

moravian messenger

MARCH 2024



Visit to the South Asia Mission Province in January 2024



© Sr Jane Carter

The new South Asia Provincial Board with the BMB: Sr Jane Carter, Br Joshua Pradhan, Br Ebenezer Gangmei, Sr Roberta Hoey, Br Joachim Kreusel, Br Darshan Lama, Br Shanti Pradhan, Br Danish, Br Samson Thangpa (Br Nathaniel Gengmai not present)

First Synod of the South Asia Mission Province

Following the resolution at Unity Synod in September 2023 that South Asia should become a Mission Province, plans began for them to hold their very first Synod. On 11th January Sr Jane Carter, Chair of the BMB (British Mission Board), Sr Roberta Hoey, Chair of the Unity Board and Br Joachim Kreusel, Bishop of the Unity, set off for New Delhi where preparations were underway. On arrival we were met by the choking pollution. If you consider that where you might live in the UK the air quality range may be in the region of 0-5, in Delhi it is on average 500! It is like a constant fog that smells like nicotine. However, Delhi was the most central area to hold a meeting with 28 ministers and delegates travelling from the four regions of Ladakh, Central, Northeast India (NEI) and Nepal.

We met and stayed at the YMCA in New Delhi near Connaught Place, a busy area for commerce, finance and retail. Beginning

on Saturday 13th January over four days the meetings were chaired by Br Shanti Pradhan from Nepal aided by Vice-Chair Br Joseph Kundan from Rajpur. All regions and congregations were represented with the exception of the Leh congregation. Sr Jane led the Synod opening service and as we were still in the season of Epiphany we explored the visit of the Magi, in Luke's gospel, and how they were changed by their encounter with the infant Christ; reflecting that the experience of Synod may indeed find us challenged and changed and we might return home to our regions 'by another road'.

As this was the delegates first experience of a Synod there was much explanation required on the procedures and protocols in order that the meeting ran smoothly. How to present reports and proposals, how to conduct a debate and indeed how to vote were all explained and practiced. Reports were received

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Editorial

A friend of mine believes social media to be the root of all evil and he expresses this view forcibly. We debate this periodically and I smile because my friend has no presence on social media so what he knows is second hand from his wife and children and 'the news'.

Social media is such a part of our lives now and has brought such benefits. The linkage of friends, family, acquaintances and work colleagues has brought friendship and news across the years and across the world. Those who are lonely and the housebound can get great support and friendship from this technology. We rejoice that people can get access to our Church services via YouTube or streaming on Facebook.

There are also huge downsides to social media with bullying, false/fake news, glib and glossy looks and lifestyles and the effect this can have on individuals and communities. The amount of time social media can take up can mess with our lives too if we become addicted to it! And possibly worst of all is the lack of privacy that has become part of it, being filmed without proper informed consent is a particular danger for young people or for those who are filmed when drink has been taken!

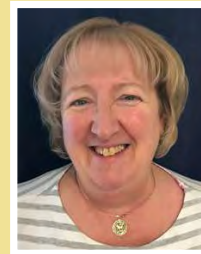
Social media is a Pandora's box that now opened cannot be closed. It, like any technology shows the two sides of human beings, all that is good and all that is bad. But its real power is that it magnifies everything - what is on it can be passed on and on for benefit or detriment.

So how do we use social media, avoid it like my friend or stay on it? That is your decision not mine but if you are a

Christian then people will judge you in a 360° way not just on the side you want to show. How often we have said things hastily and hurt others - the letter of James has great advice on taming the tongue and it is just as applicable to taming the typing. So, we need to be aware of what we are posting and how it might read at another time and place. That does not mean being anodyne because you can post a challenging point of view but in a courteous and respectful way; I am constantly amazed at how angry people can get responding to posts.

Perhaps, when we are reviewing our lives and recommitting to our faith it would be a good time to review our social media usage too and what it says about us. What would someone who looked at your posts guess of your passions and your faith, or would they just conclude that you were grumpy or self-obsessed! What if they could see your YouTube trail too? I have just looked at my Facebook page or X feed (formally known as Twitter) and realised people would probably think I was away with the birds, but I don't think they would realise I am a Christian! Do you use your time on social media wisely or do you just waste time? What would be the change if you used that time in prayer or reading the Bible or good Christian literature?

Giving up chocolate may not be the most important thing you can do during this Lent!



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

Press Release of the Special service to celebrate Church of Ireland-Moravian relationship

To be held in Ballymena and Gracehill on Monday 18th March 2024

In recent years, the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church in Britain and Ireland have been developing a closer formal relationship which will allow for clergy from both denominations to serve in either. To celebrate this, a special service will be taking place on the afternoon of Monday 18th March, starting in St Patrick's Church, Ballymena, at 1.30pm and continuing in Gracehill Moravian Church at 3.30pm.

Archbishop John McDowell will preach in St Patrick's with Bishop Sarah Groves, from the Moravian Church, leading participants sharing in Holy Communion in Gracehill. Trees will be planted in the grounds of each place of worship to mark this celebration, and a reception at Gracehill will follow.

Bishop Sarah expressed her joy at what had become known as the 'Armagh Agreement' between the two Churches. She said that she was sure this would 'bring increased vitality to both denominations enriching their worship and enabling them to share the resources of people, faith and service.'

