



# MORAVIAN MESSENGER

## A coat of many colours



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**'Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.'**  
(Genesis 37:3)

I wonder what you imagine the 'ornate robe' that Jacob gifted to Joseph looked like?

Is it like the fabulous rainbow-coloured cloak of the famous musical? Or is it all natural colours?

I wonder what you think the robe would be made of. Wool, flax, linen, goats' hair?

I wonder if there is a pattern in the weave of the cloth. Does it have a collar, pleats, folds, gathers or buttons? More importantly, does it have pockets?

As in most biblical stories, we aren't told this information. To the writer of the text these are just ordinary everyday details that aren't important or relevant to the larger narrative. Everyday items are things that we take for granted and rarely think about in the moment. Imagine looking at photographs taken a hundred years ago of shop fronts and the proud shop owners standing outside. The images allude to a much more detailed story of the time and location, but most of that is forgotten now, as it wasn't documented.

By not including the small details, the writers of biblical texts are cutting out a large part of history, or 'her' story. Women's

work makes up a vital contribution to the community, then and now, which is excluded from the history books. Most of this everyday work was undertaken by women, inside the home or tent, around fires, with children running in and out of the tents. The women would share local news, how to bring up the children, pass on craft techniques to the next generation, and so on.

Each village had its own special stitch or weave. Clare Hunter, in her book *Threads of Life*, says:

*'Traditionally, embroidery and dress provided an intricate code of social signalling, each village marking difference in distinctive stitches and patterns, the construction of a garment or sleeve design, the kind of threads used and sewing techniques, colours and motifs. Needlework was a form of detailed genealogy - each motif and stitch had a specific name, each detail on ascribed locality. It encapsulated human diversity in an internal system of personal and intercommunity communication.'*

Many of these skills and techniques have been lost with the invention of the spinning wheel and weaving loom. Communities, predominantly female communities, are torn apart in order to fulfil quotas and deadlines. Work is now mostly outside the home and the support system offered by home working is no longer there. Weaving/cloth-making is now a corporate industry - think of fast fashion, where costs and safety are cut at the expense of individuals.

But there are small glimmers of hope: women all over the world are reclaiming their crafting communities. Women are using

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## HOPE IN A WORLD TROUBLED BY DIVISION AND VIOLENCE

*Loving God, grant us the gift of hope in abundance in a world troubled by division and violence. Strengthen your people afflicted by apathy and fear.*

So we prayed at the service I have just come back from for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

At times this world seems very dark, internationally, nationally, and individually.

For many people there is a sense of darkness and uncertainty about the future. There is so much we don't know and so much we can and do worry about; climate change when climate change deniers are in power; borders, migration and how we treat people; economic changes; the power of the ultra-wealthy; AI; ... I could go on.

But! But we are called to be a people of faith, hope and love. A hopeful people, a faithful people and a people of love. Pope Francis has dedicated this year as a Jubilee year of Hope with words drawn from Romans 5:5: 'Hope does not disappoint'. He went on to say: 'Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope.'

He calls us to be pilgrims of hope in the world, working for peace, open to life, close to prisoners, the poor,

sick elderly, young, migrants and all who find themselves in difficult situations. He wants affluent countries to forgive the debts of countries that could never be able to repay them (remember the call for Jubilee forgiveness in the year 2000). Lastly, he wants nations to address ecological debt which is 'connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time'.

What a wonderful vision - that we are helping to 'restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone' and to understand ourselves as 'pilgrims on the earth' rather than masters of the world!

Well, I am not a Catholic, but I am up for that - what about you? Can we be 'pilgrims of hope' in the Moravian Church wherever we are and what ever situation we are in? Can we shine light for our Lord and collectively make a difference to those around us. Can we pray, visit the lonely and those in need, challenge the status quo and the powerful, advocate for the helpless, help to restore creation and share the good news that we have found in Jesus our Lord? You in your small corner and I in mine!

