



Good Friday

We are moving through Lent with purpose, and we begin to approach Holy Week with reverence. Lent is long. Lent is long because it is a serious time of self-reflection. It ends with the most hopeful time in the Christian year, Easter, filled with celebrations, colourfully decorated eggs, special foods and general feasting. However, before we get to Easter we must make it through Good Friday. Many churches, ministers, and Christian Traditions, have attempted to get past Good Friday with as little notice as possible, often smoothing through the problems of the darkness of the day, or, as Paul put it, the 'Scandal of the Cross', as much as possible, focusing instead on the highs of Palm Sunday, ending on the even more triumphal high of Resurrection Sunday. Some of those in this group who still feel the need to give a nod to Good Friday often focus on the triumph of Christ even in the midst of defeat.

The Cross is an unsettling thing. Good Friday, or Holy Friday as some traditions call it, is a time of darkness, pain, and suffering, and it calls to us, as Christians. God demands of us something important in this act of the self-sacrifice of Jesus. Paul, writing only twenty to thirty years after the Resurrection of Jesus, gives us the earliest recorded Christian reflection on the theology of the Cross. He says in I Corinthians 1:17-25:

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.'

In her masterpiece 'The Crucifixion' Fleming Rutledge writes:

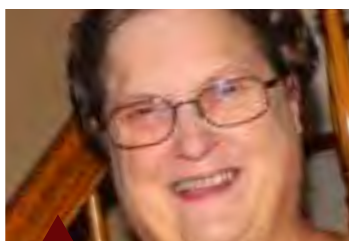
'The crucifixion is the touchstone of Christian authenticity, the unique feature by which everything else, including the

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It is very hard to write of the glories of spring or the hope of Easter whilst we watch cities being pummelled into dust and sadly observe people moving en masse as refugees in Europe. For most of us, war has been a far away thing, fought in remote places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and the Falklands. Now it is close to us and feels threatening in a way that the Balkan wars of the 1990s never did.

We have grown used to peace and we are accustomed to plenty. Now we are living with the fear of war, sorrow at human suffering and a feeling of helplessness. On top of that there has been the real issue of fuel costs and following on from that inflation surging and a fall in personal living standards. Many are having to make hard choices. This all comes hard on from the two years of COVID and of course that pandemic is far from over yet. A hard time indeed.

We see the horrors that men and women can inflict on each other in the Holy Week readings. Collaboration and occupying armies are in the mix as are betrayal, abandonment, lying, scapegoating, torture and death. Years might have passed, and technology developed incredibly but men and women are still victims and perpetrators in our world.

But hard times, dark times and helplessness should never be allowed to dominate our actions and have the last word in our lives because the Christian gospel is one of faith, hope and love in action. God is a god of action who does not leave the world to go on its sad way but reached out in love over the years, with messages and promises via prophets and patriarchs. Finally, God sent his Son to show the extent of his love, to take on in his own body the sin of the world and to open his arms on the cross to offer forgiveness.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus after the cruelty of the cross and the sadness of death we, as believers, can live in faith, hope and love. The faith that Jesus, the light has overcome the darkness and that this has personal relevance for us and for God's world. Hope that God's plans for us and for all humankind are good and to be sought out and followed. And then there is love!

As God acts in love towards his world so should we. This love in action can be in many forms; we can speak of this God who reaches out to a suffering world to anyone who will listen. We can show God's love through so many different actions, opening our wallets and giving to any number of good causes generously; opening our homes to those who need it; supporting campaigns that seek to bring fairness, justice and peace; volunteering in numerous charitable and community ventures, listening to the unheard and carrying the tired.

Over the coming weeks the PEC have asked us to donate generously to the Disasters Emergency Appeal to support those suffering in Afghanistan and Ukraine. If you would like to support this please send your donations into your local congregation or to Moravian Church House with a note saying that it is for the Easter DEC appeal.

To choose to love and live in faith and hope is not to deny the reality of evil but to live the Easter message in the midst of a troubled world.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



Letters

Dear Editors,

I enjoy the variety of articles in the Messenger and was particularly interested in the item on Craftivism from Hall Green, Birmingham, as we have a craft group in our retirement home. The residents knit and sew and make cards for birthdays and special occasions. I don't think they have ever made 'twiddlemuffs' and I had to look on Google to discover what they are. I am sure your readers would like to have a full explanation!

With all good wishes,
Br John McOwat.

Dear Editors,

I have abandoned political discourse at Keighley, Worth Valley Railway, at Bradford Model Railway Club, Church and with my large and now extended family and finally my (small) circle of friends. As you read this you may reflect on your own disinterest on the subject most vital to a healthy nationwide fully functioning democracy in a so-called free country.

It is essential that the ever-dwindling number of willing souls who discuss politics are fully aware of what the people who they elected as MPs are doing in their name. It is also essential that dwindling number include as many interested Christians as possible for both their and their congregation's sake, ministers included. I now discuss politics, non-politically under the umbrella, A.D.D., Applied, Direct, Democracy. I am soon to become, a still active 83 years old and am hoping to hold a short seminar on this subject for the Yorkshire and Lancashire districts. I am happy to speak to any of the following, Mission and Society Committee, District Conferences, Church Committees. Men's and Women's Fellowships before this year Synod then Synod itself.