Bishop Michael Burrows, who chairs the Church of Ireland's Commission for



Christian Unity and Dialogue, added: 'The Moravian Church and the Church of Ireland have so much in common and so many spiritual riches to share with one another. We both cherish the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and a similar commitment to the place of the historic episcopate. We have shared a joyful journey towards the achievement of interchangeable ministry between us, and I'm thrilled that this new stage in our relationship will be marked by a highly imaginative liturgical celebration in Ballymena and Gracehill on 18th March.'

About the Churches

The Moravian Church, originally called the Unity of the Brethren, was first organised as a communion in Kunvald, near the modern town of Zamberk, in what is now Czechia (the Czech Republic). Although formally established in 1457, its origins reach back some fifty years earlier to the Czech Reformation. Merging

into the Protestant movement that grew out of the Lutheran Reformation, the Moravian Church today is currently comprised of 24 linked provinces worldwide. The presence of the Moravian Church in Ireland is due mainly to the influence of the English evangelist John Cennick, who was active in these isles between 1746 and 1755. The Irish District of the British Province currently has five congregations.

The Church of Ireland traces its history to the early Irish Church founded by St Patrick, who is believed to have tended livestock while in slavery on Slemish in the Antrim Hills. The Church has been influenced over time by the development of dioceses and parishes in the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and its disestablishment in 1871 which ended its status as a state church (although continuing as a denomination with an all-island presence). The Church of Ireland forms part of the Anglican Communion, a family of 42 self-governing member churches, and is actively involved in both formal ecumenism and the building of good relations in everyday life with its neighbours around Ireland today.

Peter Cheney
Church of Ireland Press Office

Practical Creation Care

Sisters and Brother, Unity Synod 2023 discussed the Care of Creation, and a report was presented and moved by Br John Craver; seconded by Br Algernon Lewis. The following is an extract from the proposal (US2023.5.16.1.) that was passed:

'Whereas climate change is a reality of life in our time, and we are called in Genesis 1:28-31 to maintain the dominion of God's Creation, and

Whereas any Unity Province's reports identify agricultural initiatives through which funds may be raised for congregations and other ministries within the Moravian Church, and

Whereas Unity Synod reports do not currently require any ministries to address climate change at all, and

Whereas Unity Synod has the responsibility to encourage the Unitas Fratrum to enact practical methods by which ministries 'Care for the Earth by following sustainable practice[s] in their lifestyles Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (COUF #887).'

Be it therefore resolved that all Unitas Fratrum ministries shall identify challenges, shortcomings, and successes related to Creation Care as part of their Unity Synod reports.

Examples of categories and specific initiatives that ministries are encouraged to participate include:

1. Recycling/Sustainable Practices: practical steps taken such as the consumption of locally produced goods and food, reducing waste, recycling plastic, conserving water, the reduction of the use of fossil fuels, and utilizing eco-friendly materials, save energy by turning off lights and electronics when they are not in use, using energy-efficient appliances and light bulbs.
2. Education and Advocacy: educate congregations and communities about environmental issues, including

organizing seminars, workshops, outreach programmes, and the biblical values underpinning.

3. Community Engagement: involvement in local environmental initiatives and demonstrations, including partnerships with environmental organizations and participation in community clean-up.
4. Liturgical Integration: incorporating environmental themes and prayers into worship services and liturgical calendar, emphasizing the spiritual importance of environmental care.
5. Youth Involvement: engaging youth in environmental education and action, ensuring that younger generations are equipped to carry forward the mission of environmental stewardship.
6. Agrarian Initiatives: Planting trees which absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and provide oxygen. Fruit trees also help with food security. Development of community gardens as carbon sinks and to eliminate food deserts.

Be it finally resolved that all Unity Provinces and Synods begin and report upon initiatives which address one or more of the recommendations in the above categories.'

It was also suggested that delegates look up 'Eco-Church' to help participate in eco-activities.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (Resolution #41).

Br Edwin Quildan
Mission and Society Committee

Exemption Fund for the Sikonge Mission Hospital

Sr Mia Toldam Korsgård, from the Brødremenighedens Danske Mission, reports from Sikonge, with the permission of the patient who wanted to share some details of a case that used the exemption fund that is supported by the Moravian Church to help pay for care at Sikonge Mission Hospital.

Sezi is 26 years old and lives in the small village Kanyamsenga where people live from their own fields and where hunger is something most people have experience with. She lives with her three children, her mother, and her little sister and was pregnant. Her husband recently left her.

However, Sezi got a free C-section at Sikonge Mission Hospital and little Saulo was born safely. This was possible due to the exemption program that is supported by our Moravian brothers and sisters in Europe.

Recollections of the doctor's advice from the patient

Sikonge Mission Hospital and the Moravian Church in Western Tanzania held a combined health seminar and church service in Kanyamsenga in the spring. The medical officer in charge, Doctor Songoro, taught about the importance of giving birth at a health clinic or even better at the hospital, where this service is free. Sezi also remembered how the bishop's wife preached about how prayers are important, but how it is better to both pray and seek medical treatment. So Sezi decided to give birth at the hospital and put aside a little bit of money each week. When the date for the birth was approaching, she left the three



© Sikonge Mission Hospital

Sezi in the hospital bed, Saulo carried by his grandmother, and Sezi's little sister, Margareth.

other children at a neighbour's house and got on the minibus that drives to Sikonge most days of the week. Her mother went with her.