**Sr Sarah Groves**  
Editorial Team



## Raising Faith Monthly *from the Youth and Children's Committee (YCC)*

*Our fourth article in this series comes to us from Br Phill Battelle in Ockbrook. He reflects on how travelling has helped shape his perspective on Youth Work.*

*We hope this inspires you as it did us, your YCC Committee: Sr Katie Groves-Bond, Br Kieran Hopton, Sr Lol Wood, Sr Claire Maxwell, Sr Rachel Hamilton and Br James Woolford.*



## Passion in Youth Work

My passion in youth work started at an early age, actually being a part of summer camps and youth weekends. I was influenced and led by many great leaders and their energy and enthusiasm in leading definitely left its mark. This set me on a path to one day becoming a leader, in various camp groups, organising events and taking the full lead in running Summer Camp for a number of years. For me seeing the campers or attendees to events realise their confidence, their personalities, and make connections not only with new friends but also perhaps with God in a safe, uplifting space was so rewarding. It was the same experience I had had so many times before and it was fantastic to be able to offer that to many others.

The passion for offering these experiences and developing my own confidence in ability, opened doors to numerous other linked opportunities. I was invited to go as part of the British delegation to South Africa, which in turn saw me join the Unity Youth Team as the European representative and also assist, where needed, with our Provincial YCC.

It also led me to some further reaches of our Unity when I travelled and worked with the Shristi Academy in Nepal and got involved with the local Moravian churches youth work there. That truly was an eye-opening experience and a chance to renew energies (and share a few camp games) with a whole new group of youth members and leaders. I spent time with

them in bible studies, Sunday school, youth groups, music groups, assisting with teaching, leading school Olympics ... the list goes on. Just like being at camp as a kid, it was amazing to be part of a collective energy that was passionate about leading the next generation, through teaching, sharing, fellowship and most importantly having fun!

More recently I have taken a step back from youth work due to various reasons. However, my last big involvement was in the organising and leading of the Unity Youth Heritage Tour in Tanzania. A four-week event with delegates travelling from all over the world to join us as we toured round the various Moravian provinces was not an easy task. Again, the passion, the enthusiasm and the love of seeing people come together to form lifelong bonds and share experiences was a joy and unforgettable highlight of my life. I pray the delegates from that tour will go on to share their passion and energy with their own congregations and youth members.

I have been exceptionally blessed during my time in youth work and I thank God every day for the opportunity to be part of a young person's experience in church as well as getting to meet so many wonderful people I now call friends. If you, reading this, have a passion for youth work; do get involved! You never know where it will lead or who you might meet ...

### Moravian Provincial Men's Fellowship A warm invitation to a **CELEBRATION**



at Ockbrook Moravian Church  
Saturday 28th June 2025 at 1pm

Please bring your own food.

Tea & coffee will be available from 12.30pm

*This year's theme is on the work of the Mission Board with a presentation by Sr Jane Carter*

### Explore your calling to become a Lay Preacher

Join us for a Lay Preacher (AALP) Training Taster Session

Tuesday 4 March 7-8 pm

On Zoom  
Booking required  
christine.hufton@lutherking.ac.uk

<https://northerncollege.co.uk/>



## A coat of many colours (continued from front page)

their craft skills to make themselves seen and heard. In 2016, following the US Presidential Election, two women created the idea of the 'Pussyhat' to wear at demonstration rallies as a visible symbol of solidarity for women's rights, reproductive rights and opposition to the policies of the Trump administration.

'Craftivism' is a slow craft movement started in the UK by Sarah Corbett which uses craft projects as a form of gentle protest to advance social causes. The projects involved use mostly knitting, crocheting or other forms of needlework. In my craft groups at church, we have participated in a few 'Craftivist' projects, such as embroidering squares with 'Trees for Refugees' to be added to a nationwide installation, 'green hearts' and 'yellow canaries' to highlight climate change. There are many ways to be part of gentle protest using craftivism.

The photograph on the front page is of a piece I made which elaborates my thoughts of feminism and racial justice

and how they are woven together through crochet.

**Yarn.** You will notice that I have used many colours of yarn, and they represent all the different people and faiths around the world. They are random colours but they are interwoven like a tapestry. You might notice some fluffy yarn; this is to remind us to have fun with each other. The piece is bordered top and bottom with green, representing the good green grass that Jesus instructs His disciples to sit on.

**Jewels.** There are beads scattered over the piece, like jewels. They represent the special occasions and festivals that each group has and enjoys.

**Joins.** If you look closely, there are places where threads meet other threads. They overlap and support each other. This shows that there are places of commonality in our different groups that can be celebrated.

**Gold thread.** Finally, there is a golden thread running through the piece, up and

down, connecting everyone together. This is the golden thread of harmony of love thy neighbour.