I and a few other Christians believe we will never achieve what our Chief Elder requires of us without using A.D.D. Let's discuss that! Watch this space and get excited about a new movement for Christ's sake.

Yours as ever,

Br Alan Holdsworth.

Focus on Families' Communion at Fetter Lane

On Sunday 6th March we gathered for our first Focused on Families' Communion Service. Our aim was to trial a new way of worshipping together. Our engagement with nine adults and seven under 18's may seem small to many but it was wonderful to see our small community re-gather together after COVID, with some members having been away for many months.

We began with some food together ahead of our service - the classic jacket potato with various fillings that was followed by cake. We then had around an hour to just play games with kids enjoying various ones including Kapla, Duplo / Lego and the Pop-Up Pirate Game as well as Connect 4. Also, a good deal of time was spent by the younger end of our church playing in the wonderful graveyard that Fetter Lane is gifted with.

Just before three o'clock we headed into the Chapel for our Communion Service. We had been prepared in advance that this Communion Service would be different and we were greeted with our Communion Table as a large white sheet of paper ready to be decorated. All those under 18 did so, with drawings and stickers of people and animals as well as other drawings from their imagination. Some adults added names and images too, including those who weren't with us that day but are part of our regular fellowship.

The service included elements of our tradition, such as our usual post communion prayerful songs 'Holy, Lord and God ...' but we also embraced the reality that those under eight are often not confident readers. Therefore, we were led in praise using tunes such as 'London Bridge is Falling Down' and 'Row, Row, Row your Boat' with new words which could be learnt in the moment. We also used Taizé chants as well as classic hymns such as 'All things Bright and Beautiful'.

Sr Maxwell chose a new liturgy for this communion service which focused on telling the story in a more accessible way. This re-telling was a real opportunity to teach our younger (and older) members of the experience of Jesus' Last Supper. The children engaged really well. Indeed, their concentration during this time was noted by one individual who only attends Fetter Lane on Communion Sundays and who traditionally doesn't like All Age Style worship. However, he valued seeing the younger end of our congregation so engaged.

Our Intercessory prayers were interactive and open ended with objects chosen by individuals out of a bag and the prayers spontaneously offered. The Lord's Prayer was said using traditional language but included the opportunity to use Body Prayer alongside this. We included Body Prayer, which involves you physically moving your body to echo the words you

© Sr Claire Maxwell



are saying, to give space and value to those who may not yet know the Lord's Prayer off by heart or indeed prefer kinaesthetic movement.

Although Fetter Lane's next Communion promises to be traditional, I don't believe it will be our last in this Family Focused manner. It was described by one person as a 'deep breath' and another person who found out about it after the service, who is a granddaughter of a recently deceased member, asked to be kept in the loop on our next one.

I think it raises questions for us all about how we are catering, particularly liturgically, for those who can't read in church and how we are making teens and children feel welcome. I know we at Fetter Lane will be continuing to ask these questions whilst also being mindful of the need to not exclude people who really value our current tradition and format of the Communion service.

Sr Claire Maxwell
Minister at Fetter Lane Moravian Church



MyForum Online

Zoom meeting for young people ages 14-25 to be held on Saturday 9th April 5-7pm. Open to anyone to meet up for fellowship and to talk about the Church. A link can be obtained from youth@moravian.org.uk or James.Woolford@moravian.org.uk.

Summer Camp 2022

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 soon.



Good Friday continued

resurrection, is given its true significance. The resurrection is not a set piece. It is not an isolated demonstration of divine dazzlement. It is not to be detached from its abhorrent first act. The resurrection, precisely, the vindication of a man who was crucified. Without the cross at the centre of the Christian proclamation, the Jesus story can be treated as just another story about a charismatic spiritual figure. It is the crucifixion that marks out Christianity as something definitively different in the history of religion. *It is in the crucifixion that the nature of God is truly revealed.* Since the resurrection is God's mighty transhistorical Yes to the historically crucified Son, we can assert that *the crucifixion is the most important historical event that has ever happened.* The resurrection, being a transhistorical event planted within history, does not cancel out the contradiction and shame of the cross in this present life; rather, the resurrection ratifies the cross as *the way* 'until he comes.'

(Fleming Rutledge, 'The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ', p.44 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2017)

It is vital to go through Good Friday, and not try to bypass it to skip the challenge it offers us. We must live in it. We must find our life in and through the Cross, for it is our window through which we can interpret the life of Jesus, the works, and, especially, the resurrection of Jesus, in which we find life itself. We must own the scandal of the Cross and be owned by it.

This is not an alien concept for us Moravians, as we see plainly this attitude well expressed in our Good Friday liturgy (pp. 124-125), beginning with the words written by Erdmuth Dorothea Zinzendorf:

**'Lamb of God! Lamb of God!
Thanks and praise to you are due;
O accept our adoration
For the blessings ever new
Flowing from your life and passion:
May our hearts and lips with one accord
Hail you Lord! Hail you Lord!'**

And continues with:

'This is my Lord who as redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of evil; not with gold

or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death, that I may be his own and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he, risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.'