Acute C-section

After a few days at a relative to a neighbour's house in Sikonge, Sezi started getting contractions and they went to the hospital. The birth took a long time, and no matter how much Sezi pushed the child did not come out. It was late in the evening when the midwife contacted the doctor on call, who came and did an ultrasound. The child turned out to be very big and he was not lying in the right position in the womb. Sezi needed an acute c-section immediately. The grandmother got nervous. She was

already worried about the payment for the ultrasound, and she knew that they did not carry a lot of money. How should they then pay for an operation also? The doctor calmed the grandmother down by telling her the c-section and following admission is paid by Christians in Europe, so Sezi did not have to pay. They were relieved. Half an hour after a little boy was born; 5.45 kg (12 pounds) with a lot of black hair. He was named Saulo after his grandfather. A little life came safely into the world because of the support from Europe to our exemption program that covers all children under five years, all pregnant women, and also the most vulnerable and poor of the population no matter age or condition.

If you would like to make a donation to the Exemption Fund or to help with the work of Sikonge Mission Hospital, you can make a card payment by contacting Church House on 020 8883 3409. Please indicate if you are willing for your donation to be Gift Aided.

Or you can pay by bank transfer to:

CAF Bank
Account Name: **The Moravian Union**
Account Number: **00023436**
Sort Code: **40-52-40**
Reference: **Sikonge** (This bit is key otherwise it's harder to track).

Textile Therapy



© Br. Joachim Kreusel

So, I've had some low points in my life, such as losing my father when I was young and having my mother raise us on her own. From my mother's side of the family, I look towards a matriarchal family, which serve as the cornerstone of my foundations. I am partnerless, and a woman who has recently become a mother. The majority of the responsibilities fall to myself and my extremely helpful mother. My work expresses my strength, my inspirations, the shapes and colours that entice me at the time and awaken my senses.

the doodle in my textbooks at all schools, the card I made for someone, or the images I created and the peace I found in every art class. I've always liked to dress up and was interested in fabrics, the looks and styles of buildings' interiors and exteriors, infrastructures, home decors, clothes, and many other things. These things trigger my eyes to literally zoom in as if it were a camera, allowing me to see the most detailed aspects of an object.

Doing my university degree in fashion and textiles grew out of my art therapy,

Power? Women's empowerment? What exactly does this mean?

I was able to connect my life experiences through art therapy. I was diagnosed as dyslexic and autistic as an adult. I've always loved art. It was

which I transformed into a methodology and the foundation of my designs. This has helped me heal. I began to be able to speak and think about my negative emotions. Through my journey of therapeutic approaches to my work through art, textiles, and fashion, I have been able to gain inspiration and support. I now use the world to help my designs and to stay on top of what I want to convey to myself and those around me. The use of textile therapy induces my positive hormones, promoting my health, helping in the expression of unspoken words, and allowing the Gift God has given me to become more than just a skill. But it is a navigation through the world, my safe haven, my refuge, and a place where I see God showing me through reflection, I have purpose.

I am powerful. I rise in the face of adversity. He keeps an eye on me and guides me through the dark valleys. He restores my soul and satisfies my needs

and desires in the deserts. He calms the storms so that he can speak courage, strength, and boldness. The battle and war have been won, and I can now stand firm even on my weakest days. I'm fighting. I strive. Because I have a father who refers to me as a friend. So here I am, fatherless and partnerless. So, God keeps an eye on me and my three lovely daughters.

Warriress, my new capsule, is an exploration of women and how the role of fashion empowers women. I'm researching different industries where women work and how we're affected both negatively and positively. Fashion refers to 'a popular or the latest style of clothing, hair, decoration, or behaviour'. That being said, I'm excited to continue navigating the world and gain more clarity.

Grace Smith
London

Service of Commissioning for Sr Susan Groves

The Western District came together on Sunday 7th January 2024 to share in a very special service as Sr Susan Groves was commissioned to serve the Brockweir congregation as Lay Pastor.

Sr Jane Carter and Br Michael Newman led the service which also included a Baptism and welcoming into membership of Sr Sian Vanloo.

Sr Sue was asked to take on the role of Lay Pastor by the PEC and has undergone training for this ministry. She is also studying at Northern College for the Accredited Lay Preacher's course.

Br Newman led the Service of Commissioning using a new liturgy that

has recently been written by the Provincial Faith and Order Committee. The ministry of Lay Pastor is not new to the Province and certainly not new to Brockweir, from 1949-1952 'Granny Maud', wife of Bishop P. M. Gubi, served the congregation as a Lay Pastor and is listed on the board of serving ministers in the church.

The service was followed by a lovely tea in the Sunday school. Brockweir congregation are blessed to have Sr Sue Groves serve them and the District is very pleased that her ministry is formally recognised.

Sr Lorraine Shorten



© Sr. Katie Groves Bond

Michael Newman, Sue Groves, Jane Carter, and Sian Vanloo

Lay Pastors at Brockweir

The commissioning of Sr Sue Groves as Lay Pastor at Brockweir is an important event in her life and in the life of the local Church. It is also important in the life of the British Province as it may well be part of the way forward in the future.

However, Sr Sue is not the first lay pastor at Brockweir. The first minister at Brockweir was Br Lewis West who had been a teacher at Fulneck. He was sent to take care of the congregation in 1833 and was ordained in 1835. Followed by Br George Augustus Smith, then Br John Mellows in 1872, who had been a teacher at Ockbrook and was ordained in 1873.