Weaving, whether it be cloth or culture, is a vital part of human existence. Our interconnectedness is often ignored or forgotten, but when we bring everyone together and everyone has an equal part in God's tapestry of life, we create the most joyous and vibrant piece of work that honours and celebrates God's creation.

**Sr Lorraine Shorten**  
Minister of Bath Weston  
and Bath Coronation  
Avenue Moravian  
Congregations



#### References:

- Clare Hunter, *Threads of Life: A History of the World Through the Eye of a Needle* (Sceptre, 2019).
- Pussyhat Project: <https://www.pussyhatproject.com/>.
- Our Story - Craftivism Collective: <https://www.craftivism-collective.com/our-story/>.

## Fair Trade



© Fairtrade

Fair trade is an arrangement designed to help producers in developing countries achieve sustainable and equitable trade relationships. It started around the end of World War Two and was very much led by religious organisations in its early days. Charities like Oxfam became involved in the movement in the 1960s, but by the early 1980s it was still tiny in relation to the trade market overall.

This was despite the morale justification and the way producers were treated including being short changed. The comparative advantages of fair trade give producers a fair trade premium enabling them to develop their communities and education system in a sustainable way.

It was at this time that the first major fair trade organisation began in the UK, Traidcraft, which had religion incorporated into their way of working e.g. prayers first thing in the morning. They promoted sales through fair traders, many of whom sold the goods through their church. The sales began to take off not only in the UK, but in other European countries (although never in the Americas).

The fair trade movement grew to such an extent that supermarkets began to

sell some limited ranges of Fairtrade goods e.g. bananas, coffee etc. When the supermarkets came on board this meant that Fair trade sales became mainstream.

There are many more Fairtrade products than you might envisage, currently they total over 6,000 and this has meant that the Fairtrade premium has exceeded \$1 billion since 1994.

Many of the fair traders who signed up in the 1980s and 1990s with Traidcraft have since, due to ill health and old age had to stand down, and many have not been able to find replacements. So Fairtrade sales through churches has declined accordingly.

The growth in supermarket sales was partly at the expense of organisations like Traidcraft, and with the decline in Church based fair traders, that has had a detrimental effect on their business, so much so that in the last few years a number of them have gone into receivership, for example, 'Thought' who specialised in fair trade socks.

There has been a total dip in Fairtrade sales - as supermarkets are no longer selling many/any Fairtrade goods, and due to company failures. That gap has been filled in a certain extent by online

sales - the major ones in the UK are:

- **Oxfam** - including their ebay account (which offer particularly good prices)
- **Ethical Superstore**
- **We are Fair Trade**
- **Tony Chocolonely**
- **Premcast**

The fair trade movement has also broadened out to include Eco measures, and many Churches are now exploring Eco Church status whether that is Bronze, Silver or Gold accreditation.

So the challenge for Churches and its congregations today, is to continue to support Fairtrade and their principles of environmental sustainability and Fairtrade premiums.

The need is still there, because despite the above successes, there is still a lot of poor practice which means that producers are not able to live other than 'hand to mouth'. So please, if you can, use websites and social media to explore what fair trade can mean for you in this electronic decade.

**Br Stuart Brierley**  
Royton

## 9<sup>th</sup> FEB Racial Justice Sunday

Racial Justice Sunday will be remembered on Sunday 9th February 2025.

**What is Racial Justice Sunday?** This day is a time to reflect on the importance of racial justice issues. In 2024 the theme explored the movement of people from their homelands to new places, examining the motivations behind their journeys and the reception they received. This year's theme is 'Coat of Many Colours'.

**When did Racial Justice Sunday start?** Racial Justice Sunday started in 1995.

**Why is the Church interested in Racial Justice Sunday?** It's a time for churches to come together to pray and take action with the aim of creating a more just and inclusive society.

**Where can we find more information about Racial Justice Sunday?** Resources for Racial Justice Sunday are located on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) website. An order of service is produced each year based on that year's theme, and is made available on the website. The resources aim to inform, challenge, and inspire everyone.

**Is it compulsory for Congregations to observe Racial Justice Sunday?** Each Church leader, congregation committee or lay preacher can decide to participate by using the material available to inform their congregation on the concerns and issues raised. Being informed will allow us to be specific with our prayers and allows us to raise the concerns individually and collectively to Members of Parliament (MPs).

