Our morning was spent eating breakfast, followed by our daily morning prayer session and then assisting Br Joachim with some input into the Sunday service and the YouTube service. The weather was extremely kind to us all weekend, and this was seen throughout our Saturday with its Summer-esque sunshine and warmth. This made fulfilling our plans ever so easy and reminded me of the love and grace offered to us by God in our day to day lives with each other.

Service preparations completed and with some of our campers back from a walk to the park, we had lunch together and then set off to Derby. Here a group of us took part in a 'Murder Mystery themed' walking tour of the city. As someone from Derby this was a great way to explore the city, some of its history and show everyone around. There were definitely parts I had not seen before. We banded together and within a few hours had successfully completed our mystery - rounding off the trip with refreshments sat on the grass outside the Cathedral.

Back to the Settlement and after dinner (thankfully supplied by Sr Michele and Clare Battelle) we sat together in the hall and shared in some time of fellowship and discussion. Sr Hannah Cooper had put together a fantastic study which we all had input to with our own thoughts and experiences. Following this, we split as a group with some of us heading to the local pub whilst the others returned to the campsite. Our discussions continued heartily in both places and we all reunited for the last few hours around the campfire.

Br Phill Battelle, Ockbrook

Sunday

We woke on Sunday morning to wonderful weather once again. We gathered together for breakfast in the Hall before heading over to Church where we were received with a warm welcome. Br Joachim had invited us to take part in the service around the theme or idea that everything we do or say has consequences based on the Bible passage of James 1:17-27. Some of our group acted out situations such as pretending to fight or argue with one another versus talking civilly and with grace and empathy. Br Phill, Br Louis and Sr Sophie all spoke about how some of their choices in life resulted in positive outcomes that got them into either jobs they loved, courses they enjoyed at University or enabled them to have experiences they wouldn't have had without taking that first initial step or action. Sr Claire and Sr Phoebe led prayers. After the service we gathered for a group photo before a quick lunch followed by packing up our tents. We all left Ockbrook having experienced amazing Moravian hospitality and feeling more connected I think as a Moravian family.

Sr Laura Wood, Fairfield

Can't do right for doing wrong!

Setting aside writing Labrador Memoirs for the time being, I have been asked to write a piece reflecting on something significant that has happened in my ministry either light-hearted or serious - and after 40 years of Ordained Ministry there are quite a few! (Many of them unprintable)

Arriving at my first congregation as a relatively young man with a wife and family, full of enthusiasm and zeal following my training at Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania I set about my task of preaching and teaching. Not yet Ordained, I was still using sermons prepared whilst at college and, having not long completed a Liturgics module

with Bishop Ed Kortz, I used the Moravian Liturgy Book regularly.

Following one such service, greeting people at the back of Church with the usual words of thanks for a good service, an elderly member of the congregation (a force to be reckoned with) stood in front of me, leaned heavily on her walking stick, looked me in the eye and said: 'Tha doesn't have to use all't prayers in't liturgy, tha knows'. Barely a month into my ministry it was a lesson to be learned I supposed.

A month or so later, taking heed of the advice given, I used the Second Order and omitted some of the set prayers. At the end of the service the same sister

approached me, set her stick down firmly on my foot (although I think that was unintentional), looked me in the eye and said: 'What's up wit' royal family today then?'

You guessed it - it was that prayer that I had omitted. I obviously still had much to learn.

That particular sister went on to be very supportive of my ministry in the months that followed.

(Please forgive my attempt at the Yorkshire dialect)

Br Robert Hopcroft



India and Nepal Book



A new publication 'India and Nepal' written by Br John McOwat is now available at Church House and can be obtained with a donation of £10 (plus P & P) with all proceeds going towards the work of the Moravian Church in South Asia. This book is an illustrated account of the journeys undertaken by Br McOwat to India and Nepal as a representative of the British Mission Board on behalf of the worldwide Unity between 1995 and 2009.

To order your copy, please contact the Bookroom via email at office@moravian.org.uk or by telephone at 020 8883 3409.

The Pilgrim Song

Chorus

*These are the times we'll remember,
Travelling along by your side.
Memories we'll cherish forever,
So come along for the ride!*

Verse One

*So we're ready, to begin our campaign,
Putting ourselves, in God's hands once again,
Set the compass, for another milestone,
All heading off, for adventures unknown!*

Chorus

These are the times we'll remember ...