Sr Maud Gubi, a deaconess in her own right was the first woman Lay Pastor at Brockweir. She was the wife of Rev Peter Gubi (later Bishop Gubi), and she became Lay Pastor at Brockweir after her husband was called back from Brockweir to serve in the West Indies in 1948. She served at Brockweir until she rejoined her husband in 1952. Sr Maud was authorised to do everything in the

congregation except baptisms and Holy Communion. A minister had to come over from Bristol or further afield once a month to take Holy Communion in the congregation. There was no Severn Bridge, and the ministers would cross the River Severn by ferry and then catch the train to Brockweir Halt. They arrived on a Saturday evening, stayed at the Manse, and then would return on the same route in reverse on a Monday.

Sr Gubi provided very active leadership in the Church and worked hard with youth groups but there was some resistance in the village to the idea of a woman as minister. On one occasion she mentioned to Bishop Blandford that the objection was that she was a woman and Bishop Blandford is reported to have replied 'Well there's nothing we can do about that!' Sr Maud carried out her work in the then very isolated congregation with dignity and her name is listed with pride on the role of ministers at Brockweir.

Sr Sarah Groves

Visit to the South Asia Mission Province in January 2024

(continued from front page)

Team Ministry: Br Dimchui Rongmei, Br Nathaniel Gengmei, Br Jacob Gangmei, Sr Suaihiamlu Pamai



© Sr Jane Carter



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South Asia Mission Province Synod – The delegates

On Tuesday, the final day, the elections began for the new Provincial Board. Sr Roberta took charge in directing proceedings (because by this time Sr Jane had completely lost her voice!) and over the course of the day the following were elected for 4-year and 2-year terms to allow continuity upon the next round of elections at the next Synod:

- Br Shanti Pradhan (Nepal) - Chair
- Br Ebenezer Gangmei (Central) - Vice-Chair
- Br Nathaniel Gengmai (NEI)
- Br Darshan Lama (Central)
- Br Samson Thangpa (Ladakh)
- Br Joshua Pradhan (Nepal)
- Br Danish (Ladakh)
- Br Titus Gangmei (NEI) - Reserve

Thanks were expressed to the retiring Interim Provincial Board for their work in the lead up to this historic meeting and special thanks were given to Br Thsespal Kundan for his leadership and expertise in preparing the Book of Order to the point where it could be used as the basis for future polity.

Br Joachim led Synod with a closing act of worship thinking about new horizons and a new heaven and a new earth and ended with a Cup of Covenant.

from the BMB and the Interim Provincial Board (IPB), elected at the Conference in January 2023. Members of the IPB formed part of the clerking team. The main business of Synod was to come to a consensus on the draft Book of Order which the IPB had been working on over the past year (at no less than 30 meetings over 12 months) and to elect a Provincial Board. A number of resolutions were carried to revise the text to enable the draft Book of Order to be accepted as a working document. It was acknowledged that the Book of Order might never be deemed complete; it is a living, working document, subject to change and revision, and this was understood.

On the Sunday morning we took a break from the meetings to attend worship at the YWCA, a short walk from our venue, where the Delhi Fellowship meet for their worship. Br Bir (Rajpur) led the worship group with excellent music and the singing was wonderful. Brs Levi and Ebenezer (New Delhi) led worship, Sr Vani Pradhan (Nepal) brought the message and Br Joachim presided at the Holy Communion Service assisted by Sr Vani and Brs Levi and Ebenezer. The hospitality was warm as was the tea afterwards and it was a lovely opportunity to meet members of the fellowship.



© Sr Jane Carter

Evening Prayers

It was a great time of fellowship with many shared stories over mealtimes and we lost count of the number of cups of tea consumed. We continue to hold the new Provincial Board in our prayers as they meet to discern the way forward for the South Asia Mission Province. The BMB will continue to work closely with the South Asia PEC as they consider the processes necessary to enable the smooth running of a Province.

Ordination: Br Joachim Kreusel, Sr Roberta Hoey and Sr Suaihiamlu Pamai



© Sr Jane Carter

Ordination in Assam

After the Synod the BMB members travelled to Northeast India to Binnakandi in Assam where preparations were being made for another historic event, the ordination of Sr Suaihiamlu Pamai, as a deacon in the Moravian Church, the first woman in India. Sr Suaihiamlu is the wife of Br Jacob Gangmei, a member of the team ministry of Binnakandi, Haflong and Latingkhal. There is always a warm welcome in Binnakandi and this was no exception. During the month of January, the ministers were visiting every household in the village for prayer. We joined on three evenings where we experienced singing, a message and a time of open, extempore prayer following by tea (well we were in Assam!) with family and friends in each home.

On the Saturday the ordination service was held with a full church including representatives from the region's three congregations and the Silchar Fellowship, friends and family. Br Joachim and Sr Jane preached, both with very personal messages for Sr Suaihiamlu. A feast was shared afterwards, and it was a day of joy and celebration.



© Sr Jane Carter

Br Jacob Gangmei and Sr Suaihiamlu preside at Holy Communion.

In the evening the BMB met with members of all three church committees for a broad discussion about the ministry in Northeast India.

Sunday worship was early at 7am, another joyful experience as Sr Suaihiamlu presided at her first Holy Communion. The BMB delegates left later that morning to start the journey home. We travelled to the airport in Silchar via the tea plantations, another sign of a country and region that is rich in resources, beautiful landscapes, poverty and wealth hand in hand and a population with a diversity of faith and belief. We were grateful for our time with our sisters and brothers of South Asia and pray that they continue to be richly blessed in their ministry as they serve our Chief Elder.

Sr Jane Carter
Chair, British Mission Board (BMB)

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Heather Anderson

Sr Anderson is an Elder at the Harlesden Congregation in London.

