

moravian messenger

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Grand Market Shock

It was never in my DNA to shop early for Christmas, for that is how it is for most people in Jamaica. People in Jamaica tend to leave shopping for Christmas Eve, which we call Grand Market. Some people send Christmas cards via the post, but most neither send nor receive. There are lights and Christmas trees but not for most people. There are Christmas carols, traditional and new. There is talk about Santa Claus but he's only decorative; children know their gifts are from their parents. People give and receive gifts, and get new things for

themselves, including new shoes and clothes to go to Church at Christmas or to show off at their family dinners on Christmas Day. Whatever they get they tend to wait to get it at the Grand Market.

Grand Market has a long history in Jamaica, going back to the period of enslavement. Enslaved people had very little time for themselves. During the Christmas season they had two main days off - Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This means that all activities related to Christmas were done on Christmas Eve. That is why it was called Grand Market. The enslaved people would travel long distances from the fields to the main town. It was their free day and excitement, commerce, meeting and making

friends, and the like, mark the day. After Emancipation in 1834, the practice of Grand Market continued and is still there with some variations today.

The expectation of a Grand Market on Christmas Eve, is in the DNA of most Jamaicans. You can then imagine the shock I would get in 1999, on my first Christmas in Ireland. I was working at PC World in the run up to Christmas. I didn't know that all this time my Irish workmates had been quietly doing their Christmas shopping. I assumed that, like me, they were waiting to be given an extra hour off on Christmas Eve, so that they can go home and get dressed for the Grand Market. I was in for a shock.

In Jamaica the Grand Market really gets going around mid-afternoon on Christmas Eve and lasts until midnight. All merchants have their best sale on Christmas Eve. I can remember my first Grand Market; it was excitement galore. People were everywhere. In the shops it was congestion. With my mother we forced our way in the crowds. Everything one could imagine was on sale.

At the Grand Market, all the shops in the town are open but most of the selling takes place in the open air, on the sideways. Many people walk to-and-fro, selling their ware, calling out what they had for sale as they go. The noise is immense; there is music, people making announcement from PA systems and people shouting to be heard.

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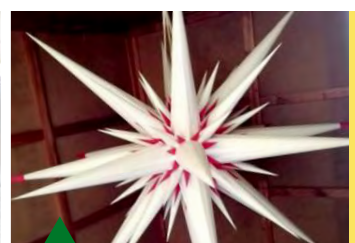
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Grand Market Shock

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The traffic is another matter: our Grand Market town was Mandeville, the capital town of the parish Manchester. In the best of times, all roads led to Mandeville but on Grand Market, everybody goes to town. It means that every road leading into the town is congested for miles. One can hear drivers tooting their horns. Drivers toot their horns, not because they are upset by the bad driving of another motorist, they toot the horn to say hello, or 'watch, I'm coming through'. They toot the horn for excitement or just because they like the sound of it or to answer another horn.

In Ireland, as in the UK, the roads may be congested but generally not noisy. However, when I left work on Christmas Eve in 1999, I saw no cars and certainly heard no noise. With my Jamaican Grand Market expectation, I assumed that the excitement was about to begin, it was only 3pm; but there was an eerie silence. Where was everyone? It was as if the rapture had come and I missed it. To make matters worse, the shops were already closing. I didn't even stop to think the fact that PC World was closing meant that all other shops were closing. I was beside myself with unbelief. I stood in the parking lot, my hand on my head, I looked around; I had not purchased even a single gift and now the shops were closing. This could not be happening, I thought, but we were not in Mandeville, and this was not the Grand Market!

Br Livingstone Thompson

Minister of Belfast University Road and
Kilwarlin Congregations



Editorial

This third Christmas since COVID began will be a bit quieter than perhaps we had all hoped for. There will be joy at the opportunity to meet together more freely following the last two years of restrictions. But I also think there will be a real fear about spending too much money on presents and food. I grieve that some families will really miss out on having a decent Christmas meal, will worry about putting on the heating and that some children will feel that Father Christmas has missed them out.

It is too easy for Church people to say that this will give us all the chance to focus on the real meaning of Christmas. Of course, God's son was born in terribly difficult circumstances in an occupied country and that has echoes for the birth of children across the world. Theologically Christmas is about the incarnation, God coming to us in human form to take on the experience of humanity and to bear our burdens and sins, ultimately to the cross. As such we could mark the birth of Jesus at any time in the year.

In truth our Christmas is a composite of the theological, the seasonal, cultural and a natural need for humans to celebrate. It is not a purely faith event, although it draws in those of deep faith, for it also includes those of other faiths and those of no faith. Families of many traditions mark Christmas in

some way or another, perhaps with a special meal, visiting families, giving and receiving presents (maybe from Santa) or just enjoying the Christmas lights and the short break from work. I remember a Sikh family in Yorkshire telling me that their house could not be the only one in the street that Santa had not visited.

Our Christmas is a unifying factor in a society that is easily fractured along ethnic, religious, linguistic, nationalistic and political lines. It is something that in a small way can help to unite us. As a Christian I long for people to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour of their lives. However, I am delighted that, even if it is only for a day or two, there is something that brings us together and that in some way our faith tradition brings joy and light into what can be a very hard world.

So, enjoy Christmas for what it is, be glad that it touches so many people and give sacrificially so that others can enjoy Christmas too. Then those of us for whom Christmas is a festival of our faith can pray that the Prince of Peace will bring peace, hope and love to our world.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



The Editorial Team wishes all our readers a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year!
Lindsey, Lorraine and Sarah

8th Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music

Call for Papers

August 16-19, 2023

This conference explores Moravian history and music from the fifteenth to twenty-first centuries in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

WORLD • HERITAGE • SITE

The Moravian communities of Bethlehem (USA), Gracehill (UK), and Herrnhut (Germany) are presently working together to join with Christiansfeld (Denmark) in becoming a multinational UNESCO World Heritage Site.

These three words give us the theme for our 2023 conference. We especially welcome proposals for individual papers, panels, or lecture recitals addressing aspects of the relationships between Moravians and the World (natural, religious, socio-economic, political, etc.), Moravian Heritage, and Moravian Sites (Sights or Cites). Each of these perspectives offers a unique way of thinking about Moravians and their interactions with others.

We also welcome papers relating to the anniversaries of composers and instrument makers.