We must never be in a hurry to rush past Good Friday, especially when we find life challenging and painful. When we are suffering, finding our place at the foot of the Cross gives us something real to hold onto. When we are feeling great about life, kneeling in humility at the foot of the cross gives us grounding we need to keep us anchored to the source of all life and the hope of our salvation. The Crucifixion is not incidental to the Resurrection, it is at the very heart of God's plan for the world to be reborn from death to life. For it is only through the death of Christ, we find life.

Br Jared Stephens
Minister at Cliftonville
Belfast Moravian Church



Lunga's Field



*Meandering up the field in the early morning light
Nose in overdrive for odours of fox or feline
He was oblivious to the trawler
Wearily returning to the harbour after a hard night's work.
Attention was then caught by the chimney sweep moths
Indulging their gourmet pignut diet.
He watched delicately in curious amazement.
On, through the long grass be-jewelled with dew
To the cow who suddenly appeared over the top bank.
Swallows swooped to devour their insect prey
And greet him on his morning stroll,
While below on the shore the curlew's haunting cry
Carried in the still air.
Another day his way was through the yellow rattle
That faded to brown and then rattled as he brushed past.
Neat mown lines of hay were such fun for play
And bales to jump on and try and steal the binding rapidly appeared.
Leaves on the hedges changed colour as the swallows left
Heralding autumn and an abundance of fungi
Lit in an evening by the rising full moon.
His canine brain cannot wonder, we think, how all this was created,
But I, with human brain, am aware of the divine creator of all things
Spreading the rich tapestry of the changing seasons before us.*

[To provide some context to this poem: Lunga is my miniature labradoodle who will be one in a couple of weeks. Pignut is an early umbellifer, or wildflower with very small white flowers in a group at the top of the stems and chimney sweep moths fly in the day. The field rises gently above the road opposite my house giving a bird's eye view of the village and the sea in clear weather.]

Sr Claire Summers

Personal story on refugee sponsorship in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Family sponsorships in the Bethlehem area are a very rewarding experience. We watch the families learn to trust, to lose some of their fear, as well as watch their children benefit from the education they may not have received in their respective home countries, especially the females.

We, the Bethlehem Area Moravians (BAM), alongside other denominational churches and agencies, began this journey by sponsoring a Syrian family some years ago. Three people from the committee have continued to accompany the Syrian children for the past six years, which is a good thing in that when COVID closed the schools the children had a difficult time learning through the use of a computer. The committee members were able to provide educational and technological support that the parents were unable to provide and thereby served as guides through the computer learning process in order to keep them at their grade levels.

There are differences between the Syrian and newly arrived Afghan families, however we love them equally.

In September 2021 the world watched planes leaving from Afghanistan as thousands of people were evacuated as the Taliban took control of the country. A significant number came to America with the hope that they could be housed and employed by December of 2021. Others were housed on military bases in Europe. Both groups have been and are being securely processed in order to receive clearances into another country while also having their medical needs attended to. Some continue to wait for clearances or have received clearance but have nowhere to live. Churches are helping as they can. Some evacuees are placed in apartments with some furniture but with no sponsors. Others have sponsors and no apartment. Since there are still so many looking for sponsors and apartments in the United States this process could easily go on for another year. It is a cruel situation for those who helped our country when United States personnel were present in Afghanistan. These dear brothers and sisters who assisted America are in serious need of help, a home, security, and peace of mind.

Fortunately, finding folks willing to support the Afghan family was very easy in Bethlehem. Bethlehem Area Moravians, individual churches, and friends from the Unitarian Church sent money and people to serve on a committee that attends to the variety of needs for the family. Finding an apartment was not so easy, as apartments are being snapped up in our area due to the influx of refugees. However, thanks to Brothers Hopeton Clennon and Mike Long, we found a beautiful home in a safe area of town for the family where they have started to explore their surroundings and community. Since it is difficult to secure housing in the Bethlehem area, even when advanced rent is offered, a potential solution to the housing deficit may be to have the churches utilize their combined resources to purchase an apartment building to house multiple families. If each church then adopted one of those families, this would bring hope and joy to so many delightful brothers and sisters.

Our Afghan family consists of two parents and one child. Both parents are college graduates. Before they arrived, the mother was a translator for the military, which put her on the Taliban list for punishment. The father was an investigative journalist and also owned a WIFI cafe. He was also on the Taliban list for punishment. They were forced to leave their families and flee from the potential Taliban punishment as well as for the safety of their beautiful, baby boy. Taliban punishment was a real threat and was written about in a New York Times article. Two journalists were arrested and severely beaten for daring to write a piece about women's rights. The journalists have escaped from Afghanistan. One relocated to the United States with his wife.

Our Afghan family will undertake suitable educational and employment opportunities to support their family.

Sr Louisa Frey

Member of Central Moravian Church and the Afghan Sponsoring Committee



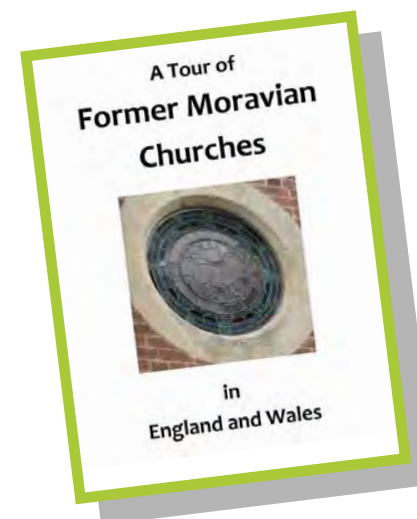
New Book: A Tour of Former Moravian Churches in England and Wales

Br Michael Newman wrote an article in the January issue of the Moravian Messenger, 'Sabbatical Part Two: The Road Trip', about the four weeks he spent travelling around England and Wales, visiting the locations of 24 former Moravian Churches and a Moravian school. A booklet has now been produced and is available to purchase from Moravian Church House for £5.00.