Tell us about your early years

My early childhood in Junction in the Parish of St Elizabeth, Jamaica was a happy one. I grew up with my grandmother because my Mom and Dad migrated to England to seek a better life. I was spoilt and had all that I needed and attended the Moravian Primary School in the Parish.

In January 1968 I arrived in London to join my Mom, Dad, brother and sister. It was a miserable and cold day, a shock to my system as I was used to the warm climate! I thought London would be a nice place but the houses where we lived looked like a factory and the living situation felt like poverty living because we had to share the house we lived in with other people. I thought this was not a better life that my Mom and Dad left Jamaica for. I cried for two weeks hardly eating because I wanted to return to my grandmother, and I prayed for that day when I could return back to Jamaica.

I attended an all-girls Comprehensive School in Paddington and achieved 6 CSE's and then attended The Kilburn Polytechnic College and completed my AAT level 2 Accountancy. My Mom worked in Lyons cake factory when she first arrived in London and my Dad in the Kodak factory. My Mom later worked as a Traffic Warden until she returned to Jamaica in 1996, she is still alive at the age of 92 years but my Dad died in 2004.

How and when did you come to faith?

As a child in Jamaica, I grew up in a Christian family with my grandmother, so I attended Church and Sunday School. The seed was already planted, and I knew about God and continued to attend Church when I arrived in London.

When I returned to Jamaica in 1996 I attended the New Beulah Moravian Church where the minister Rev Robert Patmore announced a confirmation class. I asked if I could join, and I was confirmed on the 3rd September 2000 and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour.

Tell us about your own family

I lost my husband at a young age in 1984 leaving me with two young sons. I also have a daughter, whose dad also died in 2016. I have been a one parent family for most of my life with God's help. My two grown up sons have blessed me with seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

How have you integrated your faith into work?

I was brought up to be honest and do the right thing. So, when I was asked by my boss to agree with something that was a lie I objected - I could have lost my job, but I stood firm. Another time when I worked at a Law Firm I was asked to do something that was unjust, but I refused - I wanted to remain steadfast in my faith.

What parts of Church life have given you most satisfaction and real challenges?

I cannot separate my Church life to say which part satisfied me the most because I love Church and I enjoy all that I do in Church, it is doing God's will and helping others. I enjoy being

a Church Secretary, MWA Leader, Elder and Worship Leader.

I have not encountered any real challenges to date. If I ever felt that I am not capable of doing a task I ask and allow the Holy Spirit to guide me and those challenges disappear.

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

I have never been angry with God because in John 16:33 God said we will have tribulations, in him we will find peace, we should be cheerful because he has overcome the world.

Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death?

I am not afraid to die. I can see beyond death because we all have to die to gain eternal life with God. I believe in the resurrection because this is the hope that was promised when God returns to receive us to himself. When we see the clouds open, the trumpet playing and the angels around God we will see him face to face and what a joyous moment of excitement that will be.

What can we learn from other Churches?

We can learn the commitment from the Seven Day Adventist Church about how they keep their young people engaged in Church by involving them and contributing to their education.

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

They have lost faith and belief in God because of hardship and following social media, prosperity preaching and not being patient and waiting on God's promise and assurance that He will never leave us or forsake us.

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

Book: The Bible which focuses me on God and how to cope with life's challenges.

Music: some reggae because they have inspiring words and memories of my past; Gospel songs lift my spirit; Moravian Hymns with words of wisdom that touch my soul.

TV: crime programmes because I like to see the method and approach that is taken in solving a crime that is challenging.

The place where you feel closest to God?

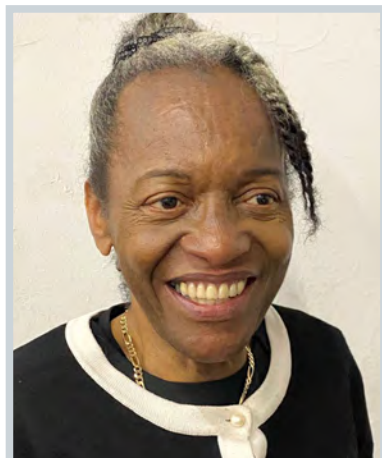
There is no special place that I feel closest to God because He is with me all the time and he is close with me wherever I am in my heart.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

It would say 'Well Done Thou Faithful Servant. Enter Into My Kingdom'. If not I would leave it to my children.

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

My regret is that my children had to grow up without their Dad. My major joy is that I have God in my Life and I have seen my children achieve great things.



Thoughts on the United Day of Prayer in the British Province

A big thank you to all who took part in our Provincial United Day of Prayer on Saturday 6th January 2024 for the Moravian Church in the British Province. Whether it was simply for five minutes or for large chunks of the 24-hour timeframe, your co-operation was really appreciated. We hope and believe it was God honouring, a blessing to you, to individuals and families, and to the whole Moravian Church in the British Province, as we seek to be a **Quality Church** that is **Sustainable** through the 21st Century.

We believe it is essential, in the battle and journey, that we are seeking God and his purposes, that we are ensuring that Jesus is Lord of this church, that we are in partnership with the Holy Spirit, who is Field-Marshal on earth co-ordinating the building of the church. Also, that we are in unity together and are seeking to be good news and a blessing to our neighbours.

