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Irish District Fellowship Weekend at Corrymeela *9th-11th February*

Long ago I had holidayed in County Kerry and visited my sister in Portstewart back in the 1970s, so already had a soft spot for the lands across the Irish Sea. The warm hospitality I experienced visiting Gracehill when Sr Sarah Groves was consecrated Bishop, and later with the Moravian Pilgrimage in 2021, meant that when I saw the publicity for the weekend I didn't need much persuading to book a place. I had first heard about the Corrymeela Community in the 1970s and the chance to go there was an added attraction. Also, I had met Sr Jill Vogt, who would be leading the weekend, at a previous Provincial Synod, and was interested to hear about Lebensläufe, having recently heard part of Peter Gubi's lebenslauf at his funeral. Jill is jointly minister at Herrnhut, with her husband Peter.

So we gathered, as the light was fading across the north Antrim coast and the lighthouses on Rathlin Island a short distance across the water, were blinking their reassuring presence, to begin the fellowship weekend with a hot meal. Corrymeela has a strict no alcohol policy, so we compensated with plenty of

cake. Several cakes were donated by people who weren't themselves participating but wanted to make a contribution to the weekend.

The first session was a gentle but penetrating icebreaker which helped us look at how to tell the stories of what God is up to in our lives, revisit memories of key moments from our past and build up a sense of trust and community among us.

During the sessions the following day Jill enticed and intrigued us with an aspect of Moravian identity - the Lebenslauf - that I wasn't very familiar with. It is a way of recording who you are - from God's perspective, a kind of spiritual memoir of the significant encounters and events through which a person has grown deeper into faith and into Christian community and service. From early in the life of the Renewed Church, Moravians have been encouraged to write, or narrate, this account in their riper years, as a testimony, a witness and a means of encouragement to their sisters and brothers. It has been the

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The other day I read a wonderful obituary for a retired Dean of Peterborough Cathedral. I don't very often read obituaries but this one stuck out for me. The Dean loved offering hospitality and it was estimated that he and his wife cooked for over 2,000 guests every year. He called it 'eating for Jesus'! Another of his sayings was that 'Faith is not a fixed position, it's a commitment to travel' and he saw this as a voyage of discovery.

This gave me a glimpse into the resurrection narrative of the Emmaus Road; a journey undertaken in disappointment and probably fear. Moving from a place of trauma, grief and dashed dreams, in retreat, returning home. Yet in that travelling eyes were opened and understanding grew. Those seven miles in the company of a stranger were a voyage of discovery for Cleopas and his companion. Yet the full import of the words might never have taken root if it had not been for the deep act of hospitality given by Cleopas saying, 'stay with us because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.'

Sharing their home and their food with this stranger enabled them to see Jesus - they were not just eating for Jesus, they were eating with Jesus!

A number of our Churches are following 'Holy Habits' and

most of us have now done the habits of *Eating Together and Fellowship* and are looking forward to the habit of *Breaking Bread*. These subjects seem very natural to Moravians but in these habits, we are urged to go further than we usually do and look for ways of eating together, or rather, 'eating for Jesus'. How can we do this in a way that draws people in rather than excluding them from our circle? How do we move beyond our friends and the people we know and like to the people we don't know and maybe we think we have little in common with?

So, in the weeks after Easter and with the better weather it would be good to review how our Churches do hospitality and look for new ways to eat for Jesus with other people. And how might that move from eating for Jesus to eating with Jesus.

The other thing I don't want to forget from that obituary is that our faith should develop as we journey through life and as we see more and learn more. It is not fixed and unable to move but rather secured with an anchor that allows us to take on the movement of the tide around us but does not cast us adrift.



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

Irish District Fellowship Weekend at Corrymeela *(continued)*

practice at Moravian funerals for extracts from the person's lebenslauf to be read out, rather than a eulogy, so that it is their own voice, and not someone else's ideas about them, that is heard. The emphasis is on God's saving grace at work in my life, rather than how marvellous or insignificant I may think I have been. Having been given a general understanding of the background to the lebenslauf, we looked at extracts of one from the 18th century and a more recent one and were given some tips on how to write one for ourselves.

Since the past gains perspective in the context of the present and the future, our final session was led by Peter Dornan, bringing us up to date about Project 32. As you will know, the vision behind Project 32 is strengthening and reviving our church to build up its quality and sustainability across the next eight years. Peter outlined the Natural Church Development strategy which has been adopted by the Project 32 team as a helpful way forward. While he was speaking, a penny dropped for me, that the lebenslauf itself can be a tool for strengthening and reviving Christian community.

The emphasis of the weekend was on fellowship, so the programme wasn't overloaded. The calm and gentle care and hospitality of Corrymeela, with plenty of tasty and nourishing home-cooked food, set the tone. And then there was cake. The beautiful landscapes, ever changing with the weather and lighting conditions, enhanced the atmosphere. And of course, Christian fellowship is rooted in worship, and we were ably led

in morning and evening prayers by members of our group. On the Saturday we also joined Corrymeela's evening reflection in the Croi (Irish for heart), led by the Community's leader, Alex Wimberly. And there was cake. Saturday afternoon was free, so some walked, some explored Ballycastle, some just chilled. And all chatted, and there was cake.