PLEASE SUBMIT A PROPOSAL OF 300 WORDS OR LESS, accompanied by a one-page CV, by January 1, 2023, to: www.moravianconferences.org/submit-a-proposal

We encourage submissions from undergraduate students for whom there may be special panels and poster sessions.

The program committee will notify accepted applicants by February 15, 2023.

Visit our website for more information and updates:
www.moravianconferences.org

Safeguarding: IICSA

Over the last seven years you may have heard the term 'IICSA' in the news. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (<https://www.iicsa.org.uk>), led by Professor Alexis Jay, after a slightly wobbly start has finally finished. It was a response to the realisation that many children were being sexually abused and exploited because both State and non-State institutions failed to protect them.

An integral part of the work of the Inquiry was the Truth Project which gave victims and survivors the opportunity to share their experiences of child sexual abuse in an environment that is non-judgemental and safe. They also contributed their ideas for how things could be better and these suggestions were used by the inquiry when setting up their recommendations.

The Inquiry had 15 investigations into a range of institutions including the Catholic Church and the Church of England publishing their findings and recommendations over the years of the inquiry.

The final report was published in October 2022 and should have been headline news, but Liz Truss resigned as Prime Minister the

same day, so it was eclipsed by that news. It was still a major news item. This final report added a further 20 recommendations to the 87 already made. Many of these require action from the Government such as having a statutory requirement for reporting cases of allegations of child sexual abuse, the creation of a Child Protection Authority to inspect any institution working with children and the creation of a Minister for Children at cabinet level.

The inquiry has shone a light into the way organisations respond to disclosures of sexual abuse, often very poorly, and urges organisations to be aware of the indicators that a child may be being sexually abused and act immediately. Those working with children need to be aware that child sexual abuse can happen anywhere, in any community, and in all social classes and ethnic groups. Listen to what children are saying, whether with words or behaviour and report onwards so the child can get the help and support they need. Only a third of reported cases are reported by the children being abused at the time the abuse is happening. There are many reasons for this, but having adults that they trust, that

they know will believe what they are being told, that will act on the information in an appropriate way is important to encourage disclosure. As a church, where we like to think we are a safe place, full of people who care, I would like to think we can be open to disclosures. But this is about more than just the children. The culture of the church is so important. Is it a place where everyone is respected, where negative comments are discouraged, where racism and sexism doesn't exist, and safeguarding is the centre of everything the church does? Is church a place where adults can talk about child sexual abuse without embarrassment if it happened to them? The challenges are not inconsiderable, but the Moravians have never run away from a challenge, let us rise to this one.

Sr Joy Raynor
Provincial



Safeguarding Lead
<http://moravian.org.uk/provincial-life/information/safeguarding>

The Project 32 Work Plan and Current Initiatives

In this month's article I would like to highlight the current work plan and initiatives for Project 32.

The Project 32 Work Plan consists of various strands, such as, Governance, Accountability, and Communications, but also initiatives such as Stakeholder Engagement, Holy Habits, and Virtual Congregation. It is a work in progress, with additions being made to it following every meeting, but the main purpose behind it is to ensure that each strand of Project 32 mutually supports the others and that we stay on track to achieve our goals. These initiatives are jointly owned by the Project 32 Implementation Board but have an individual from this group who leads a sub-group to develop the area or idea. This sub-group is open to any member of the church to get involved in, so please do get in touch if there is something which sparks your interest!

Stakeholder Engagement Sub-Group

This sub-group is led by myself and draws on my experience of doing communications and engaging with people, primarily from when I used to work in the political world. This group has a rolling activity of analysing the church and its structures, so that we can identify which parts of the church we need to talk to and engage with in order to make progress with our goals of making the Moravian Church a sustainable and growing church. Our main task at the moment is compiling a survey to go out to all those who are involved in the church to gather views from across the province. This will help us to understand what people feel and think about the direction and changes within the British Province, and allow us to incorporate these views into our plans.

Holy Habits Sub-Group

Br Edwin Quildan has recently set up the Holy Habits Sub-Group.

Holy Habits is a course designed to help encourage Christians to develop their faith through meeting together as small groups and in church and a range of activities to support this endeavour. Some of you may remember that Holy Habits was part of the original synod resolution for Project 32, as it was seen as a good way of preparing congregations for the changes needed for us to turn our decline into growth. Congregations will have already received an initial letter from Br Edwin which includes the first Holy Habits pamphlet. I encourage everyone to get involved with this initiative, as it is a tried and tested course that both our Methodist and United Reform Church cousins have benefited from immensely. (Fun fact - Moravians from Hall Green Congregation were involved in the initial development of the Holy Habits resources, which just goes to show how pioneering we have been in the recent past!)

Virtual Congregation Sub-Group

Our newest sub-group is led by Sr Sue Groves. It has sprung from discussions about how a member would stay engaged with the Moravian Church if they were no longer part of a congregation. This group is in the early stages of development, so watch this space for exciting things to come!

Br Stephen Maxwell
Chair of the Project 32 Implementation Board.
In his day job, he is an emergency planning officer for the NHS in London, and a member of the Fetter Lane Congregation.



Ordination of Br Dimchui Rongmei in Leh, on Sunday 23rd October 2022



© Br Joachim Kreusel

My first visit to India and Nepal took place in 2013, when the Hornsey congregation sponsored my visit to this part of the world, on the occasion of my 15th anniversary at Hornsey Moravian Church. Little did I know that one year later synod would elect me a bishop, and consequently I would be much more involved in the work of the Moravian Church in South Asia. In 2016 I had the joy of visiting South Asia again, and I met five students of theology at the New Theological College in Dehradun.

At the beginning of the year 2020 I was supposed to spend several weeks in South Asia. One of the purposes was to spend a time of learning together with our student ministers. The COVID pandemic prevented me from going. Whilst it was a disappointment at the time, the bigger picture is much more positive. We soon started to meet via Zoom, and we have had very regular meetings ever since. In this way it was possible to cover much more ground than would have been possible with a direct visit only.

We came to the point at which the British Mission Board was convinced that all student ministers were ready for ordination. For some logistical reasons the decision was taken to bring the ordination of Br Dimchui forward (hence travel plans were made with short notice), with the others to follow in the near future.