Thanks to all the churches that undertook a corporate pray time together for some part of the day. Listen to a brief description of the corporate prayer experience in Yorkshire:

'The day of prayer was a thoroughly worthwhile experience. Although I am not used to concerted prayer in this form, I was ready to give it a go! I attended both the morning Prayer Breakfast at Horton and the evening Craft and Prayer for Lower Wyke, and at each I got a real sense of God's presence and hope for the future through those who were there. I was especially humbled by the thoughtful and resolute prayers of our sisters and brothers which showed the depth of prayer we are able to achieve in the Moravian Church. The best moment for me was when one of our sisters reflected that she had felt that she didn't have a role in helping change the Church, but that by taking part in the Day of Prayer she had found great heart in being told that her prayers are the first and best step to help bring about the change we need through God's help.'

Stephen Maxwell (Lower Wyke and Horton congregations).

We also had an online prayer watch, which covered 12 hours, beautifully and sensitively led by a group of volunteers, both ministers and laity. Liturgy, spontaneous prayers, songs and intercession flowed all day. A few people stayed on for the full 12 hours! Listen to Jean share her experience:

'It was a marathon event 9 to 9. I'd never done something like this before. But how uplifting; exhilarating, yet tiring, to some degree. The determination to run the race was rewarding. The truth was I was there for some blocks of focused time 9-11, then dipping in and out listening but doing a few chores. Returning for shorter spells, then the last two hours, I was carefully focussed. Besides the prayer and intercession times my highlights were; The Servant Song and Peter's comment on the Messy Church. It was indeed a blessed day.' Jean Thompson (Irish District)

While some in our church are prayer warriors, for many of us, the muscle of prayer has been underused, and it has now become somewhat flabby and out of practice. So, praying for a prolonged time proved hard work and tiring. We would encourage you to persevere and keep on praying, even when things get tough. Just like a sturdy tree stands firm in a storm, our commitment to prayer grounds us. Let us let God, through prayer, guide us like a reliable compass. Embrace quiet moments, because in them, we will find a reassuring sense of hope.

Remember - Prayer is a timeless and borderless exercise, transcending the constraints of both time and geography. As we prayed heartfelt words, they become echoes that resonate beyond the immediate moment and geographical boundaries. Our prayers form a network that spans generations, connecting you to the wisdom of those who came before and those yet to come.

In the vast tapestry of existence, prayers serve as threads weaving through the fabric of history, touching lives across our country, across continents and eras. The energy of your prayers knows no distance; it creates a spiritual bridge, fostering a sense of unity that defies the limits of time and geography. Prayer is amazing and worth persevering with together.

A few practical things to do to continue the practice of praying together for our church:

- Please ensure that you encourage corporate prayer times in your local congregation.
- If you would like to join an online prayer and intercession group, for one hour a month, then please let Peter Dornan know by email.
- The monthly **Project 32 Health Energisers Prayer Sheet** is available to provide useful prayer fuel and information. Contact Peter or get it from your minister or church secretary. Print it out, stick it on your fridge and keep praying!
- The PEC has decided to plan to regularly incorporate a Provincial Day of Prayer twice a year, to become part of business as usual for the whole church. They have provisionally put Memorial Day, **Monday 17th June 2024** as our next Provincial day of prayer. Put it in your diaries now, and more details will be forwarded by the PEC later.

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Peter Dornan
Project 32
Coordinator



Choosing Christ, Choosing Fellowship

Br Hans Beat Motel, past Chairman of the Unity Board, was the Key Speaker at the Provincial Fellowship Day being in 2007. He spoke on Jesus who is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever, and how, as we stand at the crossroads, we have to make a choice.

Br Edwin Quildan felt that this summary of the address was worth reading again to use as the basis of discussion and study in our congregations, fellowship groups and Holy Habits groups.

1. The One Who Does Not Change

One thing is for sure, nothing is certain, everything changes. A Christian however, knows and trusts that God, revealed in Jesus Christ and speaking to us through the Holy Spirit, is the only One who does not change, and that he remains the same through the ages whatever happens. Jesus, the same - yesterday, today and forever, thanks be to God.

Time and again, Zinzendorf emphasised that all one needs to know about Jesus could be written on a tiny piece of paper, namely that he is our Saviour. But our faith in Jesus Christ must not remain the same, for it is in itself a changing process, it is in the process of growing to be able to discover anew Christ in our life and in the world.

a) Jesus the One who Was

Jesus was a Jew, a member of God's chosen people. As a Jew Jesus was born, lived, suffered, died and rose. And as Nathanael said: 'Can any good come out of Nazareth' and Philip answered, 'Come and see'. Come and see - the still standing invitation addressed to each one of us today. Jesus does away with barriers and separations, he includes everyone in his love, he builds bridges between himself and others. This is how peace begins.

b) Jesus the One who still is

One event tells us that all of Jesus' life and teachings and that he himself has not disappeared into an irrecoverable past, but that he is present and still with us: that event is Easter! We are led by the faithful to the conviction that Jesus lives. It was the discovery that God's powers

are mightier than the powers of death. Easter is the fulfilling of Christ's mission, the justification of the sinner at the cross, the healing of the sick, the lifting of the poor. Everything starts anew because Jesus lives for us all. This makes life new; this is the meaning of the resurrection.

c) and forever shall be

Christ is with us forever - this fills our hearts with peace, with quietness, we become relaxed, our future does not depend on our achievements and our work and our good ideas, but on the loving presence of our Lord.

2. Jesus remains the same

This Jesus of the past, the risen Lord, and the one who is with us in the future remains the same! This recognition has been the driving power of our Moravian Church for 550 years! Jesus himself passionately looks for us, searches for us, and discovers us! He does not sit on his throne far above the changes of time. He heals our past, is with us now, and he declares the future to be a space where we can throw our sorrows on him. At the crossroads - are we open to discover his never changing love?