Verse Two

*We're not the first, to be here in this place,
In Gods Acre, or in this sacred space.
Other pilgrims, were here ahead of us,
After Cennick, Zinzendorf or Jan Huss!*

Chorus

These are the times we'll remember...

Verse Three

*Follow footpaths, that were trodden before,
See things yourselves, but then look out for more.
Share the highlights, where these pilgrims have stayed,
Step in their shoes, in the tracks they have made.*

Chorus

These are the times we'll remember ...

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Pilgrimage Reflections

From a Pilgrim

The Pilgrimage was an idea my husband Paul had about thirty years ago to visit all of the Moravian Churches in the British Province and he wanted to do it in a weekend, but I said that wasn't possible and that four days would be difficult enough. It was exciting to plan and prepare for, especially after a very difficult and restricting eighteen months. I was looking forward to it so much as we came out of Lockdown and also relieved when people began to sign up for this mad trip.

The trip began to feel real when we collected the minibus on the Friday afternoon and settled down for an early night. We picked up the Coronation Avenue members and headed for Leominster - it was lovely to have breakfast together with the rest of the Pilgrims and members of the congregation there. Like all of our congregations they were very welcoming and accommodating. One of the ladies asked if we wanted orange juice, then immediately disappeared up the high street to buy some for us. We then shared our first service together, and then we were off, filled with excitement and anticipation, but with time already against us.

The minibus unfortunately had a limiter on so we could not travel over 65 miles an hour. But Ludwig the lamb, our mascot, travelled on the dashboard and even flew to Northern Ireland with us after a couple of running repairs. The welcome we

encountered everywhere we went was phenomenal, and our first day ended with a great Caribbean feast at Harlesden and a well-attended service at Hornsey. Some of us were lucky to have beds on our first night as we stayed at Church House, and after a good night's sleep we had an amazing breakfast that filled the whole large table in the chapel which was produced by Christine Emmanuel from Harold Road congregation and her sister Susan Foreman - it was a feast!

Our last service on our second day took place at Ockbrook, for which we were embarrassingly two hours late after being stuck behind an accident. Seventeen members stayed to greet us and take part in the service. We had a lovely BBQ, which they managed to keep warm for us. We then travelled to Dukinfield to sleep over night on camp beds, to prepare for an early 5am start to Northern Ireland. After a frantic rush through a busy Manchester Airport, supported by many prayers, we just managed to all get on the flight. It was wonderful to be back in Northern Ireland to see some of my previous church members. Our first stop was Cliftonville, where the congregation fed us an excellent breakfast and we learnt that Br Jared makes a mean blueberry pancake! Our day in the Irish District was emotional for me, being back in the churches that I had served as minister.

Our last day was in Lancashire and then Yorkshire and it was sad to think that our

trip was already coming to an end. The whole thing had been such an amazing experience and we had been like a little family getting to know one another better each step along the way. Our days were long and exhausting but we knew that was part of the adventure. Sharing the liturgy Br Jared had written and singing the pilgrim song Br Paul had produced with members of each congregation was also very special.

We had an emotional final service at Ockbrook before we began to go our separate ways. We all spoke about what the trip had meant to us and how it had been such an extraordinary and incredibly special journey that we had shared together.

It was a wonderful trip, and I will never forget the hospitality: the fellowship on this journey was hard to put into words - it was a truly amazing experience, and I felt privileged to be part of such a special Pilgrimage. We have also had lots of GoFundMe donations - people have been extremely generous and up to now we have raised £743 for Youth Funds and the British Mission Board thank you for your generosity.

Sr Patsy Holdsworth

Minister of
Brockweir,
Kingswood and
Tytherton Moravian
Congregations



From a Host

- Reflecting on September's Pilgrimage: A Lingering Spirit of Hope

One morning in September a group of slightly stressed church folk gathered at Cliftonville Moravian Church. One of their number had already been dispatched to the airport while the others gathered breakfast supplies, prepared tables, figured out how to use the long dormant gas stove in the church hall, and made sure the place was fit to receive the important visitors who were flying in that early morning in September.