'A Tour of Former Moravian Churches in England and Wales', a paperback booklet

(pp.60) by Michael and Claire Newman, contains images and details about the buildings or former sites, what they are used for today, how to find them, along with a little bit of the history of each church.

To purchase a copy, please contact the Moravian Bookroom at: office@moravian.org.uk; or by telephone at: 020 8883 3409. £3.50 of each copy will be donated to the Moravian Archives in London.



Reflections on the Moravian Minister's and Lay Workers Retreat

28th February to the 3rd March 2022
at Sarum College, Salisbury



© Sr Patsy Holdsworth

It was such a relief that this retreat was able to go ahead as a few months earlier it was unsure if this event would actually take place. It was over two years now since we had been able to gather as clergy, so it was great to have our first evening meal together and to meet Brendan McManus SJ (Society of Jesus) who is a Jesuit Priest and the Spiritual Director for the Society of Jesus in Belfast. He has also written a number of books on the theme of Pilgrimage. Sadly, we were not all able to join the retreat, as Br John McOwat and Srs Sarah Groves, Christine Emanuel and Susan Foreman sent their apologies as they unable to attend.

After the evening meal we gathered in the Hamilton room, our home for the retreat, and Brendan, a good friend of Br Jared Stevens introduced himself. We had been given a passage from Jeremiah 29 verse 11 to dwell on as we travelled, 'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.' Brendan explained what we were going to do over the next few days, and generously he gave all of us a copy of his book, 'Finding God in the Mess, meditations for mindful living'. I thoroughly recommend this book as it is well written and is accompanied by beautiful photographs. We then introduced ourselves to him and said how we were feeling having arrived for the retreat that day - the majority of us said we were tired and worn out but looking forward to some time together as colleagues.

The goal of the retreat was to help recharge ministers' batteries: renewing their energy and enthusiasm. It was also designed to help process the traumas experienced by the pandemic, to create a place of calm and peace and to create a space for personal quiet prayer and free time. There was also an emphasis on Celtic spirituality to recover our pilgrim character through walking in nature, experiencing our own art, poetry and a sense of place. After this short introductory session, we went to the social area to chat then went to bed excited for our next few days together.

We gathered at 7.30am in the chapel for morning silent prayers, had breakfast and gathered in the Hamilton room for our first session. The starting point was based on the concept that we are created good by God and, after an introduction by Brendan and a true story to reflect on, we were encouraged to dwell on a particular question for 40 minutes by walking or doing something creative. We were all given a journal to use during the retreat, in which I drew a picture of rusty chains, taken from Brendan's book. When we returned to our small groups I reflected on how we are all connected and joined to God. We had a second session following the same pattern after coffee, and I began a painting of the beautiful Cathedral, which I could see very clearly from the craft room. We then returned back to our discussion groups before lunch, which followed a pattern of

guided and active listening and sharing.

In the afternoon the majority of the group walked in the rain to Old Sarum, the site of the earliest settlement in Salisbury going back to Roman times. It was so wet I decided to stay at the college and finish my picture of Salisbury Cathedral. Many of us attended Evensong at the Cathedral before dinner. It is always very moving to experience the singing that is of such an amazing standard. That evening we had a quiz and we also shared other games, which was fun both for those taking part or simply spectating.

By the second day I felt many of us were now unwinding and settling into the rhythm of the retreat. We were now into our third session and enjoying space to reflect on the messes of ministry we are all entangled in. Brendan is skilled in helping us to find silence and peace to reflect on our usually busy hectic lives, and we were all beginning to feel less tired and stressed. Lunch followed by more free time, during which a group went off to Stonehenge. I went for coffee with Jane and Lorraine at the Cathedral cafe, bumping into many of our group in the gift shop. After this, as the weather improved I wandered briefly into Salisbury.

At 5.30pm we all gathered for an Ash Wednesday service in the College Chapel. The service was led by the group organisers, Lorraine and Jared, and was followed by Holy Communion - it was a very special experience and an important part of our retreat. Once again after dinner we played the pub quiz game and finished undefeated. Of course, we had our group of creative knitters and those who preferred to crochet swapped patterns and ideas throughout the retreat helping each other out - I stuck to my embroidery. I woke up Thursday morning and felt sad that our retreat was already nearing its end, we packed and gathered for our last session, but we definitely looked more refreshed than when we had arrived.

Brendan had led us through some deep sessions and our last gathering challenged us with the statement, God does not want to keep us in the mess and so we need to find our way with God as our navigator and our friend on the journey. A group photo was taken then we had lunch and wished each other well, knowing we were different people leaving, feeling more refreshed and renewed than when we arrived four days earlier. Thank you to Brendon, Lorraine, Jared and all those made this very valuable and rewarding experience possible for us.