Although it was the plan that I travel with at least one more member of the British Mission Board, bureaucratic issues sadly prevented this from happening. I was grateful for having local support.

Having arrived in Leh / Ladakh, where Br Dimchui is ministering (so far away from his home in Manipur!) I had the opportunity to meet with many sisters and brothers, and hopefully can meet with others soon.

I should also mention the breath-taking environment: the high mountains of the Himalayas, many of them snow-covered, always fascinating anew. What a beauty of God's creation!

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Leh church committee, the whole congregation, and everyone else I met or was connected with in Ladakh, for their warm and generous welcome, and the openness we could talk with each other.

On Sunday, 23rd October, we celebrated a joyful and memorable service at the

Moravian Church in Leh. It was a service with three parts: The baptism of the child Evanna Chamzin, the ordination of Br Dimchui as the central part of the service, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper with Br Dimchui as newly ordained minister presiding.

In my address I focused on what the apostle Paul was writing to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:1-14): Paul has experienced ups and downs in life, and he had always experienced God as the faithful one, and therefore he was faithful to God. He encouraged Timothy to trust God always, and to draw on God's Spirit: 'The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline' (verse 7). 'Power' may be a weapon of this world; it becomes a weapon of God only if it is paired with love.



Here are the questions to the ordination candidate, and the encouragement:

'Do you bring a ready mind to spend and be spent in the service of Christ and his Church? (Answer: I do.)

Do you accept the Holy Scriptures, and above all, the living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord, as giving the true revelation of God and his will towards all people? (Answer: I do.)

Is it your set will and purpose to make that revelation the substance of your teaching? (Answer: It is.)

Do you promise to work loyally with your brothers and sisters according to the principles and rules of the Moravian Church? (Answer: I do.)

May God Almighty grant that those things which you have resolved in your heart you may be enabled to perform, for the building up of his Church, for the salvation of the world, for the bringing in of his kingdom,

and to the glory of his holy name. Amen.'

And the ordination followed with the laying on of hands:

'Br Dimchui, I ordain you to be a Deacon in the Church of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.'

After the surplice and a bible (symbolising the sacraments and God speaking to people) were given to Br Dimchui, he sung the song (written by Bill Gaither):

**'Since I started for the Kingdom,
Since my life He controls,
Since I gave my heart to Jesus,
The longer I serve Him,
The sweeter He grows.'**

**The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows,
The more that I love Him, more love He bestows;
Each day is like heaven, my heart overflows,
The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.'**

**Ev'ry need He is supplying,
Plenteous grace He bestows;
Ev'ry day my way gets brighter,
The longer I serve Him,
The sweeter He grows.'**

What a witness!

The singing with the congregation was a sheer joy. Sung and spoken words comprised different languages: Urdu, Rongmei (Br Dimchui's mother tongue), Nepali and English. There is a great richness among God's people! The congregation of nearby Shey joined also in worship and celebration.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper was then led by Br Dimchui. Greetings were brought by sisters and brothers from Ladakh, and also from the UK and Germany, either written, or verbally as the whole service was attended by many people from South Asia and abroad via Zoom!

We thank God and pray that he may continue to bless his people everywhere.

Br Joachim Kreusel

Bishop of the Unity



Retired Minister's Retreat

Back row, L-R: David Newman, Hilary Smith, Martin Smith, Dilys Howard, Richard Ingham, John Wilkinson, Kathryn Woolford, Kenneth Evans. Front row, L-R: John McOwat, Robert Hopcroft, and Fred Linyard.

© Br Kenneth Evans

This was a momentous occasion for me. It was the first time that I had travelled by train since lockdown and the first time I had been invited to the retired ministers' retreat. The train journey there was something of a baptism of fire because Transport for Wales had cancelled two trains to Crewe and jammed the passengers onto two coaches, so it was packed! I didn't even have space to take my backpack off, but everyone was very helpful. I was glad to see Br Peter Gubi's smiling face on the platform at Crewe.

The Oblate Retreat Centre is beautiful, a historic, rambling building conveniently done up for visitors, so I had a lift up to my room and an en suite suitable for my disability. I never did work out the heating in my room but didn't need it as the weather was warm for the time of the year. It was soon time for the evening meal, and I happened to be at a table with three other women. We shared particular challenges that a wife might encounter in ministry, which Sr Roberta Hoey found interesting. This sharing at meals continued throughout the week, as I sat with different people and learned their journeys through life.

Sr Roberta spoke to us after the meal about the Provincial Board report that had been presented at district conferences, which some of us had attended. She filled us in on further details and background, answering questions at the end. Sr Kathryn led prayers every morning after breakfast with a hymn and set liturgy, a good start to the day. The food was excellent, catering for our needs, including gluten, lactose and sugar-free diets.

Br Bob Hopcroft set out our timetable for the week and spoke to us about Elim, and we began with shared experiences, centred on mementos which we had brought with us. Amongst the mementos shared were dolls from Ladakh and Labrador, crosses, carvings, musical instruments, clothing and many photographs, which provided a challenge to Br Bob, as they came in the form of slides, and digital photos on various devices. He coped admirably.

I personally found it most interesting, as those present had served the Moravian Church as missionaries all over the world and were able to share their experiences when they had been to the same place at different times. Being a comparatively new Moravian of 12 year's standing, I felt more and more part of our worldwide Unity. I found the sharing on Africa interesting, specifically Tanzania, where my husband spent a year as a boy, and Elim, which is near Hermanus, where my Welsh grandfather built a house and retired, as did my father. We spent many

happy holidays there, and even tried to retire there ourselves, unsuccessfully. I could also exchange experiences with Br Martin Smith who came to serve the Moravian Church from the URC and also gave a husband's perspective on sharing ministry with his ordained wife.

Inevitably, the time allocated to 'Mementos' was inadequate, so we continued after our talk on Safeguarding, presented by Sr Joy Raynor, and also after the evening meal. She reinforced the message to recognise, respond, record and refer in some detail and answered questions. Br Bob also fitted in evening prayers each evening as he could in the packed programme. In true Moravian fashion we always sang a hymn!

On Wednesday, we were fascinated to know what 'Dragon or Treasure?' meant. This was the title of Br Peter Gubi's talk, magnificently illustrated by pictures. We were challenged with the thought that the treasure of Christian faith as presented for instance as salvation, life after death and wisdom, could sometimes be a dragon. For example, bad things do happen to good people, so taking the parable of the mustard seed literally can lead to the heresy that these bad things are caused by lack of faith.