Thanks to the succession of storms pestering the UK at the time, I was the only participant from England. I came by ferry on a calm day, but frustratingly someone else who had booked to come was stymied by their local airport being shut down for the whole weekend, with all flights cancelled. I had never met four of the participants before, and three I knew only slightly, but by Sunday afternoon it was as if I had known everyone all my life. Such is the powerful effect of the presence of Jesus amongst us. Such is the magic of Corrymeela. Such was the skill and love of Jill's leadership. And, of course, there was cake.

Special thanks must go to Sr Sarah Groves and Br Livingstone Thompson for organising the event, and to Sr Jill Vogt for her leadership, input and companionship. Since retiring from Moravian ministry, I have not been able to worship regularly in a Moravian congregation and have felt a bit on the edge of things. This weekend made me feel I was back in the heart of the Family.

Br Martin Smith



What's on in your area for your families and young people?

HERE ARE THE EVENTS IN APRIL

We are endeavouring as PYCC (Provincial Youth and Children's Committee) to collate together regularly the known events and services that are shared to us by the churches across the province of events and services that are deliberately aimed at growing and nurturing our families, children and young people. We hope that by advertising these people will become more aware of the events in their local areas that they can then share with their families, friends and neighbours and use these as a springboard to invite people to them. All of these events are discipling and feeding this younger end of our church family which as a Province we are hoping to see growth and development in.

Here is a list of events that have been sent to us for the month of April. If you look at it and see that your family/youth event is not advertised please contact Sr Claire Maxwell so she can collate the information for the month of May for you in this space. Her contact details are: claire.maxwell@moravian.org.uk.

Lancashire

Wednesday 3rd and 10th April - at Fairfield Moravian Church in the College: New Lego / Building club:

- 10.30am - 11.30am SEN session.
- 2pm - 3pm open Session.

Cost is £1 per child (incl drink). Any Age welcome but children must be supervised.

Every Thursday - Fairfield Moravian Church runs a Tots Time 10am - 2.30pm in the College (under 4s with an adult).

London

Saturday 20th April - Hornsey Moravian Church has Family Lego Club from 10am - 11.30am aimed at children up to 11 years old with a guardian or adult family member. Cost is £3 per child (£2 per additional sibling).

Yorkshire

Saturday 6th April - Horton Moravian Church tea, coffee, cake, halal snacks and Under 5's provision from 10am - 12pm. Prices ranging from 50p - £2 for tea/coffee/cake. All welcome. Children must be supervised.

Sunday 21st April - Lower Wyke Moravian Church, Café Church, refreshments and fellowship from 10.30am. All ages welcome and worship at the centre of this Sunday service.

Every term-time Friday - Lower Wyke Moravian Church hosts Adventurers for those aged 9 - 13 years of age from 7pm - 8.45pm. All are welcome. Subs are £1.50 each week for tuck.

Every second and fourth Sunday - Lower Wyke hosts a 14+ Senior Youth Club from 7pm - 9pm. Subs are £1.50. All are welcome.

What to wear?

This question comes up for many people before all kinds of events, and whether you have lots of different types of clothing or very few does not really matter. It is important that you look right and fit in with all the others who have been asking the same question.

It is not simply a matter of fashion, trend or taste but could be a mix of all three. And again does it not depend on what is clean? I know that our sisters will even phone friends to check what they are wearing before deciding on their own personal apparel.

For many special occasions there are set dress codes such as ladies being required to wear a hat or the gentlemen a suit. Then when it becomes too hot the code is relaxed and the men may remove their jackets, as happened at Ascot one year. A request for the relaxation of the dress code was often heard at a British Provincial Synod a few years ago.

Some of us grew up when clothing was rationed, and you had to have sufficient clothing coupons as well as the money to purchase something new. Then if you were still growing a perfect fit was rejected in favour of a larger size which was bought for you to grow into!

Hand-me-downs may or may not fit well, but very often they have to do - even if not really acceptable. There are some who enjoy rooting through the second-hand clothing racks in the charity shops and sometimes come up with a real bargain, meaning it could be worn at the Royal Garden Party.

Which brings me to the Sunday best or clothing that may be worn for Church. New clothes were bought in some places for show on Whit Sunday when the Church paraded through the streets and the spectators might admire the new finery. But there has always been a desire to dress up for Church, as if God needs to see us in our best.

Now there is quite a change in worshippers' thinking about appropriate clothing - which I am glad to see - for we seem to be more ready to believe that the important thing is not what to wear but to be there!

Br John McOwat



To Editorial Team,

Br Alan Holdsworth is organising a Yorkshire Moravian Church members gathering at Lower Wyke Moravian Church on Thursday 25th April, approximately 11.30am-14.30pm, to discuss our personal worries about our present day and future days concerns and what we as committed Christians must do about it. He will not be speaking but listening, so please come along with your constant concern. He is hopeful that this gathering may be a stimulating subject to discuss at relaxing times at Synod.

A light lunch will be available and there will be no charge and no collection. Further details to follow to Church's secretaries. Please bring someone with you.

Yours,

Br Alan Holdsworth.

The Men's Shed Movement



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The Men's Shed concept developed in Australia following a 1995 conference focusing on poor health among Australian men and led to the formation of the first Men's Shed. This phenomenon rapidly spread across the country and beyond in subsequent years and became known as the Men's Shed Movement. By 2010 it had reached Ireland where today there are currently some 450 Men's Sheds in existence. The Movement continues to spread apace throughout the UK and elsewhere.