**Prayers:** The following prayers were available on the CTBI website in 2022 and available for use by you even today.

*Prayer of Commitment to Racial Justice (used in 2022):* 'God of light and truth, you call all men and women to live lives of holiness and justice. Help us to see in one another: a heart which is tender, a mind which is humble and a care for our brothers and sisters; so that together we may build up the Body of Christ as a sign of hope and mercy for all. We make this prayer through Jesus our Lord. Amen.'

*Prayer for Refugees and Migrants (used in 2022):* 'Lord Jesus Christ, in your ministry you were approached by people of many different nations and cultures. You listened to their cry for help, treated them with love and compassion, and brought them healing and wholeness. In our own time may we provide to all those who are suffering the help that they need and the care that they require. May we respond to the invitation of the Holy Spirit to dream of a world made new where the poor are not forgotten but are given the opportunity to live and flourish with good health and equal prospects. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.'

(You can find the website by adding the below information to your browser: <https://ctbi.org.uk/category/witnessing-together/racial-justice/racial-justice-sunday>)

**Br Edwin Quildan**  
Provincial Board



## The Church Leaders Group (Ireland): Church Leaders visit European Institutions

Last year the Church Leaders Group (Ireland) engaged in a two-day visit to the European Institutions in Brussels. Those present were Archbishop John McDowell (Church of Ireland Primate), Archbishop Eamon Martin (Roman Catholic Primate), the Rt Revd Dr Richard Murray (Presbyterian Moderator), the Revd Dr John Alderdice (Methodist President), and Bishop Sarah Groves (Irish Council of Churches President), accompanied by the Joint Secretaries to the Group, the Revd Dr Heather Morris and the Revd Trevor Gribben, General Secretaries of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Ireland.

During a busy two days, the Irish Church Leaders met with Vice-President Antonella Sberna of the European Parliament; Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič; the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU, Ambassador Aingal O'Donoghue; and the Head of the UK Mission to the EU, Ambassador Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby, along with other individuals with significant expertise. The Group also engaged extensively with Aodhán Connolly, Director of the



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Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels, and his team, who greatly assisted in the arrangements for the visit.

The Irish Church Leaders sought to recognise the positive progress that had been made over the years following on from Brexit as well as communicating the ongoing concerns and challenges faced by many sectors and communities especially in Northern Ireland. The Church Leaders shared the wide range of perspectives within their communities and noted the strong level of engagement by the people they met with. They welcomed a sincere commitment from these key individuals to building positive relationships between the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European Union, while recognising the challenges and opportunities that remain especially in relation to Northern Ireland.

*Issued on behalf of the Church Leaders Group (Ireland) by the Church of Ireland Press Office*

# 'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Claire Maxwell



**Sr Claire is the minister of Horton and Lower Wyke Moravian Churches in Yorkshire.**

**Tell us a bit about your background, family, education etc.**

I grew up with parents whose lives showed their faith in their work and the way they were always kind to people and patient. We went 'home' to Fairfield Church where my Grandma and Grandpa Stonehewer lived for all our holidays and went weekly to an Anglican Church nearby where we lived in Southport.

**How and when did you come to faith?**

I think I always was curious and asked my Sunday School teachers in Southport some tricky questions. My adult faith came at Lancaster University where I had some excellent university chaplains who linked faith with active concerns for me like social justice. I always loved the theology of the Moravian Church and it feeling like home.

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

At 22 after training as a Primary Teacher, I knew it wasn't quite the right fit. My chaplain at university suggested I go for a lay role at Sheffield University as an Outreach Worker in the Chaplaincy Department. I got the job through interview and went on from there enjoying lay ministry for three years in this role alongside other roles such as a ESL Teacher, cleaner, optician's secretary and finally a youth worker. Most of the time I had two jobs but sometimes three during this period as all were part time.

I went home when I was 23 or 24 to preach the Easter day sermon at Fairfield when they were in interregnum and Br Richard Ingham came to the service. At the end he encouraged me to consider ordained ministry and gently continued to encourage me via email for a year. My boss at Sheffield also asked nudging questions ... and so I decided if it was meant to be it would become clear through the call process.

**Where and how did you train?**

Northern College, Manchester. I started on the B.A. and transferred to the M.A. course over my time of four years. It was great fun with lots of placements and good, healthy learning.