Sr Patsy Holdsworth
Minister at Brockweir, Kingswood and
Tytherton Moravian Churches



Trip to Herrnhut in Former Times

I went 'Behind the Iron Curtain' three times. The first in 1979 on a trip arranged by Br Harold and Sr Joyce Jones and again with them in 1981. Still in the 80s, Sr Cora Ives and I organised a visit and later after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Sr Jackie Morten and I put together a 'Comenius Pilgrimage' for the MWA (Moravian Women's Association).

Each time was for two weeks and included visits to Moravian historical places of interest, talks, sightseeing and meeting people. Unfortunately, I cannot find the notebooks I kept with daily comments. I think they must have disappeared in the great sort out 20 years ago when I downsized and are probably moldering away in Dowley Gap tip at Bingley, so this is written from 40-year-old memories!

I vividly remember losing Harold Jones in Prague on the last visit after The Velvet Revolution which brought on a panic attack with me. Jackie Morten needless to say remained calm. When he finally turned up, he explained that 'he'd followed the wrong umbrella' (the guides all had brightly coloured brollies) and got a sound verbal bashing from Joyce!

I'm going to concentrate on the first visit in 1979 as that left the deepest impression on me. Crossing the border from West to East in our big shiny coach I will never forget. The unsmiling guards carrying guns, the drab appearance of the buildings, the searches of our luggage

for Bibles, the sudden instruction from Harold to eat our forbidden bananas ... and a plaintive voice from the back seat complaining 'I hate bananas'! When we finally drove into Herrnhut a young boy on a bike was waiting for us and with a wave beckoned us to follow him to The Christian David Guest House. A cheer went up from the coach.

I remember the Guest House as being comfortable and basic. We mostly shared rooms: two or three people together. No en-suites ... but that was normal in hotels in the UK then. The food was plain and plentiful and included delicious charcuterie which some people had not tasted before. I seem to remember rice pudding and dumplings.

We were entertained royally by the church members and warned to guard our speech and behaviour. There was certainly a feeling of being 'watched'. A little yellow aeroplane was often spotted flying over our coach as we travelled round the countryside. We were fairly conspicuous!

One visit remains particularly in my mind. We were crowded into the little Lutheran Church at Berthelsdorf and suddenly Br Wilfred Mortimore appeared in the pulpit like the spirit of Zinzendorf! He told me afterwards it was one of the most moving experiences of his life. Dear Wilf!

For me, the most important and lasting experience was being invited into

members' homes. I was with a small group of three who went to Alexander and Benigna (Binle) ver Beek's. We took tea out of Binle's Meissen tea service and sat in their lovely garden and listened to their stories of living under Communist rule and how they coped with the constant suspicion of others and kept their faith and their Church alive.

When we returned home I contacted Binle's sister Brigitte Treutler who lived with her husband, always known as 'Trolly', in Norfolk. They had fled East Germany at the end of the war escaping from the Russians. Brigitte gave birth to one of their children in a stable. Trolly was a scientist and worked here in that field. We met up several times and Brigitte came to stay with me in Yorkshire.

It was an amazing, moving experience for us all and led to many lasting friendships and visits through the years. It also opened our eyes to how people were living such different lives to ours so very near to us geographically.

It's difficult to grasp today, when we have so many different ways of communicating instantly, that such ignorance existed less than half a century ago?

Sr Libby Mitchell
Baildon



Burned Out Christian?

'Burned out' is the most prevalent of social diseases of our time. It is when someone is feeling overwhelmed, emotionally drained and is unable to meet constant demand. Caused by excessive and prolonged stress at home, illness, or responsibility, it takes away joy out of career, friendship, and family.

Such people like Elijah, feel they have nothing left to give and may become pessimistic toward life. Some have termed it, the 'Elijah Syndrome'. Paul was no stranger to sacrificial hard work; living for God's people and relentless work. In this, he indeed outdid all apostles, 'I worked harder than all of them ...' (1 Cor. 15/10). Unlike Elijah, in his unrelenting work at the cost of his family life, physical limitations and difficulties, severe opposition, he could write, 'Rejoice in the Lord always ...' from a prison. He viewed his life as being given to God as a 'sacrifice' to Him; 'poured out like a drink offering'. Nothing remained, retained, with him; all was to, 'live for Christ'. His complete existence was only for the Lord. This willing 'giving away' of life in complete transparency, meant that beginning with the waking time, food habits, choices in social life, clothes and possessions, books read

or friends cherished, all were with the mindset of Jesus. His accountability with life and hard work was such that he confidently could claim God's approval at judgement (1 Cor. 4/4). In all challenges his focus was on God; decided by His permission; willingly risked death knowing the sufficiency of God's grace. (Acts 21/13).

Such 'poured out' lives can never be 'burned out' lives. With no hidden selfishness (Acts 5/2), lives are not meant to envy, greed; to please others or be driven by godless greedy work schedules. People with divided hearts might leave company, as Demas did (2 Tim. 4/10); or abandon; but these anomalies are far outweighed by interceding and fellowship of believers, hospitality, dedicated times of seeking God's will, praise and prayer.

Paul, often alone, was never lonely, isolated or out of step! Constantly replenished in poured out lives, like Paul, no one can ever be a 'burned out'!

Rev Elijah Gergan
Retired Pastor, Moravian Church, Leh, Ladakh, India.