Br Peter then presented us with his 'angels', maintaining anonymity, as we all did when sharing. Cases illustrated rejection by a church when offering talents as an example. One question was how far we challenge or accept another's beliefs, it being important to begin where the person is at in his or her faith. Healing is of body, mind, and spirit, and we may feel that God is testing us, but brings good out of evil. We also learned of other problems that can arise in counselling.

We had free time on Wednesday afternoon so some of us explored the grounds, which are beautiful. Br David Newman ran a quiz after our last evening meal, when we were joined by Br Peter Gubi Sr. He and I were in the same team, and I don't think he was very impressed with our performance, as we came last! Br Bob and Sr Katherine gave us Holy Communion before bedtime.

There was the usual rush around the next morning as we packed, stripped our beds, said our farewells and prepared for departure. We were truly blessed by our time together and I am glad to say that my return journey was uncrowded.

Sr Dilys Howard

Leominster



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Unity Archivists Conference October 2022 in Herrnhut, Germany

'Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past' (Deuteronomy 32,7). This was part of the opening line of the statement produced at the end of the Unity Archivists Conference held in Herrnhut, Germany, this year from 10th-17th October 2022.

One of the resolutions passed at the Unity Synod in 2016 was regarding the Unity and Provincial archives of the Moravian Church. Specifically, it was resolved that the importance of not only the Unity but Provincial archives be recognised, that proper arrangements for the safekeeping of archives be in place, local and international funds should be sought to this end and the relationship between the Unity and Provincial archives be considered.

As a result, a Unity Conference of Archivists was planned with the purpose of furthering the above aims. Myself, Jackie Neill and Lorraine Parsons attended: Lorraine as the archivist for the British Province and Jackie and myself as observers.

We were grateful for all the assistance in planning our visit given by Unity archivist Claudia Mai who was meticulous in co-ordinating and corresponding. As a result, the whole conference ran very smoothly over the week and our travel arrangements too thankfully. Archivists and representatives from Provinces throughout the Unity attended: Czech, Surinam, Tanzania Southern and South Western, Malawi, both American Provinces (Northern and Southern along with the Moravian Music Foundation), Jamaica and Cayman Islands, Labrador and Newfoundland, European Continental Province and our own British Province were all represented. Travel from all over the globe has its problems and sadly the representative from South Africa had visa problems and was unable to attend. On the return journey those from Labrador were delayed several days getting home due to bad weather on the last leg of their journey. We had thought our travel arrangements were challenging enough but they were nothing compared to many of the other attendees!

Delegates arrived at the Komenský guest and conference centre throughout Monday and after dinner and an official, warm welcome from the conference organisers,

we enjoyed some specially chosen musical items and refreshments to follow. The most enjoyable process of renewing friendships and beginning new ones was underway.

A full schedule was planned for each day: we worked hard but also had the opportunity to experience the special beauty and atmosphere of Herrnhut and its environs, including a walk to Berthelsdorf in wonderful autumn sunshine to visit the Zinzendorf Manor House and the Lutheran church. Magical! We also had a very interesting tour of the Star Factory and the special exhibition for the 300th Anniversary of Herrnhut displayed in the Ethnological Museum. Jackie and I sadly missed the sculpture trail because of the timing of our flights home but all the more reason to return in the future.



Olaf Nippe gave a very comprehensive presentation and tour of the Unity Archive in Herrnhut and later Rev Dr Jørgen Bøytler spoke about the relevance of World Heritage. A workshop on preservation and conservation followed and a visit to the church sanctuary and Unity exhibition ended the first full day. This was led by Sr Erdmute Franke who managed to involve everyone in a light-hearted but effective re-telling of the story of the renewed church (just when we thought our day's work was done!).

Over the course of the conference we were able to hear presentations from each province about its archives and discuss and consider all aspects currently relevant to the keeping of archives and specifically in the Moravian Church. We were able to have very useful discussions about what we want to achieve by having an archive, what is unique about the collection, who will use it and how, community support, use of technology and digitisation, websites and the many practical considerations such as

location, physical space, cataloguing, environment, protection and preservation, statutory regulations, ownership and legal aspects, and last but not least financial support.

Similar challenges are faced in each province but also unique problems: for example, in the Tanzanian provinces the climate conditions are especially challenging as there is much variation and at times high temperatures and humidity, something that the more Northerly provinces do not have to deal with. There is a wide variation too in the stages of development of Provincial archives depending on the age and period of time over which archive material has been gathered and how it has been kept, the availability of suitable accommodation, funding and so on.

The conference was, I felt, wholly successful and a great step forward in achieving the aims set out at Unity Synod. Attendees gained and shared knowledge about practical aspects of the effective keeping of an archive. Our conference statement recognised the significance of Moravian archival records not only for our own church but also globally and that a definition of archives would be a useful addition to the Church Order of Unitas Fratrum.

A commitment was made to work together for the benefit of Provincial archives throughout the Unity by increased collaboration and communication. It is planned that archive committees be established in Provinces and a Unity website is being developed for Provincial archivists for sharing of resources and information. A proposal to establish a unity archive committee will also be forwarded for consideration at the next Unity Synod. There is always much to be done but the conference was a great encouragement on the journey and the friendships established and renewed there bring joy to the job!

Personally, I found it a great pleasure and privilege to be able to meet archivists from across the Unity and learn more not only about the archives but the Provinces themselves. The archives not only detail our heritage but are a rich resource for our future.

Sr Sally Ann Johnston
Gracehill

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Br Paul Holdsworth

Br Paul Holdsworth is a Moravian Minister currently serving on the Provincial Board and two congregations in the Western District. In February he will be moving to serve congregations in the Lancashire District.

Introduction to your background, early years, education

I was born in Bradford and brought up near Lower Wyke Moravian Church where my grandparents and parents worshipped. I was educated at Fulneck Boys' School, then I achieved a law degree in Leicester and a theology degree in Manchester.

How and when did you come to faith?

My family encouraged me to go to Sunday School and family services at our church and so I cannot remember a time when church worship and activities were not a part of my life. I was never happier than when I was out carol singing around Lower Wyke or on stage performing in the pantomimes in the Sunday School.