Much is known about factors associated with poor health among men. In general, men are likely to be somewhat less assiduous than women in looking after themselves, likely to be more reticent about availing of the services of doctors, pharmacists and opticians, and prone to taking little exercise. In addition, men may become socially isolated subsequent to retirement, or follow a poor diet, drink excessively and engage in risky behaviour. Men's Sheds offer an environment that can improve Men's health and wellbeing.



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As the name suggests, Men's Sheds cater for men although some also admit female members. Members are generally of retirement age as the activities mainly happen during the working day. Some Sheds however also offer evening and Saturday morning sessions to attract younger men.

I am a long-standing member of North Belfast Men's Shed which has regularly been in operation five days per week since 2011 as a cross-community facility. Members come from a diverse range of work lives to join in the comradeship that pervades our Shed.

We have learned new crafts and skills from tutors on courses brought in by the Shed (for example watercolour painting) and have also run our own courses on subjects as diverse as digital photography, scroll sawing, pyrography, cookery for men and mastering the woodwork router. We have also had a popular series of ukulele classes.

We have a fully equipped woodwork shop, a laser cutting studio, an arts and crafts room, a pool room and the most important area, a canteen. The most frequently used piece of equipment in any Shed is of course the kettle!

Some activities that started in the Shed have encouraged the formation of special interest groups: a walking group, fishing club, bowling club and gardening club all started in the Shed with a few like-minded individuals joining together and organising their interest group activities.

We expect to organise a day trip somewhere each month - trips to other Men's Sheds are always well attended, generally followed by lunch and a trip to somewhere interesting in the locality of that particular Men's Shed. Other trips have included a visit to a gasworks museum, heritage railway project, the Ulster Folk Museum and the Armagh Planetarium. One highlight

was a trip to Dublin to meet President Higgins at a garden party at his official residence.

We have visited several Men's Sheds throughout Ireland and have hosted other Men's Sheds as they visit Belfast. For example, we will shortly host Longford Men's Shed who are travelling to Belfast by train and staying overnight in Belfast before visiting the Titanic exhibition and having a tour of Belfast City Hall.

Shed visits have helped us to discover that Sheds are all different yet basically all the same. Sheds are run by the members for the members and will reflect the interests and capabilities of the members in that particular Shed. For example, some Sheds will have a bias towards gardening with raised beds, polytunnels, plant sales and the like. This said, woodworking and art and craft activities are integral to activity in most Sheds.

We support our local community where we can. We have made bird box kits and taken these into schools and community groups to help them assemble them. We have just completed a project for a local integrated primary school to build them 21 playground benches. We renewed the timber in a series of raised beds for a community garden. We have made nest boxes for the RSPB and commemorative floats for a suicide prevention charity. A local charity shop asked us to look at 150 donated watches and we managed to get 125 of them fitted with new batteries and suitable for resale.

An active Men's Shed can be a real benefit as is evidenced in a recent evaluation report conducted for North Belfast Men's Shed. It concluded that the initiative is:

'one in which older people are evidently supporting older people. The Shed has developed in such a way that is not others doing things to or for older people but is older people developing their own skills and sharing all their learning and experiences with others in the Shed.'

This is true also for the wider community, with the Shed - on a cross-community basis - providing fundraising support for causes and items to schools and other local community organisations.

The most important aspect is of course the change for men. For some it created new relationships following difficult retirement experiences; for others it created new skills and learning; and for others it was simply a place to be safe with others. The health benefits, family benefits and community benefits simply cannot be understated. This positive impact on men who are generally difficult to reach - on a cross community basis and across all manner of social divides - is to be highly commended.'

Br John Cooper
Cliftonville, Belfast

What to Expect at Summer Camp 2024

As you are hopefully well aware our theme in 2024 is that of 'Belonging' and the booking for summer camp is open now! Our theme 'Belonging' really helped myself and James as we set out to visit our location for summer camp, Bell Heath, as we knew what we wanted to see and we are thrilled to say we found it!

Where is Bell Heath?

Our Summer Camp location this year is not far from Birmingham whilst still feeling like you are set in quieter surroundings. We hoped for larger spaces than last year where we could create 'belonging' through Senior and Junior Campers having opportunities to work together and separately in smaller groups. This location certainly allows us to do this. I hope over the next few minutes that this will help you to visualise the place that we picture our young people from across the Province gathering together to learn together alongside God.

Our first impression on arrival of Bell Heath was that this was a hidden gem - just off a more main road you arrive to a clearly signposted entrance with plenty of parking. The building itself is long and gives you the distinct impression of space and room for lots of fun.

On entering, we were shown the incredible dining room space. It will not only be perfect for eating in but also doubles up well as an indoor game space or an ideal space for indoor summer camp workshop.

Last year we had an indoor workshop on Bhangra dancing which was really good fun and as the Provincial Youth and Children's Committee (PYCC) we are asking the Summer Camp leadership to hopefully resource another fun 'movement' activity for us all to try. Watch this space! Last year's Bhangra dancing was a real highlight for many, and we feel confident in this new space that many more 'highlights' are possible. We also believe it provides us with much needed space to do artwork akin to what we managed to produce last year. The photo is from last year's summer camp where we used our dining area to run games such as Taskmaster as well as do some prayerful art and reflection. With a bigger space come bigger ideas ... so watch this space.

What's the sleeping area like?

The bedrooms this year are bunk beds like last time. However, unlike last year each bedroom is a fully separate room (with walls up to the ceiling) which we imagine will lead to even happier campers than last year. Our dorms are separated into girls and boys with both sections leading back into the major social areas of the space.