There was anxiety and uncertainty in the air ... it had been so long since we had done something like this, the first time we had opened up our church halls to guests since the lockdown of 2020. It was as though the uncertainty of the times we were in had rusted shut the doors to our hospitality and hearts. We had closed something vital off from our lives, the joy of community, because it was too painful

to keep it open and expectant in a world closed to all intimate gatherings of friends and even family.

This pilgrimage had forced us into action. We are, at the heart of all things, a hospitable people. The height of joy, and a true honour, for a Moravian congregation is to be able to be host for brothers and sisters journeying from far away. As we waited and prepared for their coming, uncertainty and anxiety played in our bellies, and joy, a quiet, gently excited joy, pulsed in our hearts. This was new, and yet, so very familiar. As the pancakes were flipped and the bacon sizzled in their respective pans, and the doors swung open to reveal strange faces at the door, a buzz of life and community swirled around us.

The Spirit of God came to visit us that day in the form of an exhausted, sometimes tetchy, group of grateful, and excited pilgrims, happy to find a welcome from their weary trek. Grateful to find rest, minor comforts, and kindness and love greeting them.

We received them in the love of Christ, as

brothers and sisters. And even though we were not the ones traveling around the province, we still found ourselves transported to a strange and wonderful place. We met them in a Divine space, a place where the guests became the host, the ones offering food and shelter were the ones who received the gift of hospitality as the Holy Spirit poured sacred oil upon the rusty hinges of our hearts and we sang with full hearts, and shared in the moments of worship with joy, and we were changed. And they were changed. And we met, not at Cliftonville, or University Road, or Kilwarlin, Ballinderry, or Gracehill, but rather, we met in a moment of Grace, in the land of love that exists brother to brother, sister to sister, in Jesus Christ our Lamb.

Br Jared Stevens

Minister of
Ballinderry and
Cliftonville Moravian
Congregations



Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Stewardship of God's Creation

Photo by Felix Mittermeier from PxHere

With the recent huge publicity of COP26, climate change and green energy are on everyone's radar. Climate change is a reality for the whole world and almost all scientists agree that now is the time to act before the impending crisis becomes insurmountable. Climate change is the result of global warming which in turn is caused by huge quantities of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, CO2, being pumped into the atmosphere. All combustion processes involving carbon-based fuels (petrol, diesel, coal, etc) release CO2 and, if the fuel is fossil based, then this adds to the CO2 accumulating in our atmosphere. So to tackle this problem, we should all try to move away from use of fossil fuels and use renewable sources energy. As Christians, we should be mindful of the teaching of the Bible which reminds us in both the Old Testament (Genesis 1:26-28, Number 35:33, Ezekiel 34:18) and the New Testaments (Matthew 25: 14-30, 1 Corinthians 4:2, Revelation 11:18) that we are chosen as stewards of God's beautiful creation, and this means looking after the environment.

So, what can we all do individually to help reduce carbon emissions: well, reduce consumption of everything. Carbon emissions are almost entirely due to energy generation in transport, electricity, heating and manufacturing, in fact almost everything we do or consume involves energy. So use less fuel in your car, waste less food, turn down your heating or take the bus once a week instead of the car. Locally, businesses and councils can take more responsible attitudes to energy with more efficient buildings and enabling more public transport. On the larger stage, governments need to enact policies to encourage more use of renewable resources such as wind, solar and biofuels. As an engineer, I see that scientists and engineers have a lot to offer by developing new, environmentally friendly technologies and this is the area where I have chosen to contribute.

I have worked my whole career in both industry and university to improve energy efficiency and reduce harmful emissions. In the past 20 years, I have been working with Wrightbus in Ballymena to develop more energy efficient solutions for public transport. A few years ago, hybrid technology appeared to be the optimal solution and was applied in buses, such as the New Routemaster buses in London, enabling a 40% reduction in fuel consumption with a similar reduction in CO2. Now technology has moved on with fully electric and hydrogen fuelled buses having developed as the future of bus transportation. You will see many more of these on our city streets all across the UK with not only London but also cities such as Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Belfast all employing this new low-emissions technology.