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

Attending Moravia of 1987 in Prague had a major impact on me. Meeting Moravians from all over the world there set the course for the rest of my life. When thinking about career choices I realised that there were no candidates in training for Moravian ministry in England. It occurred to me that there was no point in hoping that someone else would put themselves forward to serve if I was not prepared to do so myself. After prayerful and careful consideration, I offered myself for ministerial training and, much to my surprise, I was accepted. The rest has been a continuing journey of faith and service, learning as I go and trying to serve the Lord in the best way that I can.

What has been your greatest joy in ministry?

Pastoral care: visiting people and being with them, especially in times of great emotion and need. It is a great privilege and a great responsibility to be accepted by people, even though you are not necessarily a family member or a friend. You are there for them and they let you into their lives. I have always enjoyed youth work within the Church. This does, of course, include an aspect of pastoral care, but this is mixed with the wonderful reward that comes with helping to nurture young lives and walking with them on their journeys of faith.

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

My wife Patsy bought me a T-Shirt with Mr Grumpy on the front, and I think that it makes a very salient point about me ... yes, I get angry, and sometimes with God. And the circumstances range from the serious, such as the loss of loved ones, to the ridiculous, for instance why did He turn that traffic light from green to red against me!!

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?

No, I am not afraid of death. Maybe the way I die, but not death itself. When my mother, Carol, died, she was in a lot of pain and endured a great deal of suffering, but was never afraid. Her faith brought her the strength and courage that she needed, and I can only hope that I can face death like she did. I believe in resurrection and eternal life in heaven, but I have no idea what it will be like. If pressed, I hope it's like Derwent Water in the Lake District!

What can we learn from other Churches and other faiths?

A huge amount. We don't have to be like others, or change to suit them, but we can show our respect to people of other denominations and faiths. We spend far too much time and energy working on what divides us when we really should be basing what we do on what we have in common. This way we can value each other and then work together for the betterment of everyone.

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

There are too many distractions these days, and Sundays are no longer a sacred, special day. In addition to this the Christian Church worldwide has not done itself any favours by the infighting on various issues and focusing on the few things that divide us rather than the vast amount of things that unite us, such as the overarching Love of God for us all.

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

Favourite Music:

Pop: Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark and Madness. More Classical: Gilbert and Sullivan, and Mozart - just because they are all great and have inspired me to write music myself.

Favourite Book:

Rivals by Jilly Cooper. Strange, I know, but there are some great story lines in there and it also taught me a lot about having a dyslexic partner.

Favourite Film:

The Shawshank Redemption, because it's an excellent story with so many themes, such as justice and revenge, hope and despair and even life and death itself.

The place where you feel closest to God?

On the top of a mountain, preferably Blencathra in the northern Lake District, on a dry, clear day, with a lovely of Keswick, Derwent Water and Borrowdale.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

He never gave up!

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

Regrets: failing to complete the British Three Peak Challenge when I was sick on Mount Snowdon at the very end. Joys: the fact that Patsy still puts up with me after all these years.



Report on the Lancashire District Conference Autumn Meeting

The meeting was held via Zoom on the morning of Saturday 8th October, and opening prayers were led by Br Peter Gubi.

As our Chairman of the Lancashire District, Br Philip Cooper, had now left to join the sunnier(?) climes of Yorkshire, Br Livingstone Thompson willingly stepped in as Chair. The position of this vacancy was discussed and Sr Janet Warr had previously agreed to take up this role again if nobody else was found. A ballot will be held at the next meeting in March 2023 to find a new Chair.

After receiving the news from the PEC given by Br Livingstone Thompson, it was time to discuss each of the church's reports from the district. We are sad to report that Salem church held its final service on 21st August although the closing service was a wonderful occasion. Some of the Salem members had transferred to the Royton church with two members attending the Dukinfield church. They now have a regular morning attendance of around 24 people. They have been struggling with their period of interregnum for over twelve months and were hoping that a new minister could be found to work with Royton.

A similar situation exists with the Fairfield church since the departure of Br Cooper, and they too are looking forward to

welcoming a new minister. Br Cooper conducted 17 infant baptisms, two confirmations, three weddings and ten funerals up to the date of his departure. However, there are no baptisms or weddings taking place because of the interregnum and a large backlog is developing. Weekly worship is being conducted by volunteers and Fairfield's membership is 72.

The report from Dukinfield was given by Br Gubi and he began by saying what a strange six months it had been, due to COVID. The solar panels are working well after almost 12 months since installation, but we have yet to assess their effectiveness during the heaviest quarters. Growth in membership is one of the biggest concerns of this congregation and they are continually looking at ways to attract new people.

The Treasurer's Report showed very little movement in finances due to lack of district events.

The Youth Representative offered no report and she advised that she wished to step down due to work commitments. We will try to identify a replacement within the district who could take on this important work. The job description of such a role

would include:

1. To interact with the Provincial Youth Committee.
2. To initiate youth work in the district.
3. To report the activities at the District Conference in October of each year.

In the Report of the Greater Manchester Churches Together, Sr Warr had advised that as our district comprises only three churches, not four, that we will no longer be able to be on the President's Committee. Sr Warr will obtain clarification on this shortly,

A Safeguarding Officer for the District had not yet been nominated but this subject will be worked on until a replacement is found.

Br Gubi will extend the Ministerial Staffing and Worship cover until the end of January, by which time it is hoped the period of interregnum will no longer exist.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with a blessing by Br Richard Ingham.

The date of the next meeting will be Saturday 11th March on Zoom.

Sr Sue Selby

Eastern District Conference (EDC) Autumn Report October 2022

Br Edwin Quildan welcomed everyone to Harlesden and opened the conference with devotions and the Moravian Watchword.

The Minutes of the previous EDC were read and accepted as a true record.

Elections

Sr Christine Emanuel was elected as the District Chairperson.

Sr Susan Quildan-Foreman as Minute Secretary.

Sr Minette Flemmings for the Prayer Watch.

A representative was identified as the Youth Representative (to be confirmed).

Provincial and Unity Information

The Provincial information was presented by Br Michael Newman, which included, the Moravian Church's response by letter to the death of the Queen and the accession to the throne of King Charles III. Synod 2022 was a great success and details of the new Provincial Board was

acknowledged. Sr Christine Emanuel was ordained in March at Hornsey.