**What has been your greatest joy so far in ministry and what do you struggle with?**

I love encouraging curiosity. I love conversing with people on the edge of church as much as people who've been there all their life. I think deepening faith is my greatest joy and curating new ways for church to occur. I have loved my Pioneer Ministry and the Bible studies I have been lucky to be a part of in my roles.

I struggle with people who cannot appreciate that what they love in church isn't necessarily the only way to do church. I can understand it, as church is personal and so something people feel protective over, but struggle with the fact that we can't be generous in recognising church needs to be diverse to try and enable diverse people to meet God. Traditional forms of church aren't 'better' than new expressions of church, for instance.

They're all channels to connect and hear from God if they're being healthy and fruitful.

Also, I struggle with the reality of being a good mum and a good minister (and wife). Some days I feel I've won at one and not others.

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

Occasionally, but it's often short lived. I think for me anger with God is often anger at something that's happening which is beyond my control - be it anger at a war happening or someone receiving a cancer diagnosis who is a lovely human being. In reality, I don't believe God creates those problems but is there with the most vulnerable weeping with them in those situations.

**Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death? Do you believe in a resurrection?**

No. I hope dying itself is like a big hug when you go home.

**Why are so many people turning their backs on the Church?**

Honestly, most church communities aren't really ready for the 21st century needs of people, be they families or single people. Church hasn't evolved at the pace of the society to recognise that people still want to know God they're just not always free on a Sunday (working life) and actually that people have got some good questions but they want the space and time to ask. It's not simply a case of being told what to think anymore - the sermon slot suits but not for all generations and not for each Sunday. I can see growth coming in new forms of church and house group churches as it offers this space of validating the genuine curiosity that exists in many generations but especially younger ones. The key understanding is that younger generations haven't turned away from God there's just a recognition by them that the Church doesn't want them to be themselves, so why go.

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

Favourite film - I love at Christmas 'It's a Wonderful Life'. I prefer series to films now, to be honest. Love 'Brooklyn 99' and 'Taskmaster'.

Favourite Music - The Clash's 'London's Calling' - it's just a great rebellious song, isn't it?

Book - Tricky because I read a lot. As a kid I loved 'I am David' by Anne Holm as it felt such an intimate story.

**The place where you feel closest to God?**

Outside. Either in the countryside or mountains or running.

**What inscription would you like on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?**

Nothing beyond my name and dates are fine with me.

# Reconciliation - then and now



© Sr Mary Holmes

Recently, Sr Sarah Groves and I attended a European Province conference in Herrnhut where we enjoyed exploring the meaning of reconciliation. The many activities encouraged us to walk in the footsteps of our forefathers and foremothers, to reflect on what brought them to walk the way of reconciliation. We also looked at our present time and to the future, considering how we can serve, nurture, live and take steps towards reconciliation.

Let us start with the question what is meant by reconciliation? It generally relates to the transformation from a place of separation, hurt and brokenness to healing, forgiveness and reunion. Most frequently today it is applied to countries where society is deeply fractured by historical divisions. The aim is not punishment but a restoration of balance and of living well together.

At the conference the Bible study sessions were important in guiding our personal reflections on reconciliation. We were guided through these in different ways, including meditation and drama. As part of the 'reconciliation then' we were introduced to various ways of exploring reconciliation on 13th August 1727.

One approach took us on the Reconciliation Walk from Herrnhut to Berthelsdorf. At Zinzendorf's Manor

House Claudia Mia, the Unity Archivist, gave a fascinating talk about the events leading up to the August service.

From the Manor House, we walked to the Lutheran Church where the service was



held in 1727. We shared a short service with prayers in the eight languages of the folks present at the conference.

Another walk led us through the forest of Herrnhut along the Sculpture Walk. This was created for Zinzendorf's 300th birthday. One set of faces show how in 1727 there was anger, rejection and finally how people came to walk alongside each other, facing forwards together. Further along there is a communion table, initially designed simply as part of the story. At that time, in 2000, no one could have foreseen the pandemic that hit our world. As Germany

started to ease their COVID rules, Br Peter and Sr Jill Vogt held communion services outdoors at this table. This was so popular that it has become a new tradition.

Sessions to set the whole context for our reflections and the 'now' of reconciliation were led by Rev Dr Alex Wimberly of the Corrymeela Centre, Northern Ireland. Alex grew up as a Presbyterian in the USA and moved to NI many years ago as a Pastor in the Presbyterian Church. Through his work and life at Corrymeela he has developed a broad knowledge and deep understanding of this whole topic. He has worked with young people, families and other groups across the communities in NI that lived through the Troubles. He shared his work with us freely in a number of sessions, interspersed by the other activities.