The electric vehicle (EV) technology is fairly intuitive where a large battery pack drives electric motors to propel the vehicle. This concept is very efficient as regenerative braking can be used to recover energy and recharge the batteries instead of using conventional brakes where the energy is wasted as heat.

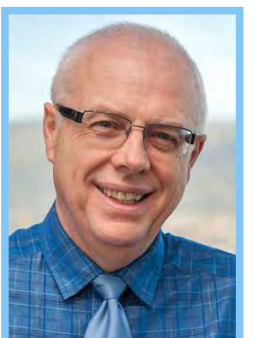
Not so simple in practice, where the battery pack is huge, weighing in about six ton and storing enough electrical power to power your home for about four months. Hydrogen powered buses are very similar with the same electrical powertrain but some of the batteries are replaced with a hydrogen fuel-cell, a fuel-cell EV (FCEV). The fuel-cell converts hydrogen gas directly to electrical power by reacting the hydrogen fuel with oxygen from the air. This electrical power charges the batteries which then drive the wheels through electric motors. This FCEV is a fuel-cell hybrid rather like a self-charging hybrid such as the Toyota Prius but with no emissions at the vehicle: well actually just water.

These buses, the EV and the FCEV, have the big advantage of zero emissions at the vehicle and so are good for air quality in inner cities with high vehicle density and lots of people. However, there are some major impediments to use of these buses to deliver real zero-emissions. Infrastructure, availability of renewable electrical power, production of green hydrogen and transport of hydrogen are all issues limiting use. The power grid is currently not able to deliver the power required for charging and renewable power generation is rather too intermittent. For the FCEVs, the fuel tanks must be filled with hydrogen at high pressure of 350 atmospheres and fuelling infrastructure is not yet widely available. To be genuinely zero-emissions, these buses must use renewable power or green hydrogen (produced from renewable energy), and this is only being developed now. So expect to see a gradual rollout of these buses over the next ten years as the power and fuelling delivery catches up with the vehicle technology.

Having recently retired from Queen's University, I have now moved on from the world of buses, but I have not moved away from developing new solutions to environmental problems. A few years ago, we jointly founded a new company, Catagen, with the expressed mission to 'Clean and Decarbonise the Air', so this is my new vocation. We have a string of new technologies under development: green hydrogen production, hydrogen infrastructure, renewable e-fuels, carbon capture and personalised emissions data. Over the next year, we hope to develop these to full production status as a contribution towards a net-zero economy where there are no fossil fuels and no new carbon emissions.

I finish with this thought from 1 Timothy 4:4; 'For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving'. So as Christians, we must do all we can to look after what God has entrusted to our care.

Br Roy Douglas
Gracehill



Br Dick Porter reports on the Autumn Conference of Moravian Churches in Yorkshire

Concern at the shortage of Moravian ministers in Yorkshire was raised at the conference.

Retired minister Sr Kathryn Woolford told delegates: 'We are getting overwhelmed by it.'

Baildon, Horton and Gomersal had no full-time minister and there were also vacancies at Salem and Royton.

Baildon and Horton were left without a minister when Br David Howarth, who tended both congregations, moved on to the Provincial Board.

Sr Woolford said: 'Our diaries are full of the need to fill in for services. We are all getting older. Of course, no one wants to say no.' She added that fellow retired minister Bob Hopcroft 'barely has a Sunday free between now and Christmas'.

'We used to have a lot of lay preachers', she said, 'but not anymore.'

Baildon's deputy, Sr Marie Hanson, called it 'frustrating and upsetting'.

Br Howarth told the conference: 'We will be in touch as soon as we know something.'

Since the conference, Br James Woolford, the new minister at Fulneck, has announced he will also be providing some cover for the Baildon church.

In his report from the Provincial Board, Br Howarth spoke about the closure of Ockbrook School in Derbyshire after 222 years due to insolvency.

Br Howarth spoke of Project 32, the 10-year scheme of mission and outreach to attract new membership and team ministry

and to ensure sustainability. To oversee its effective implementation, a provincial taskforce is to be set up. It is estimated the wide-ranging activities within the scheme will cost £3.8million over the next decade.

Individual reports from each congregation were given to the meeting. Gomersal reported 38 members and announced that a loan of £50,000 taken out in 2009 had now been repaid ahead of schedule 'due to the generosity of members'.