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What about the food?

Like last year we plan to cook again - including some of our favourites like home-made pizza. As ever we will work to dietary requirements and so ask that you fill these in on the form you send in with your deposit. The kitchen at this space is far bigger and has far more space for team cooking and is just off the main dining hall making working together and eating together an ease and a joy. Last year a lot of our young people showed us some great cooking skills with others learning from their peers how best to do things like chop onions. As a team we are looking forward to seeing how our returners are doing in their cooking skills as well as learning about what people love to eat and cook at home from any new summer campers. I recall a young lad from Northern Ireland raving about a home-made cake he makes at home, and we loved hearing the enthusiasm for self-sufficiency when it came to making food.

Although cooking hasn't always been something we have done at Summer Camp, last year proved that there was joy to be had in sharing in the preparation, cooking and eating together of the food as a group and one we want to do again.

Are there other social areas at this Summer Camp?

Yes! Inside there are several other smaller rooms including one we think will be perfect for our Summer Camp Film Night. It has projection facilities as well as plenty of seating space. It might not be as pretty an outside view as last time, for those who came, but there is far more space to go off and do smaller group work / relax in.

Even when we were on site Br James Woolford was already very excitedly thinking about what films to suggest in our summer camp planning meeting having seen the space. Popcorn at the ready!

What's outside?

The outside space at the Bell Heath Centre for 2024 is great. Like last time there is a campfire space which will be perfect for those wind down times where just a marshmallow will do. There is also a football field/rounders area as well as a basketball court with nets. Finally, there are high rope and low rope areas which can be used when supervised and with a booking.

A personal highlight for me last year was when we played Werewolf around the campfire but I know others really enjoyed the outside sessions including the game of 'Moo' and rounders.

This year the space allows for different types of game as well as old favourites. And there is more than one running around space which we are really pleased about.

Should I be excited about Summer Camp 2024?

Absolutely! The location we feel has the real potential to make this Summer Camp and we are thrilled to already have return campers booked. Thank you! The sooner you book, the easier it is for our Summer Camp Planning team to start planning and making sure we can book accurate numbers for each activity. So please, if you have any doubts, please get in contact with Br James Woolford and ask questions. If not get your £35 deposit and booking form into Br David Howarth and join us as we explore what 'Belonging' means for us this 2024 Summer Camp.

Sr Claire Maxwell
PYCC

Showing Mercy - Go and Do likewise

(Luke 10:36-37)

A sermon given by Br Livingstone Thompson at the Dublin Council of Churches for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on 18th January 2024

Introduction:

Needless to say, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I am really honoured with the invitation to bring the message. I bring greetings on behalf of our executive Board of the Moravian Church, and from Sr Sarah Groves, our Bishop in Northern Ireland, President elect of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC).

The Week of Prayer of Christian Unity is and remains an important ecumenical action, as churches keep the habit of praying together. The symbol, the meaning and the hope of ecumenism lie in this: that we occasionally meet for prayer; we occasionally stop by each other to give and receive the hospitality of common prayer.

Exegesis - in search of neighbourliness:

This year we meet under a theme which encourages us to give Abrahamic hospitality and challenges us to pursue Samaritan neighbourliness. A willingness to stop by, to stoop over, or to show hospitality and give welcome are gathered up in this theme, 'Go and do likewise'.

As risky as it might seem, I want to invite you to focus on the text in Luke 10:36-37. I say risky because with a text so familiar as this story, you are justified in asking what else could be said that has not already been said.

Let me read again those two verses of the text:

'Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

In his book, *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell called my attention to a piece of research I managed to locate, which is modelled after the Good Samaritan story: two psychologists from Princeton University, John Daley and Daniel Batson, conducted a study entitled *'From Jerusalem to Jericho: A study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior.'* As I said, the study was modelled after the Good Samaritan Story and was designed to establish what factors led to the likelihood of helping others in an emergency. In my view, the results of this study are important for how we locate ourselves in this Luke story and the way in which we interpret it. The outcome of the research should at least be considered in how we interpret the motivation for behaviours in this story.

In the Princeton study a group of seminarians, whom Darley and Batson met individually, were asked to prepare a brief talk, without notes, on given biblical theme, then walk over to a nearby building to present it. In a way replicating the Good Samaritan story, on the way to make their presentation each student ran into a man slumped in the alley, head down, eyes closed, coughing and groaning. The question was who would stop to help. Variables introduced in the study included a pre-study questionnaire about why the seminarians chose theology as their field of study and the role of religion in their lives. The topics on which they were asked to speak also varied, but some were given the story of the Good Samaritan as their topic. Some students were made to feel they needed to hurry to get to their

presentation, others were made to feel that they had more than enough time, but they should head on any way.

You might think that at least those students who were going to speak on the story of the Good Samaritan would be the most likely ones to stop and offer help to the man in the alley. What the researchers found, in fact, was that most people didn't stop to offer help. In fact, on several occasions, a seminarian going to speak on the parable of the Good Samaritan literally stepped over a victim as he hurried on his way.

The issue of Time

The factor that was the most important predictor of whether or not help was given is time: whether the student was rushing or not. This is really important because, according to researchers, 'The convictions of your heart and the actual contents of thoughts, are less important, in the end, in guiding your actions than the immediate context of the behaviour.'