The design of the conference offered us the space, challenge and encouragement to think deeply about the meaning of reconciliation in our church, lives and our world. The action-packed, thought-provoking content gave us the opportunity to quickly dive into some fascinating conversations and to learn more about the work and challenges of our Moravian church across Europe and beyond.

**Sr Mary Holmes**  
Fulneck

## CONGREGATION NEWS

### Lower Wyke, Yorkshire

Preparations to celebrate Christ's birth once more started at the beginning of December 2024 when the Greenfingers group gathered to make Christmas wreaths under the expert eye of Sr Heather. Their many varied and delightful results were truly fit to welcome a king!

The 'Christmas Gathering' in the church this year included a 'Live Nativity' when adults acted out the nativity story interspersed with carols sung by those who had gathered to browse the stalls, play games and eat the hot pork sandwiches, Christmas cake, mince pies and drink the mulled wine. The festive atmosphere was gathering momentum.

The Christingle Service, led by Sr Claire Maxwell was, once more, the highlight of our church services. The Sunday School, Adventurers and friends presented the Christmas story to a packed church. 130 Christingles were made and we needed more! Baby Jesus was placed in the crib on Christmas Day during



© Sr Claire Maxwell

an inspiring service led by Sr Janet Cooper which completed our celebrations.

'The Lord is come! Thanks be to God' as our Christmas Day liturgy says, and we sang together 'Joy to the world'.

Brn Gledhill and Mallinson led the Watchnight Service when 21 people gathered in the Sunday School to share a 'festive lovefeast', reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025.

What will it hold for us all? - love, laughter, tears and sorrow but through it all God will be with us.

We wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year from all at Lower Wyke.

**Sr Diane Thornton**

© Sr Carole Young

## Bath Weston

Christmas preparations started early as we were asked by Rev Lorraine in our monthly craft evening to make a crocheted Christmas tree. We needed about 1,000 squares altogether, so Sr Lorraine made up bags of wool and a pattern for people to take and make up squares. This went very well: the word got around and the crocheted squares came in by the hundreds. All had to be sewn together and fixed to the frame which was made by Br Rob Williams (Boys Brigade Officer) plus he also inserted a light on a timer to light the tree in the evening and now it's proudly outside for everyone to admire. After the tree was put in place we had carol singing around it. This was enjoyed by many, even people walking by joined in.



### OUR CAROL SERVICE

The Towns Women Guild also joined us and their choir sang three lovely songs. The whole service went with an uninterrupted flow, candles alight all around the church. After the service the TWG put on refreshments for us all to enjoy and to catch up on the gossip!

Sunday 22nd December a film show was arranged for the younger generation plus the oldies who are still young at heart! There was ice cream with flakes, candy floss, juice and mulled wine for the parents. This was put on for free, but we do have a donation plate plus a card machine which is very useful.

It was a nice relaxing couple of hours although the children got a bit hypo after eating too much candy floss!

**CHRISTINGLE SERVICE** at 4.30pm Christmas Eve. This is always a lovely service and very well attended. As the people came into the church there were all different stickers on a tray to choose from (Angel, Shepherd, Joseph, Mary, Donkey, Wise man, Baby Jesus). When Sr Lorraine, who was dressed very glittery, read out one of the names, the people who had that particular sticker did an action, and so it went on to the end of the story. Carols were sung, and it was so uplifting when the church is full and to hear everyone singing their hearts out. All went home happy with a Moravian Christingle. We had one gentleman arrive with a top hat and a black coat, which took me back to the Christmas Carol story!

**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE** at 10am. This is what Christmas is all about: the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The fifth candle which we have is white and is lit to welcome Christ's birth. Sr Lorraine gave us a lovely service and carols were sung. It was a joy to be with our church friends who could make the earlier time and people who just come along on these special occasions. Br Chris Shorten did all the organisation for the technical side of each service and he does us proud!

Wishing you all that 2025 will be filled with peace, good health, joy and love.