For Horton it was said that membership stood at 34 and that weekly average attendance had been 30, which was described as 'no mean feat' due to the need for social distancing.

Baildon announced it had 27 members and its Christingle service went ahead last year, with singing, as it was held outdoors. Lower Wyke reported 32 members and said Cafe Church, held every third Sunday, was still the best attended. Wellhouse reported a membership of 14 and said its usual activities had been much restricted because of the pandemic.

Fulneck spoke of 73 members and reported it also held an outdoor carol service, as well as the usual Easter morning service in the burial ground. The drama group had filmed a Nativity play based on the Wakefield Mystery Cycle and this had been screened online.

For the West Yorkshire Moravian Singers, Sr Diane Thornton announced that rehearsals had resumed in September, with 14 active members, one of whom is Francine Smith, the new principal of Fulneck School. The choir's next event will be a concert on Advent Sunday at Wellhouse.

The conference, held at Baildon in October, ran with Sr Jane Carter in the chair and Br James Woolford as vice chairman.

Fulneck Heritage Day

'It might happen', was the attitude in the spring. Well, happen it did and what a fabulous day we had. Food was the theme for the day and permeated all our activities. The church display reflected how essential food was to the settlement, fulfilling both the physical and spiritual needs of the brethren and sisters.

Unexpected connections were made, ranging from the bee's wax used by the shoemaker for polishing boots, to the discovery of penicillin found on melon bacteria and the later developments discovered by Sir Robert Robinson, former Fulneck School pupil.

The school pupils visited most days and following a brief introduction explored the displays themselves. Many enquired of myself or Br James to find out more and raised thoughtful questions.

The museum was busy all day as were the hourly tours around the settlement. Each tour included a short talk about settlement life by a character in traditional Moravian 18th century costume.

Delicious refreshments were enjoyed both inside and out and many people took advantage of the warm sunshine to chat and enjoy a pot of tea.

The visiting vintage Humber car, set out with a picnic table, was popular for photographs and added to the enjoyable experience of the day.

Despite COVID we were pleased to welcome quite a number of people which made the event worthwhile.

Sr Myra Dickinson



I Worried...

In the last few weeks I've been thinking how lucky I've been to be so little affected by COVID. I haven't had it and neither have any of my close family or friends ... but of course we've ALL been touched by it to a greater or lesser degree in the last two years.

Personally it's exacerbated my natural predilection for 'crossing bridges before I get to them'. It used to drive my husband Charles potty! I remember once when we were planning some MWA event and dear Mary France asking me what I was doing with a sheet of paper and a pen and I replied 'making a list of things to do' and she replied 'I've never made a list in my life'. I won't record my reply to that!

I chew things over and suffer from a 'what if?' mentality. Sometime in my early 30s my old head mistress from Fulneck, Miss Dorothy Augusta Connor (always known as 'Gus') came to visit me for the day. I had a houseful of young children aged between twelve and two

years old and a very poorly husband. I suppose it must have all seemed a bit chaotic. She wrote me a letter of thanks in her beautiful hand which I still have, and she must have been concerned about my wellbeing because she referred me to 1st Peter Chapter 5 verse 7: 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you'.

I have re-read that letter many times in the last 60 years and looked up the verse and other words of Jesus in similar vein ... yet STILL I worry, especially now about the future and what sort of a world my beloved young ones are inheriting from me. I have to admit to even turning off the news with its terrible pictures of homeless people and starving children.

Last weekend I planned to go out in my buggy to get some fresh air. It was a lovely morning but by noon it had started to blow a Hoooley with driving rain and hail, so I picked up my copy of Mary Oliver's Selected Poem 'Devotions' and it fell open at this wonderful poem!

'I Worried' by Mary Oliver

*I worried a lot. Will the garden grow,
will the rivers flow in the right
direction, will the earth turn as it
was taught, and if not how shall I
correct it?*

*Was I right, was I wrong, will I be
forgiven, can I do better?*

*Will I ever be able to sing, even the
sparrows can do it and I am, well,
hopeless.*

*Is my eyesight fading or am I
imagining it, am I getting
rheumatism, lockjaw, dementia?*

*Finally I saw that worrying had
come to nothing.*

*And gave it up. And took my old
body and went out into the
morning, and sang.*

Sr Libby Mitchell
Baildon

CONGREGATION NEWS



© Br John Cooper

Cliftonville

Cliftonville Council Meeting was held after the service on Sunday 21st October and 13 people took part. We are hoping that it will be possible to celebrate the Christingle and other Christmas events more normally this year. On 28th we were very happy to have our friend, the Rev Ken

Doherty, as the preacher while Br Stephens presided at the Council Meeting in Ballinderry.