3.

a) The consequences of believing in Jesus 'the same'

Jesus comes to us as he approached the men by the lake, and he says the same words today: follow me!

Follow me: the same yesterday, today and forever, also means that our faith in him is not an individual, private matter, but leads always into a Christian Fellowship. One of the greatest gifts of our Church is our worldwide fellowship, which overcomes cultural, ethnic and geographical barriers, but we need to check whether we still do everything possible to live and deepen this wonderful global fellowship. We need to ask ourselves: are we still an inviting Church, how and where do we invite others to follow Christ?

b) Our Gift

One great gift of our Moravian heritage

is our clear focus on Christ and flowing from this focus, is a wonderful liberating openness, with Jesus Christ the centre of our faith. The clear confession that Jesus is Lord, leads to openness towards the world and its needs, towards tolerance and taking others seriously - this is what I like, this to me is the Moravian heritage, let us preserve it!

4. The Great Hope

Jesus the same, yesterday, today and forever, can never be a formula, or a routine statement, because it is the strong and clear expression of a great hope. It means as followers of Christ, we cannot afford any kind of hopelessness, neither with regard to our life, nor with regard to the world or to our Moravian Church. Hope is not a second-degree element of our faith, but an essential part of it. This confession tells us we cannot afford to be hopeless anymore, because we are strengthened, prepared and encouraged to face the future, as individual Christians and as Moravian Christians, because Jesus Christ is already there. Every prayer is a sign of hope!

Conclusion

The confession that Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and for ever, is not a claim of power, but a promise containing enough energy to keep us going, following him who remains the same in his searching love, fulfilling our hope as individuals and as a Moravian Church. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, 'Jesus Christ is the width of our life, Jesus Christ is the centre of our fellowship. Jesus Christ is with us until the end of our world. This is thanks to Easter'.

In 2007 Br Kenneth Evans wrote this postscript to the address:

We had the privilege of hearing Br Motel speak so passionately about Christ being the centre of our Fellowship, and his summons to us to follow him into the great gift of Christian Fellowship, the Fellowship of the Unity and the Fellowship of the Church. What price do you put on Fellowship? If Christ is the Centre of our Fellowship, shouldn't we all make every effort to join in that fellowship?

Royton, Greater Manchester

On the build up to Christmas we had our usual social events: the Beetle and Bingo Night and the Christmas Fair. The Beetle and Bingo Night is always one filled with lots of laughter, talking, excitement and of course some fierce competition. All together £174 was raised for Church funds. This year's Christmas Fair took place on Saturday 25 November and a good time was had by all. Food, laughter and lots of chatting created the most welcoming and lovely atmosphere. It took place between 11am till 2pm and in 3 hours we managed to raise an amazing £1,516 for Church funds! We thank all of those that help to run these events and attend. It makes a huge difference and as they say, teamwork makes the dream work!

This leads on to our services as we have welcomed our neighbours from Trinity Methodists to a service of Holy Communion and enjoyed a time of warm fellowship together. We are going to continue to have this time of fellowship, taking it in turn to host. Other services include a service to remember loved ones led by Br Peter Gubi. He also conducted a very thoughtful and moving service on Remembrance Sunday.

We have gone out into the community and visited our local residential home to sing carols. It was lovely to do this especially at Christmas which can be a tough time for families and people who may be feeling lonely. Our usual Christmas



services took place with Christingle falling on Christmas Eve this year which was a lovely coincidence. After all the festivities pass there is always a lull. The build up to Jesus' birth, the big day, has gone. However, this year we had a huge reason to celebrate. Sr Anne Geary celebrated her 95th birthday on 28th December, and a special birthday lunch after the service on 7th January was enjoyed by all. Happy Birthday, Anne! We hope you had a lovely time and love your

present. We loved celebrating with you, God bless Anne, her family, friends and her church family.

We are a church family at Royton and we recognise that team work does make the dream work. Working with one another, our community and the province. So, I leave you with this: 'There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit. And so we are formed into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. So the body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts.' 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

Sr Hannah Coope and Sr Gail Holden

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Synod 2024: Credentials, registration and pre-Synod documents

Preparations for our Provincial Synod are underway. As notified, it will take place between 18th-22nd July 2024 at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick. This details initial information for ministers, deputies and ex-officio members of Synod.

Deputy Credentials and Registration

Congregations should submit deputy credential forms to Sr Lindsey Newens at Church House by the 31st March 2024. Please be aware that following a resolution of the Synod in 2022, congregations having between 66 and 130 members are entitled to send two deputies, and congregations having 131 members or more are entitled to three deputies.

All ministers, deputies, ex-officio members and staff are required to complete an online registration form that can be obtained from your minister, if you have not already received an email. Please complete this form by 5th April 2024.

Synod Papers and Voting System

All Synod papers will be available online this year and will be made available by 4th July 2024. If hard copies are required these can be posted to your home address. This must be indicated in the registration form.

We are continuing to integrate electronic voting at Synod and as such all voting members of Synod are required to have access to a mobile, tablet or laptop that will enable them to fully participate. Please flag any accessibility considerations to Sr Lindsey Newens.

Proposals and Nomination Forms

The proposals template and nomination forms for the Provincial Board and Standing Committees are available from ministers or Church House. Class A Proposals must be notified to the Provincial Board by 19th April 2024 and Class B Proposals must be notified to the Provincial Board by 30th May 2024.