What I Believe

Moravian Messenger Editor, Sr Sarah Groves
interviews Sr Lorraine Shorten

Sr Lorraine Shorten is a Moravian minister serving Hall Green United Community Church in Birmingham.

How and when did you come to faith?

It wasn't until my family moved to Baildon (West Yorkshire) when I was nine years old that we started attending Baildon Moravian Church. Over the next ten years or so my parents divorced and remarried, and my brother and sister left the church completely. But I felt at home at the Church and continued attending. The church was my safe place, my constant in a confusing and painful world. I will always be grateful to the Sisters of the church for their stability, even though they didn't know it at the time.

How does this faith play a real part in your life?

I never had an 'Emmaus Road' experience of coming to faith, it was always there. God was, and is, part of me. There have been periods of my life when I haven't been with God but God has always been with me.

What lead you into the ministry, how did you hear God's call?

We were members of Gomersal Moravian church when the late Br David Dickinson was minister. One Sunday, he asked if anyone was interested in leading services to have a chat with him after the service. I suddenly felt an elbow in my side and my husband saying, 'You could do that'. So, I spoke to Br Dickinson after the service. I now jokingly say that God spoke to me through my husband's elbow!

You went into training for ministry as a mature student - how did you adapt to that training?

I didn't enjoy school and couldn't focus on coursework due to difficulties at home, so I left school with no formal qualifications.

After having our children I worked for Sure Start. I was working in and sharing the lovely side of life of babies and toddlers alongside the reality of post-natal depression, domestic violence, poverty and lack of education.

I worked with (mostly) mums who had left school with no qualifications and had been written off by society. I was helping them achieve the basic levels of numeracy and literacy. This gave the women empowerment, they felt valued for the first time in their lives, and many continued their learning and found jobs. These women empowered me in turn and I gained a Level 3 NVQ in Children's Learning and Development.

What experiences from your life before training have you found useful in ministry?

Working for Sure Start gave me a good understanding of the realities of family life. I moved on and started working for the local Social Services Contact Team. This was supervising the formal contact parents had with their children who had been removed and put into foster care. I could see from my short time working at both ends of the care spectrum that the

preventative work that Sure Start did was so much more valuable long term.

This is my method of working now, what can I do, what can the church do, to help people now so that things don't get worse for them.

What has been your greatest joy so far in ministry?

I have only been in ministry a short time and half of that has been supporting my congregations through a global pandemic.

Have you ever been angry with God, and if so, why?

No.

Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death? Do you believe in a resurrection, and if so, what will it be like?

I am not afraid of death. I am afraid of being in pain and being a burden to my family but in dying I know that I will finally be with my Saviour and I am looking forward to everlasting joy.

What can we learn from other Churches and other faiths?

One of my congregations is an LEP (Local Ecumenical Partnerships), Moravian, Methodist and URC, and I love being part of all three denominations. It makes me

realise that we are all here to love and serve God we just have different methods or words. I enjoy living in a multi-cultural area of Birmingham and learning about other faith traditions.

Why are so many people turning their backs on organised religion?

I feel that up until recently children were separated from church by the church itself. Faith is a living, breathing experience. Faith is learning how to laugh with God, how to cry with God, how to shout at God. Children, in my opinion, did not learn faith they were taught stories. Stories don't help you when you are angry at the world, you need faith to carry you through.

Some personal preferences-favourite film, book, music and why?

My favourite author at the moment is the late Rachel Held Evans. She has shown me the humanity of the Bible and God.

The place where you feel closest to God?

In nature, walking with family and friends.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

Not that one would be allowed in a Moravian burial ground but I would like it to say, 'What has she got planned for us now!'

Finally, any major regrets and any major joys in your life?

I wish I had had the courage to go into ministry earlier. I have grown so much as a person since then, but God knows the right time.



Letters

Dear Editors,

I read with deep sympathy Sr Sarah Groves' editorial expressing her pain on reading the story of Jephthah's daughter, especially at a time when two women had been murdered in N. Ireland. This led her to ask how she could be faithful to Scriptures in the light of such stories of violence against women, and, I would add, of violence in general. I don't pretend to have a complete answer to the question or anything new but offer some points to think about and to continue the discussion Sr Groves has started.

Remembering that the Bible is not one book but a collection, written by many different authors over a long period of time, we should not be surprised if it shows human understanding of God changing with the changing years. So, for me, the touchstone against which everything else is judged is the Gospels and our developing understanding over the Christian centuries. When we say the Bible gives us God's word, to me that does not mean every word is directly from God. So, if we find we cannot accept some parts of the Bible as giving a true picture of the God known to us in Jesus, we must be prepared to say so, and in its place present the positive picture given to us in the Lord (and that, perhaps, will help us to realise how far we still have to go to reach that standard).

This may well mean accepting that there are some passages in the Old Testament that we shall never read in worship. In practice, doesn't that happen already? If we use the daily lectionary in the Daily Watchword, that is intended to give an overall view of the Bible in about three years I think much of what we read may not help us in our search for God or how to live as followers of Jesus except in the negative sense of leading us to say 'I don't believe the God whom Jesus called 'Father' can be like that.' That, I believe, is being faithful to the Bible as a whole.