During the year, Srs Vivienne Davis and Lorraine Gill collected items to fill shoe boxes for needy children in Europe. They expressed grateful thanks to the eight other members who joined them to help pack the 112 boxes ready for transport. In addition, there were four large bin bags containing knitted baby cardigans, sweaters and hats and two boxes of crocheted blankets, all made by Isabelle Maginnes, a friend who for many years has carried out this work and donated it to the Shoe Box appeal. Our congratulations and thanks to Vivienne, Lorraine and Isabelle.

Sr Edna Cooper

Gomersal

Here at Gomersal we are still functioning without a Minister since Br Michael Newman left for Hornsey in July. We as a congregation would like to thank both Sr Kathryn Woolford and Br Bob Hopcroft, both 'retired' ministers without whose dedication we would have found life at Church very difficult. They have both given their time and expertise to make our interregnum as smooth as possible.



Pumpkin party

© Sr A L Rivers

Life at church is slowly getting back to normal. MWA (Moravian Women's Association) and the Ladies Fellowship have both now resumed, although we have changed the

Halloween, which attracted a few visitors from the Gomersal area. A good time was had by all.

Sr Norma Machell

timing of the Ladies Fellowship from an evening to an afternoon meeting. Walking for health, carpet bowls and the Julian meeting are all taking place again. It feels so good to be able to meet and socialise once again with fellow members and friends of our Church family.

A group of our young people held a Pumpkin Party in church, for

Horton

The Byrds had a hit record in 1965 based on Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and they sang - 'To everything turn, turn, turn, there is a season turn, turn, turn, and a time to every purpose under heaven.'

We at Horton are, like the song and the leaves on the trees this Autumn time, slowly turning and like most congregations, changes are slowly happening.

We recently celebrated Harvest where we donated food to be used by our local foodbank. It was lovely to see the Church decorated with flowers from congregation member's gardens, hand baked bread, fresh fruit and vegetables and a wide variety of tinned and packet food that we are all so lucky to have access to, and we are so thankful to everyone who helped and donated.

We have new Chapel Servants in Church following the 'retirement' of some long-standing members and we give thanks to those who have served for many years and for those who are just starting to serve.

After undertaking a lengthy COVID risk assessment, and



© Sr Linda Barraclough

following strict rules, the Women's Fellowship group re-started. The Social Committee also met for the first-time post COVID and are hoping to hold a Christmas coffee morning on the 27th November. Please come along if you are in the area, you would be so very welcome.

It was our Minister, Br David Howarth's, last official service on the 26th September and we wish him well in his new

position, our best wishes and prayers go with him.

So, we continue to slowly turn, turn, turn this Autumn season and we give thanks that we have time for every purpose under heaven.

Sr Linda Barraclough

Bath (Weston)

After two years we are now back in church for worship. Our alterations are almost complete. This will make such a difference for letting the premises, and groups will be able to hire the church or the hall. To let people know about the new facilities, we held a church celebration and open afternoon. A short service to start the afternoon was led by Rev Paul Holdsworth, and the Mayor of Bath also attended and gave a short talk. This was followed by cream teas. In the hall some of the groups that use the premises 'advertised' their activities - these groups did a lot of talking, trying to get new recruits, apparently it went well. The afternoon was a great success and well attended.

New paintings have been designed and painted with acrylic on board by a very talented member of our congregation, Sr Sally Biggs. The Welcome sign is displayed in the entrance of the church - the books on the painting are all the books in the bible, bar one which you have to see if you can name it.