Re-reading the story in light of the Princeton Research

To the extent that this research holds merit, and I am not aware of anyone who has questioned its findings, there are a number of implications about how we might judge our own motivation for being a neighbour and the behaviours of the actors in the story.

The **First** implication is this: we might need to revise our thinking about the priest and the Levite. We have tended to see them as people not wanting to risk the sanctity of ceremonial status and in so doing missed the opportunity to show mercy. However, whether or not mercy is shown, as the Princeton study demonstrated, might be simply a matter of time. Could it be that the difference between the Samaritan, on one hand, and the priest and Levite on the other, was time or the perception of time.

For if we consider the role of the Levite, for example, it was not one that was devoid of the ability to show compassion. In Numbers 8:19, we read, *'From among all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the tent of meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary.'* In Numbers 1:53 we read, *'The Levites, however, are to set up their tents around the tabernacle of the covenant law so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community.'* Here, the Levites mediate between God and the community. They stood as a kind of go-between. God looked on them and spared the community from wrath. The Levite was seen in a sort of redemptive role, so that God looked at the Levite and pardoned the community.

In brief, the Levites were not bad people but in a specific context they lacked the Samaritan difference that the moment required. It seems that being neighbour is about being possessed with the Samaritan difference that matters in a specific context.

The **second** implication of this research is this: there is no immediate or necessary correlation between convictions and

actions. Those who failed to show mercy in the study were even ready to speak about the lesson on the good Samaritan. In all likelihood, the priest and Levite were in pursuit of solemn duties of love in the service of God. We are aware that even the knowledge and belief that some activities and habits are bad for health, relationships and morality are not enough to lead to the desired action. Having the belief that it is good to help, as the Levite was called to do, did not mean that help was given. How often have we read a situation requiring action that we are able to give and know it would be desirable to and yet we still chose not to act, giving ourselves the necessary justification.

A **third** implication is this: unless we have the Samaritan difference in the specific context, we are likely to behave as the priest and the Levite in the story. In this respect, the story aligns with the outcome of the research. Finding the Samaritan difference is important, but it is not the same thing in each situation. The error we make, in reading this story, is that we think that the Samaritan difference is always the same thing. The priest and the Levite may have succumbed to what is called the bystander problem. Although we have the impression that each of them passed by on their own, they might have done what bystanders sometimes do and assumed it was not their problem to fix. The priest might have assumed that someone else will pass by and he would be right. For that reason, he didn't have to take responsibility for acting. Similarly, the Levite might have said to himself, 'I'm sure I am not the first to pass by', and he would be right. Why should I make it my problem, if the person before me didn't make it his problem. The bystander problem is the bane of the suffering neighbour, when I console myself that someone else will help. The fact that there might be several people who can be expected to help is sometimes, part of the reason that help is not given.

The Samaritan difference in the research was the time or perception of time that the students had. In that context, the amount of time was the factor that made the difference in behaviour.

However, we should not assume that time will be the factor making the difference to behaviour in each situation. When Kitty Genovese was stabbed and killed in New York, a story that rocked the New York media some years ago, no less than 38 persons heard her screams yet not one of those 38 had the Samaritan difference even to call the emergency. It was that they needed time to call, they needed simply to take responsibility. Each seemed to have assumed the other would. Here the problem was options. Too many options proved to be a hindrance to the desired behaviour. In that context, the Samaritan difference is one which says, I am the one who will make the difference.

The Samaritan Difference - Connection

All of that being said, I believe that our Samaritan in the biblical story had something, which the priest and the Levite didn't have. It could be that he had more time than the two who passed before, but I think it was something else.

Knowing what that thing was will add to Samaritan currency, which we know already includes time and awareness that I need to take responsibility. Building up our Samaritan currency and competence will make a difference if we're going to go and show mercy.

Connection

In this story and possibly many Samaritan stories, the Samaritan difference is what I call the ability to make connection. It appears to me that the Samaritan was able to make connection with the realities of the wounded man. He himself or someone close to him, might have been in that very situation; he might have experienced what it is to be passed over or to have people passing-by. He connected. The need to make connection with the neighbours in a variety of contexts is why we need diverse churches. The danger of a church lacking in diversity is that it is able to make only limited connections, which means that it will encounter many neighbours and simply passed by on the other side. We pass by not because we're bad people; we pass by because we are not able to make a real connection with the neighbour.

Compassion

There is a relationship between connection and compassion. The word for compassion implies the yearning of the bowels. The word includes the words for the bowels and the spleen. It refers to the ability to feel something inside; when it relates to someone for whom we feel a sense of tenderness, we call it butterflies, alluding to that sense of nervous shimmering.

We can say the Samaritan felt butterflies for the wounded man. Unless we're able to feel butterflies in our tummy for the neighbour we will not be moved to act with tenderness, love and care. We need to feel sometime inside our bowels.

Compulsion

It is for this reason that community-based organisations are more and more appreciating the power of lived experiences. The sense of connection was expressed in compassion and created the compulsion for action.

Conclusion

So how are we doing? Do I need to shout? The point I want to reiterate is this: making the Samaritan difference, will depend on the context. As research shows, sometime the difference might just be that we have more time. Our Luke story seems to revolve around the Samaritan being able to make connection with the wounded man and many Samaritan situations will require that currency. Go then, and be the Samaritan.

Br Livingstone Thompson

Minister of University Road Belfast and
Kilwarlin Moravian Churches



'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Br Joachim Kreusel

Br Kreusel is the Minister of Ockbrook and Leicester Moravian Churches, a Bishop, and serves on the British Mission Board and in that capacity has strong links with the Moravian Church in South Asia.