Summer Camp 2022

Due to the small booking numbers in 2022, Summer Camp was cancelled. Summer Camp 2023 will take place at 'The Chellingham Centre', Bedfordshire, from 31 July to 4 August 2023.

Congregation reports

Bedford - there are seven members, four adherents, and three children. They celebrated the Queens Jubilee in June.

Fetter Lane - a gathered congregation with sixteen adults and nine children. Post COVID there has now been an up-turn in attendance. A regular bible study takes place on Mondays.

Harlesden - there are ninety-four members and adherents. Seven children on the Sunday School roll. There is a house group meeting regularly and a bible study.

Harold Road - the membership is thirteen.

There are two young people at Harold Road who make regular contributions to the service. Worship starts at 9.30am. Members are committed and attend at this time.

Hornsey - the number of members at Hornsey is now sixty, as three members have been called home. There were four other funerals in church and they had three infant baptisms. They are planning to run a membership course in the autumn.

District Safeguarding Policy

The district safeguarding policy was presented and accepted by EDC.

District Fellowship Day

A district Fellowship Day will be planned for June 2023 at Fetter Lane.

Close:

Everyone was thanked for attending EDC and the Conference was closed with prayers and the grace.

Sr Susan Quildan-Foreman



Moravian star in the church at Jablonec, Czechia



Giant Moravian star, in its storage box in the church in Niesky, Germany

Moravian stars lit us on our pilgrim journey

The Moravian star hangs from a building along the main road into the centre of Herrnhut and was a welcome sight as our group of pilgrims of September 2022 reached Herrnhut late in the night, having driven 160 miles from Berlin airport, where we had met to begin our pilgrimage. Along the motorway our headlights had lit upon brown tourist signs, which feature the Moravian star, church and Altan tower, guiding our way as we drew nearer to Herrnhut. The Moravian stars shine in the darkness, their message a sign of God's presence, and that Jesus has come as light into the world.

In Herrnhut we spent some time at the visitors' centre of Herrnhuter Sterne Ltd, the company which has been producing

Moravian stars for more than 120 years. We saw the display workshops, and could watch a film about the production, development and history of the stars. A rich selection of stars in many colours and sizes is on display at the centre - something for every taste to admire and purchase if we wished. We learnt that handcrafting of Herrnhut stars began as early as 1773 in the boarding schools in Niesky and Kleinwelka, taken up in geometry lessons to brighten the dark days of advent for the pupils, many of whose parents were serving in the mission fields.

In Niesky we saw the giant historical Moravian star, built in 1925 and restored for the turn of the millennium, measuring two metres in width with 145 points in

three different sizes, the longest measuring 80 centimetres. Because of its size it is stored away in the church over the summer. The star was very impressive and gave some food for thought whether something similar could be built for one of our churches back home. In many Moravian churches small groups come together in the time before Christmas to build the stars, which are often works of art with over 100 points.

We saw Moravian stars in many different locations on our pilgrimage, of many sizes and colours. Whatever the size, colour or location, may the light of the Moravian stars shine in the darkness and in your hearts now, at Christmas and always.

Sr Barbara Skiba Royton



Christmas Eve - Christmas Morn in the 1950s

Traditionally every year, the Scouts at Wheler Street organised a Christmas Eve Dance and Social Evening in 'The Tin Hut' (the original church building). Accomplished pianist Mrs Bradley, mother of Br George, would provide entertaining music for the whole evening by playing, without sheet music, popular tunes to dance to, whether it be a waltz, quickstep, tango or the cha cha cha. Refreshments were served, usually meat and potato pie, generously supplied free of charge by the local bakery, Bostocks.

The socialising always ended promptly at quarter-to-twelve, which gave members of the Youth Fellowship Group, and a few other members of the congregation, time to

change into warm winter clothing before gathering at the front of the church in time for midnight. Issued with Christmas Carol Song Sheets, we began Christmas Day with a loud rendering of 'Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn' followed by 'Hark the Herald Angels sing' and a few more well-known carols.

Then a tour of the local Openshaw area. Singing carols on street corners under our own torch light. Later to receive compliments and thanks from local residents.

After which, with a few stops in between, we headed for Fairfield where we were greeted by the warm glow from Advent Stars in the windows of most of the houses in the Square. It would now be about 2.30am.

Another loud rendering of 'Christians Awake' and 'O Come All Ye Faithful' usually resulted in the group being invited to take refreshment at the home of one of our church members. Hot drinks and mince pies were always welcome.

With a few more stops on the way, we headed back to Openshaw, finishing the tour where we started, on the steps of Wheler Street Moravian Church about four in the morning. Enough time to refresh before attending the Christmas Morning Service.

Oh, how times have changed as the years rolled by.

The Wheler Street Church is now closed but the memories linger on.

Br John Stelfox



Irish District Conference (IDC) Autumn Report

The Irish District Conference was held on a sunny October Saturday when representatives of the five churches gathered at Cliftonville to discuss all things district.

Top of the agenda was our upcoming district service on the 20th November to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Herrnhut. This is to take place at Gracehill with all the other congregations attending.

There was a lengthy discussion on the

success of the Irish District BBQ with over 80 attending and also the visit to the former Moravian church at Gracefield where 29 attended the 'Field trip' of our district heritage and history society.

A date for the Dublin Fellowship Christingle was agreed as Sunday 4th December at 3pm.

An interesting debate took place on the current political situation in Northern Ireland especially in respect of the legacy to the troubles bill passing through Parliament which is causing lots of debate

in churches.

The conference also included its usual work in respect of the board, youth and congregation reports with an agreement to look again at the district youth worker plans which had been put on ice due to the pandemic.

The district remains vibrant and our treasurer produced the district accounts which had been audited and were in great shape.

Br Mark Kernohan

Ruth Strong, Writer and Church Historian

Over a quarter of a century ago, in 1996, Fulneck Moravian Church celebrated its 250th anniversary. To mark this milestone in our history, a meeting of all the Church societies was convened to discuss what each one was going to do. I represented the Drama Group. At the meeting I had one of those moments that one rather regrets afterwards. My plan for the Drama Group was, using Congregation archive material, to write and direct a strolling play telling the story of the origins of Fulneck settlement, re-enacting events recorded in the congregation archives in the places they may have actually happened.