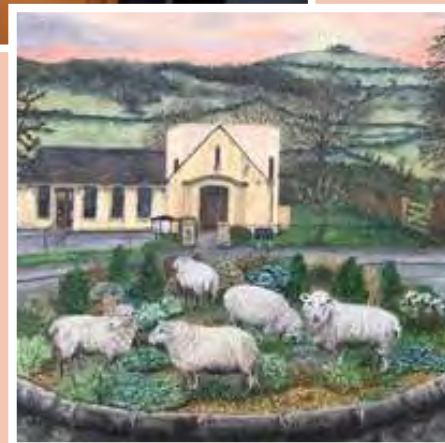


© Sr Jacqui Naish

The painting of the church and roundabout hangs in the church. This painting represents 'Direction' in several ways: the Church as a focus for the community, nestling in the local landscape; the signage boards informing what should be happening and where you are; the open gate into the Church and paths from there leading up through the hills, to the cross on Kelston Round Hill. Finally, there is the flock of sheep on the roundabout, searching in all directions. Will they continue to aimlessly walk around and around - or choose a direction to follow?

Most of the groups have started back plus a few new ones, so things are looking up here in Bath.

Sr Carole Young



© Sr Sally Biggs

Swindon

As 2021 draws to a close, we reflect on another year of worship and witness here in Swindon.

Sadly, we lost a much-loved member of our congregation during this difficult year. Kath Williams, a lifelong member, who over the years filled numerous roles in our church family, quietly doing what was needed and what was asked of her. She is greatly missed by us all.

We've been able to use our church building again for the first time in a long time - the first time being the wedding of Emma and James. Congratulations to the happy couple.

We held another successful 'stall on the steps' and raised £460 towards keeping Masai girls in Education.



© Sr Libby Clarke

restrictions have brought - there is always a way!

We look forward in faith to what 2022 holds in store for our little flock here in Swindon.

Sr Sandy Mundy

Congregational Register

Baptism

24th Oct 2021	Iona Alexandra Nelson	Fairfield
31st Oct 2021	Amari Valentine Samms	Fairfield

Marriage

24th July 2021	Emma Charlotte Mundy & James Aron Gale	Swindon
15th Oct 2021	Izzy Moody & Simon Grayston	Ockbrook
29th Oct 2021	Maisie Anne Holland & Paul Jason Smith	Fairfield

From Church House

Church House will be closed from Friday 24th December and will reopen on Tuesday 4th January 2022. The Provincial Board and Church House Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and ministry over the last 12 months, which have once again been a challenge in a variety of different ways. We recognise the challenges that both congregations and members have been faced with and would thank you all for what you have done in the service of the Lord. We wish you a blessed Christmas period and a happy New Year.

Br Geoffrey Stokell

It is with great sadness that we inform you that Br Geoffrey Stokell was called to higher service on Thursday 21st October. Br Geoffrey was an accountant in the Western Tanzania Province between 1984 and 1996. He also served on the Finance Committee in the British Province between 2002 and 2014. Please remember Br Geoffrey, his daughters Maggie, Diana, Lizza and Abigail and their family in prayer at this difficult time.

Provincial Diary for December

9	Faith and Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee (Online)
15-16	Provincial Board - PEC (Online)

Notices

Daily Watchwords 2022

The Daily Watchwords for 2022 are now available from Church House at a cost of £6.50 each plus P & P. Orders can be sent to the Bookroom via email at office@moravian.org.uk or by telephone at 020 8883 3409.

Calendars from Fairfield Moravian Church

Calendars for 2022 are now available for sale at Fairfield. They are £5.00 each plus £1.50 P & P. Orders can be sent to Sr Janet Warr via email at: jwarr@uwclub.net.

Irish District of the MWA Retreat 2022

The Irish District of the M.W.A. (Moravian Women's Association) will be holding a retreat at Drumalis, Larne, Co. Antrim from 6th-8th May 2022.

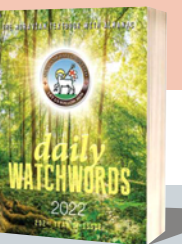
Guest Speaker: Rev Dr Margaret Barker - Methodist Preacher and Theologian

Theme: **Wonder Women - Then and Now**

Cost of Weekend: £135 per person.

If interested, please send your name and address with booking fee of £15 - cheque made payable to Mrs K Kitson - and send to Mrs Kitson at: 6 Gracefield, Gracehill, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, BT42 2RP. Closing date for booking is 31st January 2022.