Tell us about your background, early years, education, family

I grew up in a small town, called Flöha near Chemnitz in East Germany. My parents encouraged my brother and myself to take part in the life of the local Lutheran Church. We were also connected with the Moravian Church. Being a Christian in a communist country was difficult and liberating at the same time.

Difficult, because access to higher education and a good professional career were almost impossible. Liberating, because a power lies in the freedom not having to conform with those in power.

I went to the local school, then trained as an electrician. After working for a few years I did a voluntary year in the Moravian Church in Neudietendorf in Thuringia, then entered a theological college in East Berlin, studied for four years, and became a student minister and came back to Neudietendorf, working in both the Lutheran and the Moravian Church. This is also where I experienced the 'fall of the iron curtain'.

How and when did you come to faith?

I cannot pinpoint any particular time when I became a Christian. I grew into it. My parents were leading by example. Of course, there have been a number of people who gave me a little positive 'nudge'. The local Christian youth group, but also events put on by the Moravian Church have definitely helped me to grow in faith.

What led you into the ministry and how did you hear God's call?

When doing the voluntary year being guided by the local minister, I noticed the importance of the spiritual life in an atheistic environment which I would also describe as 'spiritual starvation'. This prompted me to explore possible routes of Christian service.

What has been your greatest joy in ministry?

No single greatest joy because there can be so many different joyful situations for example: when I see someone comforted in grief, or when someone finds a new direction after severe confusion. Baptisms and weddings bring joy, but sometimes even funerals, when the person who died had a deep faith in God.

I have the privilege to walk alongside people within the church and outside of the church, here, and in other countries, like India, Nepal, Tanzania and of course Germany. This often brings joy.

Tell us a bit about how you came to England and your work here

Br Derrick Woods visited a synod of the Continental Province of the Moravian Church and mentioned that there was a shortage of ministers in the British Province of the Moravian Church. This was the starting point for considering helping out for a while.



© Br Joachim Kreusel

It was not an easy decision as our children were still small, but it was a great opportunity to learn another language and culture. After a lengthy process of discernment, we felt that this would be the right step. The initially planned five years turned now into nearly 26 years! Hornsey Moravian Church in London became our home, and we were made so welcome that it was difficult to leave; and now Ockbrook and Leicester are also great places to be.

Are you afraid to die, do you believe in a resurrection, and if so, what will it be like?

I don't think I'm afraid to die, but I don't know what I will feel when death knocks on the door. I believe in resurrection, but I also know that we can only talk about it in imaginary pictures. The Christian faith in general, and the prospect of resurrection points well beyond what we can experience here, and this is so comforting that our limitations here are not all that is.

What can we learn from other Churches here or the Moravian Churches in South Asia?

I see life in general, and churches, like a jigsaw puzzle. We are not complete without each other. As God's creation is full of variety, so different churches bring a variety of gifts to the table. It was deeply humbling when this year I visited the Moravian Church in Haflong in the mountains of Assam. We met people who lost almost everything in the heavy monsoon rains, yet did not complain, but radiated a contentment and joy that can only come from God.

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

Maybe we are sometimes too busy with ourselves, and with what we like, and how we think things should be done, and not paying enough attention to the needs around us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, 'The church is church only when it is there for others.'

Some personal preferences - films, books, and music?

I am open to many different genres. Music could be anything from classical to reggae, depending on the environment and mood. I would choose more carefully when it comes to films. A good documentary or a film about a real life story is my preference. I'm interested in history, or a good novel. It could be in English or in German.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

On my grandfather's and also on my dad's gravestone is written, 'The Lord is my shepherd'. (Psalm 23:1). This would be nice on my one.

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

I don't have any major regrets. There is 'joy in ministry', and on a personal level my four daughters and their families, my grandchildren, family and friends bring me joy.

Also - in the face of so much suffering in the world - thankfulness for our life in this part of the world.



© Brs Mortimer, Ingham, Stonehewer and Torkington

The Clock and Cupola at Fairfield



Br Torkington manually winding the clock for the last time



Dismantled parts of clock



Cupola from Brethren Street

In the past few years, the clock at Fairfield has stopped working and the fingers on its four faces stuck at 12 o'clock. It was decided at the congregation council in 2023 to repair this iconic part of the Settlement.

In the archives it is noted that in May 1786 some final touches were needed. On May 21, at a Lovefeast, subscriptions were sought for clock and bell, and various articles of furniture, to the amount of £168. So began the story of the clock.

The tradition and practice of Herrnhut are seen to be in operation at Fairfield when, for the first Sunday in May, 'This being the Festival of our dear Single Sisters they were, as is usual, awakened between 5 and 6 o'clock by our Musicians'. This greeting of the Single Sisters' Festival with music would have meant that the players on brass instruments would have gone up into the cupola to play. Brass instruments were also played on Easter Sunday morning to welcome the risen Lord.

There was some peril in having a clock in the Cupola over the roof of the church. In May 1818 the 'weight of the clock, 176 lbs, having fallen this week and injured the ceiling of the vestry. It was observed that it would be preferable to hang it in such a manner so that it may come down by the Bell Rope, and in case of it falling, be made to drop on the ground under the floor, and thus prevent in future, occurrences of a similar kind'. This was not the only time the weights fell through the ceiling: in the 1930s it happened again and damaged two pews

in the middle section of the church. Fortunately, it was when the church was empty.