Everyone at the meeting loved the idea. So did I. Until the reality of how I was actually going to do this dawned. The congregation archives are immense and dense. At the time I was a working writer, in full-time employment. I was also heavily involved in the Drama Group with a couple of productions lined up before even considering 1746 and all that.

Time to page the oracle - Fulneck's historian of the time - the late, great and much missed, Margaret (Paddy) Connor. I shared my predicament with Paddy who listened and then disappeared into her writing room, returning with a slim volume entitled 'The Moravians and Fulneck' by Ruth Strong. 'There's everything you need in here. Add some of your own imagination to the stories and you'll be fine', said Paddy reassuringly.

Ruth Strong's slim volume was a pearl beyond price. Alongside recounting the simple timeline of events, using her research from the vast archive, Ruth had spotted interesting stories about our Moravian forbears. Stories that were ideal for dramatisation. There was the miracle healing of Charles Nelson, Fulneck's organist, the wayward Dellamotte sisters and much much more.

The plays were performed in the summer of 1996 and were covered by BBC Look North on TV. The story was even picked up by the BBC World Service and was heard by a friend of one of the cast whilst he was jogging on a beach in Greece. The weather was kind for our outdoor performances and audience numbers excellent, all enjoying the ambience and beauty of



© Bridget Strong

Fulneck Settlement.

All of which is a long preamble, but I feel, a fitting tribute to another Church historian, Ruth Strong, without whose research I simply couldn't have achieved my vision. Ruth, a member of the Fulneck Congregation, died on 24th January 2022 at the age of 96. A memorial service was held in Church for her in March.

Despite a late start to her career - she only started writing in her late 40s - Ruth was an outstanding writer and local historian. She went on to have 16 books published about the history of Pudsey - one tracing the story of Fulneck Girls School. Another, 'Pudsey Pubs', published in 2002, was quite a feat. For her research, Ruth - a teetotal, lone woman - visited every pub in Pudsey. It was also exceptionally timely, so many Pudsey pubs have disappeared over the following two decades. She was also a regular contributor to the Moravian Historical Magazine.

Ruth's all important early years of education were at Fulneck. For many years she lived just over the hill from the settlement and was a regular attendee at Church. She had a strong sense of responsibility to share her knowledge with others, helping raise the profile of Fulneck and the Moravians. She did this despite the fact that it wasn't in her nature to push herself forward. Ruth was the archivist for the Girls' School and a volunteer at Fulneck Museum.

Fulneck and the church were in her blood and the Moravian ethos chimed with her temperament. She became a member in the 1980s and valued being part of the community and the Fulneck friendships she forged. Her favourite service was Lovefeast.

Her own archive has now passed into Pudsey Civic Society's care, housed in the Town Hall and will be known as the Ruth Strong Collection. She leaves three daughters, a daughter in law, seven grandchildren, six great grandchildren and many, many friends and colleagues.

Br David Robbins
Fulneck

Bath (Weston)

The news of the Queen's passing was such a shock to the whole world. We had seen her two days before greeting the new Prime Minister. The promise she made to serve her country until her death was maintained to the very end. God bless her! I still can't believe she has gone!

The Sunday service after the Queens passing was a joint one with our friends from the Methodist church. Our Minister Br Paul Holdsworth took the service. An Officer of the Boys' Brigade (BB) played the last post and a minute's silence was held. A black ribbon was placed on the top of the BB flag. The service was based around the Queen and Paddington Bear.

We held our Harvest Supper on Saturday 1st October: the churches in the district were also invited and 45 people enjoyed the supper with a glass of wine or two, and of course soft drinks were available too. Br Paul's Kingswood Community choir entertained us, plus we had community singing with well-known songs. It was so nice seeing everyone enjoying themselves, it makes it all worthwhile!

Our Harvest Service was on the following Sunday 2nd October, this was led by Br Paul, and the harvest charity was for Water Aid this year.



© Sr Jacqui Naish

About every three months we hold a family night which is organised by the BB and a few members from church. It's an event for families with school age children, both the church and the hall are used for this. Food and drinks are available, for which there is no charge, but we do have a donation basket which is used!!! These nights are very popular!

Christingle service this year will hopefully be back to pre-COVID times. Lighted candles in oranges have been asked for. We have not discussed what is planned for the children to participate in yet!

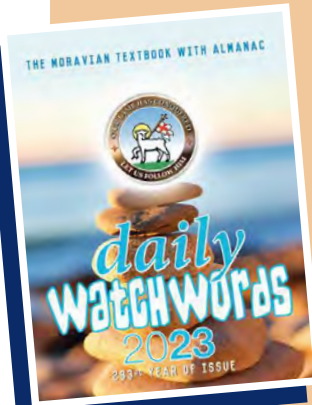
With blessings,

Sr Carole Young

Dublin Moravian Fellowship, Republic of Ireland

The Dublin Moravian Fellowship will hold its annual Christingle service on Sunday 4th December 2022 at 3pm at Dundrum Methodist Church, Ballinteer Road, South Dublin (Jct 13 M50) all welcome.

Notices



Daily Watchwords

The Daily Watchwords for 2022 have now arrived at Church House and are available to order. The cost per Watchword remains at £6.50, but please be aware that postage costs could be higher than in previous years. This is out of our control.

We will endeavour to deliver as many as possible via what many of us know as 'Moravian Mail', i.e., when someone visits Church House or when a member of the Provincial Board is in a particular part of the Province.

Please submit your order to Sr Gladys Korsah in the Bookroom at: gladys.korsah@moravian.org.uk.

Fairfield Calendar 2023

The Fairfield calendar for 2023 is now available to purchase for £5.50 plus £1.50 postage and packing by contacting Sr Janet Warr via email at: jwarr@uwclub.net. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Sr Warr.

Summer Camp 2023

...will be held at
The Chellington Centre, Bedford
(<https://www.chellington.org/>)
31st July - 4th August
- more details to follow.

The PYCC will be organising this and details of the age range and cost will be sent out after the first PYCC meeting in September.



From Church House

Christmas

Church House will be closed from 1pm on 23rd December 2022 and will reopen on 4th January 2023. The Provincial Board and staff at Church House would like to take this opportunity to wish you a joyous Christmas season!

Calls

As we look to the New Year, we can also confirm a series of Calls that will soon take place across the province.