1	World Aids Day (www.worldaidsday.org)
10	Human Rights Day (www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/)
18	International Migrants Day (www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday/)
21	Winter Solstice
25	Christmas Day
31	New Year's Eve / Watchnight



Dates to remember!

Fairfield Moravian Church

Just four miles from Manchester City Centre sits Fairfield Settlement, a haven of peace and tranquility tucked away from the busy roads and streets of urban life.

Our story begins a few miles away in another Manchester town, Dukinfield. After 30 years of life and work at Dukinfield, members looked for another place to continue Settlement life.

In 1783 various sites were examined, among them Broad Oaks Farm, held by a Mrs Greaves. Other adjoining land was already held by a Moravian brother, Br Saxon, and this site was chosen to be the church's new home, in total the estate consisted of five acres.

Br Benjamin LaTrobe (Jnr) drew up the plans, and at the age of 33 Br John Lees of Clarksfield Oldham was appointed site manager and immediately set about setting up brick kilns on site which would supply all the bricks for the building. Everything was ready for building to commence and on the 9th of June 1784 the foundation stones for the Church and Choir houses were laid by Br Benjamin LaTrobe (Snr); these main three buildings on the terrace are of Georgian design and form one side of 'The Square'. By May 1785 in addition to the church and Single Sisters' and Single Brethren's houses a further thirteen dwelling houses had been completed and tenanted at a total cost of £6,000. The church building opened for worship at a special service exclusively for members of the settlement and congregation on Friday 15th July 1785 followed by an opening service two days later for the public on Sunday 17th. Fairfield quickly became self-contained with its inn, shop, bakery, farm, laundry, fire-engine, night-watchman, inspector of weights and measures, an overseer of roads and even a physician.

In 1790 a boys' boarding school was opened and then in 1796 a girls' boarding school. In 1793 the first Sunday School of the British Province was opened.

The boys school closed in 1891, the girls school continued to 1923 at which time it was acquired by the Education Authority, and a girls' school still occupies that site today.



The burial ground was laid out when the Settlement was built and was also used as an orchard, the first interment was in May 1785, just before Church's official opening. 'Gods Acre' to this day is still reserved for members of the Fairfield congregation.

But what of more recent times? The Moravian Theological college had moved from Fulneck to Fairfield in 1875 and many ministers came through those doors until it closed in 1958 at which time the college building was left unoccupied and fell into a terrible state of disrepair. After much discussion, in the late 1970s work started to renovate the building so that it could be used as a Sunday School and Church Hall. Yet again the church looked within its membership and Br Anthony Torkington (an architect and lifelong Fairfield member), stepped forward and took on the project. The building was re-opened for use in July 1983. It has recently undergone further work (still under the watchful eye of Br Torkington), to restore the top floor of the College, and this now provides the College with a second hall with en-suite kitchen and toilet. The College is used for all sorts of church and community activities including room hire for birthday parties; use by film companies; extra examination hall for the Girls School; Starling organization (which provides creative workshops for young people with hidden

disabilities) and Catch22, who arrange activities with young people for the National Citizen Service. We hold Family Service there once a month, our Christmas Fair, jumble sales, afternoon teas, youth club, messy church and previously Guides, Brownies and Rainbows have all had their weekly meetings here. During the period of COVID regulations and lockdowns, the College Garden has been a most invaluable asset to the residents and the wider community as a safe green space for contemplation, relaxation, and exercise.

The Church has continued to worship with the help of Facebook and Zoom services, we also held Zoom coffee mornings and committee meetings. Residents of the Square had weekly Singing Our Faith on Our Doorsteps and non-residents on email, received a weekly attachment with the hymns so they could join in from their own homes each Sunday at 10am.

Our congregation now has seventy-eight members and over the past year at outdoor and indoor services, our average attendance has been twenty-eight adults and one child. During the pandemic, the Bible Study Group, Youth Club, Ladies Thursday Group, Fairfield Tots Time, and Fairfield Memory Singers have not met. We hope most if not all of them will resume at the proper time and we continue to look forward in the hope that Fairfield will continue to flourish.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe

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dave@redragdesign.co.uk
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G. R. Walkden
Tel 01253 681338