It is an interesting co-incidence that on the opposite page to Sr Groves' editorial, an article by a Swiss Moravian, Br Zellweger, remembers a meeting with Desmond Tutu of South Africa (later to become Archbishop) during which Tutu said that the Bible is a book of liberation for men and women using their minds and reasons without fear. Perhaps that is a good note to finish with.

Yours sincerely,

Br Fred Linyard
Ockbrook

Dear Editors,

Now that decisions are being made about the future of Fulneck School (as reported in the March Moravian Messenger), perhaps this is a good moment to reflect on the reasons we established schools in the first place and whether those reasons are still valid?

It seems to me that there were probably three key reasons which drew our eighteenth predecessors into education.

The first was to provide an education for the children of our own staff. That role has pretty much vanished. We no longer send missionaries around the world, we have far fewer Ministers, and many parents anyway prefer to keep their children with them rather than send them to boarding school. So to the extent that we still have a responsibility to help educate our employees' children, it doesn't require us to run a school ourselves.

The second reason I think was to provide education to those who would otherwise go uneducated - part of our mission of social responsibility. On the face of it, that is no longer valid. Everyone in this country is now guaranteed education or training until they are 18 and the children we take from overseas are those who can afford to pay school fees. There may still be some more specific barriers to education for certain children (those with caring responsibilities, those with no quiet space at home, those with lower quality IT etc) but those probably require new and different solutions, rather than simply offering mainstream school places.

The final reason, I suspect, was to provide a Moravian hotspot and to ensure that Moravian beliefs and practices were passed on to the next generation. With the decline of religion generally in society, this would seem to be an even more important reason now than it was two hundred years ago. Indeed, it is hard to see how our decade of evangelism and Project 32 will prosper if they don't take up the challenge of delivering the message to younger generations.

So there are still good reasons for us to be involved in education, though they may not be quite the same as when we started.

Once we are clear about why we are still directly involved in education we can start to think about what sort of establishment best delivers our goals. Clearly in recent times we have felt that we needed our schools to be outside the state system and to be financially independent and that may still be the best model for us. But that is not the only option. Some churches, for example, have returned their schools to the state sector in exchange for retaining some influence over appointments and on the governing body. There is also the academy option which allows schools to have a distinct ethos without having to charge fees. There is also the 'free school' model, and so on.

For Fulneck, the absolute priority - for its pupils, its staff, and the Church - is that it should survive. If any changes do need to be made though, I hope they will be changes which make it more, not less, able to deliver the core purposes of a Moravian Church School.

Yours etc.

Br John Kilner
Coronation Avenue, Bath

Bedford Queens Park

Due to COVID, infirmity and mental health issues over the past two years, four of our regular attenders are unable to come to church. Our minister, Br Edwin Quildan gives us regular updates as to how they are coping and they are still an important part of our fellowship here. Looking on the positive side Br Eric Moore's niece has been worshipping

with us with her husband and three children. Her mother has also been coming to join us in fellowship. The questionnaire that was filled in about services has resulted in a tweak with three choruses being sung and a song with actions to involve the children who take part in the service.

Br Eric Moore

Fulneck, Yorkshire

Whilst there is plenty of winter still to come, the arrival of snowdrops and lengthening evenings suggests that spring is on its way. So, an apt time to reflect on a busy autumn and winter for our congregation.

As summer 2021 drew to a close it was time to open a new chapter in our history, adding James Woolford to the list of Fulneck ministers stretching back to 1746, along with Annette, Edward and Charlotte they've quickly settled in. Having a minister that can do conjuring tricks as part of his sermon is probably a first since 1746.

Hot on the heels of James' arrival was Heritage Day, this year focusing on food. Remembrance Day was honoured with readings and the last post all delivered by Fulneck School pupils. As the final months of 2021 were ticked off, further Covid restrictions were lifted, allowing the Drama Group back on stage for the first time in 18 months.



© Br Dave Robbins

They opened with a revival of a Somerset Maugham play, 'Home & Beauty', which was well received.

Regular organ recitals recommenced during the autumn when we welcomed firstly Dr Gordon Stewart and then Paul Tidd.

December saw Fulneck welcome guests to its Christmas Tree Festival. There were also window displays in houses around the settlement depicting scenes from the Nativity story. Carol singing 'al fresco' took place during the week before Christmas and there was a return for our hugely popular Christmas Eve Christingle Service. Our Watch Night Service saw us welcome in 2022 with hopes and prayers for a return to a more normal Church life.

As these notes are written, along with the first thoughts of spring, comes the start of Lent and the excitement of the build up to the Easter season.

Br Dave Robbins

What is Fun Faith Boxes?

Fun Faith Boxes is a newly developed postal box delivery service aimed at helping families bring their faith more alive at home.

Designed by Moravians Sr Laura Wood and Sr Claire Maxwell, who developed this family business based on their observations within work contexts as well as conversations with friends. It became clear that there was a distinct need for families to find easy ready-made resources to help grow their faith together at home. Currently, in the U.K., there is no other box scheme like this.

What is in a box?

Within each box is a booklet full of resources and a box containing all the main items needed to engage in the monthly baking and crafting activities. Every box, also, contains an outdoor activity or challenge as well

as a prayer pack each month to help provide a focus for family prayer time. Our Fun Faith Boxes are themed on relatable topics taking into account the church calendar and time of year. In the booklet is a reflection on a Biblical passage which forms the basis of the theme that month.