The original clock mechanism was replaced in 1955. An old handwritten note found in the back of the clock service card tells us the mechanism now in place



(pictured here) was made by William Groves of Leeds c1830-1840. William had a clock repair and manufacturing business in Kirkgate Leeds. An almost identical clock to the one at Fairfield exists at Birkenshaw Church near Bradford. Further work was carried out on the clock face in the 1960s (see picture below).



© Brs Mortimer, Ingham, Stonehewer and Torkington

Originally the clock only needed winding up once a week, but after the alterations to the church interior in 1908 the length of the drop of the weights was reduced and it needed winding twice a week. The bell has always struck the time on the hour but at one time it also struck on the half hour. Br Torkington remembers being in trouble for not going home for lunch, whilst playing out on time, as he mistook the half past one strike for the one o'clock!

The repair of the clock in 2024 will include the automatic winding on the clock. At present there are three flights of stairs, one section extremely narrow up to where it needs winding, and also a device that will automatically regulate the time with out going into the roof space. In the past the clock was subject to going slower or faster depending on the weather. Automatic ringing of the bell will soon be able to be done from downstairs as well. The total cost of the refurbishment will be £33,000.

Sr Janet Warr

Fairfield

Archive quotes taken from Br Mellowes book 'A Short History of Fairfield Moravian Church'.

Leominster, Herefordshire

A big thank you to the Kindle and the Gracenotes choir who sang a sponsored singathon for eighty minutes to celebrate Dilys' 80th birthday. Well done ladies, the singing was enjoyed by all so a big thank you again, and donations to go to the repair of the church organ.

Sr Dulcie Scott



© Sr Dulcie Scott

Cliftonville, Belfast

We were saddened to learn that Br Stephens' mother was in intensive care, and sadly she passed away a few days after he and his wife arrived in Michigan. We record our sympathy to Jared and Elaine and to the wider family.

We are grateful to Rev David McMillan, Rev Robert McKee

and Br John Costley who kept the Cliftonville services until Br Stephens' return.

We thank Sr Vivyiene Davis for her generous gift of a new dishwasher for use in the church, until now the beakers were taken to the dishwasher in the church hall after the Sunday service.

Sr Edna Cooper

University Road, Belfast

member of the University Road MWA circle some 60 years ago, and an inspirational leader. He himself has been an avid supporter of the work of the association over many years.

The very generous sum of £582 was raised from 'Charity Coffee', but Br David's fund-raising efforts didn't end there; at a birthday party with friends and neighbours further gifts brought the total to an astonishing £757 for MWA projects.

Thanking David, his family and friends, as well as the congregation, for their support, Sr Joyce Morrow, the current leader of the University Road MWA circle welcomed the boost the generous donation will give to projects such as Elim Home and Star Mountain, Masai Girls and Summer Camp, among others.

Well done Br David! We wish you good health and happiness in your 96th year.

Sr Carol Ackah



At University Road on one Sunday each month the fellowship we enjoy following worship is designated as 'Charity Coffee', with donations going to a chosen charity. On Sunday 19th February the Kernohan family were the hosts, providing tea, coffee and delicious cakes and buns in celebration of Br David Kernohan's 95th birthday, and Br David, who is the oldest member of our congregation, requested that MWA (Moravian Women's Association) projects should be the beneficiary from donations. David's late wife Mina was a founder

© Sr Mandy Kernohan

Report from the Spring Yorkshire District Conference

The rollout of Project 32 goes on, the spring conference of Moravian churches in Yorkshire was told.

Br James Woolford of Fulneck has been appointed the district representative to carry the role forward.

Project 32 began in 2022 to help the church grow and rediscover itself while celebrating the 300th anniversary of its founding.

The co-ordinator of the entire project is Br Peter Dornan from Belfast, aided by Br Stephen Maxwell, the husband of Rev Claire Maxwell, of Lower Wyke Moravian Church.

In other matters, the Provincial Board chair Sr Roberta Hoey was asked if there had been any developments regarding the vacant school property at Ockbrook and she replied 'much progress' had been achieved and information would soon

be forthcoming.

Synod this year will take place at Swanwick, Derbyshire, from 18th to 22nd July.

The conference was also told that ministers' stipends were increased in January and compared favourably with other denominations. Some congregations were said to be struggling to finance the increase, but help was being given where needed.

Br Woolford said plans were under way for this year's summer camp from 29th July to 2nd August at the Bell Heath Centre in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside. Places are bookable via Br David Howarth, of the Provincial Board.

Br Woolford also said fresh attempts were being made to gain and share youth work throughout the province. Congregations were also encouraged to

elect a district youth representative.

At the annual elections, Br Woolford was voted in again as chair and Br Philip Cooper (Wellhouse and Gomersal) was elected vice chair. Secretary again will be Sr Diane Thornton and youth co-ordinators Sr Libby Cooper and Br Glynne Dickinson. The Project 32 representative, as mentioned earlier, is Br Woolford and the treasurer is Br Robert Hopcroft. The Moravian Messenger correspondent is again Br Dick Porter.

Members are reminded of the Palm Sunday joint service at Lower Wyke on 24th March at 6pm and a date for the diary is the Choral Festival at Gomersal on 24th November at 6pm. An online quiz on 26th April will raise funds and paper copies will also be sold and distributed.