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

21st January 2024 Brody Richard Toulson Gomersal

Deaths

14th January 2024 Chris Coutts Royton

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Founding of the Brethren's Church in 1457 |
| | St David's Day |
| | Unity Prayer Day |
| | Women's World Day of Prayer (www.wwdp.org.uk) |
| 8 | International Women's Day (www.internationalwomensday.com) |
| 10 | Mothering Sunday |
| | Ramadan begins - Muslim |
| 17 | St Patrick's Day |
| 20 | Spring Equinox |
| 23 | Purim - Jewish |
| 24 | Palm Sunday |
| 25-29 | Passion Week Readings |
| 25 | Holi - Hindu |
| | UN International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade (www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/) |
| 29 | Good Friday |
| 31 | Easter Sunday |
| | Summer-time begins |

Dates to remember!

Provincial Diary for March

- | | | |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| 9 | Lancashire District Conference | Online |
| 13 | Finance and Property Committee | Church House |
| 14 | Mission and Society Committee | Church House/Online |
| 14 | Provincial Archives and Heritage Committee | Online |
| 18 | Armagh Agreement service and celebration | Gracehill |
| 21-22 | Provincial Board meeting | Church House |
| 25 | Faith and Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee | Online |

Unity Prayer Day Offering 2024: Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Germany and the Czech Republic

Germany

The Russian war of aggression triggered a large movement of refugees within Ukraine, but also to safe neighbouring countries. More than 1.3 million refugees - mostly women with their children - arrived in Germany alone as of February 2022.

Partly through personal contacts, partly because of the proximity of various congregations to the border, the Moravian Church in Germany had already recognised the responsibility to provide active help at an early stage. The first women and children arrived at the Moravian guest house KOMENSKÝ at the beginning of March 2022 during the days of the Synod meeting. Spontaneously, an information and discussion session were arranged at Synod. In the following weeks, several rooms in the KOMENSKÝ were made available for refugees. Some moved on later, for others, flats were sought in and around Herrnhut. There was a great readiness to help, within the congregation and also among many people in the surrounding area who donated necessary clothing or furniture.

Like Herrnhut, several other congregations helped immediately with the most necessary items. It soon became clear that housing, clothing, and food could only be the basics of support. From the beginning, personal relationships were also important. Parishioners who spoke Russian often volunteered to help with visits to offices and doctors or started German language courses. In Herrnhut, the 'Café Odessa' was founded - a meeting place for newcomers and residents, which continues to open its doors once a week. In Cottbus, the 'Haltestelle', a missionary project of the Moravian Church, invited refugee children to the 'Ukrainian School'. Here they could learn German in a playful way, but above all enjoy hours of levity after the often-traumatic experiences of the war. The Haltestelle is still an important anchor point for Ukrainian children and their parents.

Supporting children and young people also became a task for the Moravian schools. Ukrainian classes were established at both the Zinzendorf schools in Königsfeld and Herrnhut. The goal of integrating the children into the regular classes after intensive German language courses has been achieved in the meantime. The Königsfeld Zinzendorf School also provided cost-intensive accommodation for an unaccompanied Ukrainian girl in the boarding facilities.

In addition to helping refugees in the congregations and institutions, the Moravian Church also helped directly in Ukraine. Aid transport to the war-torn regions was supported. In cooperation with other Christian organisations, almost 10,000 copies of the Moravian Daily Watchwords in Ukrainian language have been distributed since the beginning of the war. The books were distributed by pastors and staff of local church congregations, mostly together with aid packages. The soldiers at the front received the Watchwords together with the food packages.



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of the Moravian Church

Daily Watchwords in Ukrainian

We will continue to distribute the Moravian Watchwords to sow hope with the word of God in a country where war has devastated so many places and landscapes, in a society where joy of life and confidence are hard to find at the moment.

Czech Republic

In February 2022, the war in Ukraine began. Due to the war situation, many residents were forced to flee Ukraine and look for a new home in various European countries. Over 500,000 Ukrainian refugees also received temporary protection in the Czech Republic. These are mainly women and children, possibly the elderly, as the men stayed in Ukraine to defend their country.

The Moravian Church Unity Province also got involved in helping Ukrainians without hesitation: by providing accommodation, donating clothes and household items, offering opportunities for work and spending free time, practical help and support. Thanks to the cooperation with the Moravian Church Choir, the community united around the New Generation Christian elementary school in Kyiv, approx. 120 people, moved to Nová Paka - the Nová Paka choir, in cooperation with the region and other organisations, and with the support of donors from UF, managed to secure for them accommodation and spaces for teaching. During this year, some returned or moved to other countries, in the following school year the students from this school will be educated directly in our primary school.

We are still continuing this assistance: in some of our congregations, Ukrainian families continue to stay, or women with children, and several women are even employed in our congregations. In our Christian schools and kindergartens, we not only provide education for registered Ukrainian pupils and students (Nová Paka, Hejnice, Liberec), but we also help them and their families, if possible, with solving their needs and the traumas that war brings. Our congregations offer the possibility of leisure activities - participation of children in clubs, summer camps, involvement in various activities within the community (mothers' clubs, senior clubs), etc. If possible, Ukrainians participate in our services, which are adapted for them, a Ukrainian Christian group meets weekly in the premises of the Nová Paka church.

Br Jørgen Bøytler
Unity Business Administrator

The Moravian Messenger

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