How might I order one?

Each month the boxes can be ordered as a single one-off item or as a monthly subscription. All boxes ordered by the 15th of the month will be delivered in time for the beginning of the next one.

We strongly believe in the value of families leading their own faith development and hope that this box simply empowers parents and guardians as well as those they care for to learn more of God.

Lol & Claire



For more information go to:

www.funfaithboxes.com

Instagram @funfaithboxes

Facebook @funfaithboxes

From Church House

Synod Proposals

A reminder that proposals for Synod 2022 which affect the Book of Order need to be submitted to the Provincial Board by the 15th of April. If you aren't sure if this applies please contact the Provincial Board as soon as possible so that you do not miss the deadline.

Br Nagendra Pradhan (1952-2022)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Br Nagendra Pradhan on 19th February.

While filled with sorrow, we will also rejoice that he has gone to be with the Lord after a life well lived in His Service. We give thanks for the impact he had on his family, his community, and as a pioneer in the Moravian Church. Under his leadership, the Moravian Church in Nepal was established. Ministry continues to grow in three congregations that serve their communities across the wider Kathmandu area, and we look forward to seeing the legacy that he left with us develop into the future.

We are holding his wife, Sr Kameleshwori, their son, Br Joshua and the whole family in our prayers.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Sr Roberta Hoey

On Behalf of the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church.

Provincial Diary for April

11	Moravian Union AGM
27-28	Provincial Board

Congregational Register

Baptism

13th Feb 2022	Aaron James Barraclough	Lower Wyke
20th Feb 2022	Willow Catherine-Margaret Corsby	Gracehill

Death

7th Oct 2021	Elizabeth (Betty) Hooper	Wellhouse
5th Jan 2022	David Harold Mitchel	Fairfield
12th Jan 2022	William (Billy) Hoey	Belfast University Road
26th Jan 2022	Susan Stonehewer	Fairfield

Notices

'Travelling with the Lord': Ockbrook Retreat, 20th-22nd May 2022

The Moravian Pilgrimage Committee would like to remind you about the Retreat that has been planned for the 20th-22nd May at Ockbrook Moravian Church.

Places are still available, and we would be delighted to have you with us for this special event. The Retreat will include times of reflection, creativity, worship, gentle walks and will be an opportunity to gather together after having had to spend so much time apart recently.

The cost will be £50, which will include food and the accommodation will be provided on the Settlement, although it would be possible to stay in a local hotel and take a full part.

If you are interested in attending then please contact Br Paul M Holdsworth at paul.holdsworth@moravian.org.uk

MWA (Moravian Women's Association) Day 2022

On 30th April 2022 at 2pm, the 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 Carol Ackah has agreed to be our speaker using our current theme of 'Dreams and Visions'. 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 email your email address to gillian.taylor@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 Gillian Taylor
President of the MWA

29-31	Passion Week Readings
2	Ramadan begins - Muslim
10	Palm Sunday
15	Good Friday
16	First Day of Passover - Jewish
17	Easter Sunday
18	Easter Monday
23	St George's Day Last day of Passover
24	Orthodox Easter - Orthodox
28	International Workers' Memorial Day (http://28april.org/) Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power/Destiny) - Muslim

Dates to remember!



The old Moravian Church at Salem
© Moravian Church Archives

Salem Moravian Church

In 1823 Mr Jon Lees who was a member at Fairfield but lived in the Oldham area rented a room in Clarksfield where services were held. In 1824 he built the church in Lees Road with a school for boys at one end and for girls at the other and it was opened on 29th June 1824. A minister was appointed, Br John Smith, in 1827, and one of the schools became a manse. However, it was still under Fairfield until it became an independent congregation in 1836. The first Sunday school was built in 1826 and a new built in 1854. Purchases of land were made in 1854 and 1875, including where the present School is situated.

In 1958 the demolition of the church began due to dry rot and was completed in 1960, along with the manse. Another house was purchased on Lees Road as a manse, which was subsequently demolished by the council and another house was purchased on Wren Street.

In 1901, the Boys Brigade Company was founded and later the Girls Life Brigade, which was reformed in 1975 as the Girls Brigade and which finished in the 1990s, followed by the Boys Brigade in 2002. The present Sunday School Building was built in 1938, although it is now used mainly as a Pre-school, and became dual-purpose, holding Sunday services, after the

demolition of the church until the new church behind the Sunday School was completed in 1968, after much fundraising. The land where the original church had stood was sold to Oldham

Council to help pay for the new Church, although it has since been re-purchased. Land at the rear of the property was sold, and an estate of eight houses built, one of which was purchased as a new manse.

There was a period of stability until the student minister Br Pugh left in 1983. The ministry was combined with Westwood in 1985 when Br Cooper came for the first of his two periods at Salem and there was no need for a manse and so the new manse on Cennick Close was sold. The congregation has continued as

a combined ministry except for a period of six years when we had Br Evans as a part-time minister. Since Br Martin Smith retired last September we have been in interregnum, and hopeful that we will get a new minister later this year.

Services are held fortnightly, and we have resumed our monthly MWA meetings on a Monday and have a Fairtrade stall once a month.

Sr Anne Broadbent



Interior of the Moravian Church at Salem
© Salem Moravian Church

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