Br Dick Porter

The Moravian Church Cares for Creation



Please segregate your rubbish and reduce waste



Paper and Cardboard items can be recycled

- Office Paper (copier and printer paper, file folders, note paper, computer paper, brochures)
- Junk mail (envelopes, letters, booklets etc.)
- Greeting cards (no foil or glitter)
- Magazines and Newspaper
- Paper bags
- White/ grey/ brown packing paper
- Paperboard (heavy, non-corrugated paper such as cereal boxes)
- Flattened, corrugated cardboard boxes.

Baldon Moravian Church 21st Beer Festival



Friday 3rd May 2 – 11 pm
Saturday 4th May 12 noon – 10 pm

All welcome!

Large selection of real ales,
plus real cider, wine,
soft drinks and snacks

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Provincial Diary for April

- 11 ICC (Irish Council of Churches) Inauguration of Sr Groves as President Gracehill
- 13 MWA (Moravian Women's Association) Hall Green UCC
- 16-17 Provincial Board Meeting Church House
- 19 Deadline for Synod proposals affecting the Book of Order

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

24th March 2024 Charlotte Erin Grace Taylor Fairfield

Confirmations

3rd March 2024 Barbara Buckley Royton

Received into Membership

3rd March 2024 Barbara Buckley Royton

Deaths

5th March 2024 Sally Biggs Bath Weston

- 1 Easter Monday
- 6 Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power/Destiny) - Muslim
- 9 Ramadan ends: Eid-ul-Fitr - Muslim
- 22 First Day of Passover - Jewish
- 23 St George's Day
- 28 International Workers' Memorial Day (<http://28april.org/>)
- 30 Last day of Passover - Jewish

Dates to remember!

Czech Mission Province of the Unitas Fratrum

Continuing a series of articles from Provinces around the Unity



Present day: Our province has eight congregations and several outstations and our supervising province is the European Continental Province with whom we have close relationships. We have 14 ordained ministers, but five of them are already retired. All congregations now have their own congregational houses, which we have purchased from the Province. In addition, new chapels have been built in Turnov and Prague. At the beginning of November 2023 the Synod of the Province elected a new Provincial Board. Two brothers and two sisters: Rev Ondřej Halama, chairman, Rev Jan Hrudka, Sister Hana Friede, vice-chair, and Sister Jana Nejmanová. Together with the alternates, five congregations are represented in the provincial leadership. The Synod also adopted a new version of the Church Order, which defines our life and ministry within the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren of whom we are a legal part. This will be the case even if the structure

of the whole church changes.

The life of our congregations: In recent years the brutal aggression of fascist Russia against Ukraine has affected the life of our congregations. Hundreds of thousands of refugees, mostly women and children, have come to our country. Our congregations and individual families opened their buildings and homes and are still housing many of these refugees today. This is a lot of trouble, but in some places it also means a revival of spiritual life, where the refugees attend services.

Worship is at the heart of the life of our congregations, and at the centre of it is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. But this also leads us to take our life of faith into the wider community. That is why our congregations prepare programs for children and youth, summer camps for youth, cultural and social programs for different classes and groups of interested people. For example, on the anniversary of Jan Hus, services and

meetings are held in the rocks near Železný Brod, where our ancestors once hid in secret during the times of persecution.

It is gratifying that new people are finding a place in our congregations in this way as well. The community of the Sisters of is working intensively. Once a year there is a big meeting which is an encouragement for the work of the sisters in the specific congregations.

Our greatest concern is the lack of new preachers. A prerequisite for the ministry of pastor is the completion of a Master of Divinity degree. There are not many such ministers. Therefore, preachers with less theological training are also helping in congregations. It is certain that the role of the lay people will increase in our congregations in the future.

For the Czech Mission Province of the Unitas Fratrum,

Br Ondřej Halama.

MORAVIAN HISTORICKO - VLASTIVĚDNÁ SPOLEČNOST

We kindly invite you to

The X. International Moravian Conference

from October the 11th to October the 13th 2024 in Suchdol nad Odrou, Czech Republic

with the main topic

Emigration

300 years since the exile of the first inhabitants of Suchdol (Zauchtel) to Herrnhut on May the 2nd 1724.

Other topics:

13 Anniversaries of Other Moravians

We would like to reach out and invite historians, scholars and students wishing to present their works connected to these topics.

In a series of lectures and papers, new findings and information will be presented about Moravian Brethren who left this region at the beginning of the 18th century in order to restore the Brethren unity in Herrnhut. Thus made an indelible mark in the history of our country, therefore, we want to bring their lives closer to the public. A list of these Moravians is to be found at www.moravian.cz/History_EN.aspx#vyroci.

We welcome presentations, research and contributions on related issues, which will convey and pass on knowledge about the time of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. However, the organizers reserve the privilege to reject presentations which are not related to the topics.

Moravian – The National History Association in Suchdol nad Odrou is preparing an interesting program for the upcoming event. At the Museum of Moravian Brethren there will be an exposition about the Moravians' missionary work opened. Invitations including a more detailed overview of the conference program will be sent till the end of July 2024.

Applicants wishing to present their papers on the Moravians are kindly asked to register their contributions in advance or to consult them by mailing to daniel.rican@seznam.cz. More Information about the conference will be published at www.moravian.cz/History_EN.aspx#vyroci

We warmly welcome you and look forward to your participation.

The Moravian National History Association (Moravian Historicko-vlastivědná společnost)

The Moravian Messenger

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