Sr Claire Maxwell has received and accepted a Call to serve the Horton and Lower Wyke congregations in the Yorkshire District. The Call will begin on Monday 23rd January 2023.

Br Paul and Sr Patsy Holdsworth have received and accepted Calls to serve the Lancashire District. Their Calls will start on Monday 13th February 2023.

The Provincial Board has also approved a sabbatical for Br Peter Gubi which will start in February 2023.

We hold all these congregations in prayer and further announcements on future ministry provision at Fetter Lane and the Western District will be made in due course.

Provincial Diary for December

14-15 Provincial Board Meeting Church House

Congregational Register

Receptions

5th Nov 2022	Margaret Dickinson	Dukinfield
5th Nov 2022	Keith Dickinson	Dukinfield

Deaths

14th Sept 2022	Peter Fitch	Bath (Weston)
25th Sept 2022	David Burford	Bath (Weston)
18th Oct 2022	Ron Brooks	Royton
14th Oct 2022	Joan Frost	Royton

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/)
18-26	Hanukkah - Jewish
21	Winter Solstice
25	Christmas Day
31	New Year's Eve / Watchnight

Dates to remember!

Swindon Moravian Church

The church building in Dixon Street, built in the late 1800s was originally built for the Presbyterians, but was soon outgrown by them and after building a larger church close by, they put the original up for sale. The Moravians purchased the building for £800 (plus £25 for the benches and fittings). Moravians were arriving in Swindon from Malmesbury, Tytherton, Bath and Brockweir, looking for jobs in the then thriving railway works.

The church officially opened on 10th September 1899 - a service and celebration followed by the Lord's supper. The first minister, Rev Hugh Mellows, regularly visited the local community and the congregation began to grow. A small Sunday school room attached to the church, soon became too small for the growing number of children. The three terraced houses adjacent to the church were purchased and a large hall of corrugated iron erected across the bottom of the gardens. This new, much larger hall was built at the turn of the century by volunteers (mainly GWR workers). The men would finish their shift at 5.30 and start working on the building of the hall. Mr Tydeman, a local builder and a member of the church, supplied the materials at cost. The Sunday school continued to grow (many children from the Presbyterian church had stayed) and classes were held twice on a Sunday.

The children enjoyed the church anniversary each year, with the girls proudly wearing their new, usually homemade, hats and dresses. The highlight though was probably the annual outing, originally at nearby Chiseldon and Hodson Woods. The adults and older children would walk, with the younger ones riding in an old farm cart.

As the years passed, this annual treat moved further afield to Marlborough and involved a train journey to Marlborough and a walk up to Savernake Forest. A time of games, competitions and a picnic were enjoyed whatever the weather. This annual tradition continues, now by car to the coast in Somerset. A BBQ, a swim, sporting competitions and a game of cricket on the beach, all hosted by a member at her caravan.

The hall was a hive of activity throughout the week - choir practice, women's meetings, sewing group, men's billiards, youth clubs, badminton club, table tennis club, beetle drives, country dancing and a drama group. Tennis was played at the nearby Okus courts. The hall was in use every day as there were very few social activities outside the church.

In the Autumn of 1939, some five thousand children were evacuated from London, and during the following years, the Sunday school hall was used as a welfare centre and the billeting of soldiers. Activities took place and meetings between the children and their visiting parents.

Every November, the large hall hosted a 'sale of work' selling homemade items. Many sisters were busy all year sewing and knitting for the big day. Jumble sales were also very popular, and a queue would form along the path beside the church. In recent years, this has become a Christmas or Easter fete, now held in the church itself, and is a time of not just fundraising for charity, but an opportunity to welcome the local community into the church.

Ministers came for six to seven years before being called to another congregation. Many of our members have become ordained ministers or overseas missionaries, including Brethren Cyril Foster, Ivor Packer, John Berry, David Newman and Sister Jan Mullin. Bishop Porter was a schoolboy here before going to Fulneck. Sr Irene



© Sr Sue Webb

Morton and Br Basil McLeavy were born in Swindon and Sr Marjorie Grubb, Br Peter Gubi Jr and Br Michael Newman lived here in Swindon.

In 1950, when the Moravian Women's Auxiliary was formed, our sisters formed a circle meeting monthly on a Wednesday afternoon. After a few years, the time of the meeting changed to the evening to allow all sisters to attend, meeting in members' homes. This continues today.

A choir of 12+ practiced weekly under the direction of Br Jim Plumb. Youth Fellowship would meet on a Sunday evening at the manse, originally in Hythe Road and laterally, The Mall.

Youth weekends have been hosted over the years, with 'camping' in both halls. More recently a Boys Brigade unit, youth clubs, toddler group and Beaver Colony have used the larger hall. A Rainbow group currently meet mid-week.

The small Sunday school, now 'Sunday Sparks' continues on a Sunday morning and the Rainbows join on some weeks.

During the ministry of Br Rex Williamson, Swindon and Tytherton congregations became closer with shared ministry. In 1992, Br Peter Gubi was asked to take charge of the Malmesbury congregation in addition to Tytherton and Swindon. We became the Moravian Wiltshire Unit and enjoyed joint services from time to time, with both Br Peter Gubi and Sr Gloria David.

In 1999, a century of worship was celebrated with a weeklong flower festival, a joint MWA and 'Churches together in Swindon Centre' service. We continue to have close links with 'Churches Together in Swindon' and World Day of Prayer services. We join with The Quakers to serve lunch during Lent.

Our link with the local community is strong and we are supported by our neighbours at our fetes and fundraising throughout the year. These became a 'stall on the steps' in recent times when meeting outside was permitted between lockdowns and were appreciated by our neighbours during those difficult times.

The large hall is now mainly used for the many charities we support. During the week, we are busy preparing items for The Foundation for Social Change Shoebox Appeal, Mary's Meals, Nelson's Trust, MWA and YPMA projects, The Filling Station (food bank) and Alternative Angels (supporting local homeless people).

We are small in number, but very active supporting charities both overseas and locally - our Teddy Tombola is well known and supported throughout the town! Our congregation spans nine decades and as a close, supportive church family, we look forward in faith as we continue, with Sr Jane Carter, to work, worship and witness in our small corner of God's Kingdom.

Sr Sandy Mundy

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