**Sr Carole Young**

## Fetter Lane, London

As the first Sunday of Advent approached, we realised that our Christmas tree had seen better days - an upgrade was required. Luckily, the group that uses Studio 1 for its regular second-hand charity book and bric-a-brac sales had a stylish (we are in Chelsea after all) artificial tree among their donations which we were able to purchase for a song. And so we began the time of preparation.

Building on our collaboration with the Chelsea Salvation Army and our growing mailing list of local families with young children, we were happy to welcome back members of the Salvation Army's brass band. Having played to weary shoppers along the King's Road, they joined us and around 50 people for 'Carols in the Close' as we've come to call this event. As well as music, we offered simple crafts activities for the younger children, an impromptu Nativity play directed by Br Edwin Quildan, puppets and refreshments - warm fruit punch, mince pies and biscuits. And woven throughout was the story of the birth of Jesus.

The following weekend we, like many other Moravian brothers and sisters, focused on Christingle. A few of us gathered on Saturday to make around 30 Christingles which were lit the next afternoon, marking the 4th Sunday of Advent. Br Michael Newman, dressed in his Christingle jumper, led the service with contributions from both children and adults.

As we move through 2025 we'll be planning more half-term children's activities, a series of summer talks around the history of Moravian Close and our September Open House weekend. Our regular Friday openings, where neighbours and tourists can drop in for tea, biscuits and a chat, will continue through the winter, bleak or otherwise.

And before you know it - Christmas will be upon us!

**Sr Cynthia Dize**



© Sr Naomi Hancock

## Fairfield, Greater Manchester

As we left what little summer we had behind, church life at Fairfield continued to be busy. On Friday 4th October Fairfield Youth Club started, this is a weekly club each Friday from 7-9pm for 8-14-year-olds. To date we have 10 young people registered with an average attendance of six. Whilst the numbers are low it is hoped these will pick up as word spreads through schools and friendship groups and give local youngsters something to look forward to as the nights draw in.



© Br Owen Gooden

On 5th October Sr Anne and Br Mel Wood organised a Jam & Jackets event. It was such a happy occasion for all involved. The fun started with doors opening at 4.45pm, giving everyone time to get settled and buy raffle tickets then be entertained by Glossop Ukulele Group. A quiz followed with tea (as we call it in these parts: 'dinner' to our southern Brs and Srs) of jacket potatoes and a choice of fillings followed by homemade cakes

and of course gallons of tea and coffee! And then the raffle with lots of great prizes, all generously donated. To end the evening the Ukulele group entertained us again with their singing and playing lots of well know songs so we could join in the singing concluding at 7.30pm. The event raised nearly £500 for the church clock fund but maybe more importantly attracted a hall full of nearly 100 people, many of whom were new visitors to Fairfield and some of whom we pray may come back to join us in the future. The event took a lot of planning and hard work, and we are grateful for the team of willing workers who helped the event be a successful one - not least of all the Glossop Ukulele group who gave their services free of charge. It's been suggested we may do it all again next year so maybe if any of you are planning a visit to Fairfield you may like to join us.

The following Friday, 11th October, a staple of our fund-raising events was held: a Jumble Sale. On this occasion the number of visitors was low, but never the less raised a good sum of £357 for church funds and made the work involved worthwhile.

Our lovely Harvest service on 13th October brought in 12 bags full of food for donation to St Marys Foodbank (for whom we have had weekly church collections for many years now). The large donation has helped them fill their dwindling supplies in the run up to Christmas, but how sad that in a country as wealthy as ours so many people continue to need to rely on foodbanks.

**Sr Margery Sutcliffe**

## Horton, Yorkshire

What a start to 2025 with six inches of snow at the beginning of January! We have had so much wind and rain over the last year that the snowfall was a surprising event. We were lucky that our monthly BD5 churches together coffee morning was the day before the snowfall when it was fine but cold. We started the coffee mornings a year ago and from initial small numbers we now have a regular attendance of between 20-30 people.

Another source of outreach is our ladies fellowship group who meet each week for a different activity. December was a busy month with a display of bell ringing, an afternoon making Christmas wreaths and a party with a visit from a special guest in a red suit!

Also, in December we were lucky to share a very special birthday with Sr Beth McOwat. Beth's family travelled from near and far (unfortunately during one of the named storms but all arrived safely) to join her to celebrate her 90th (I have permission from Beth to mention this!) and after the service in church the



© Sr Brenda Hirst

congregation joined her family for a lovely lunch and time of fellowship.

Sr Claire continues to inspire and challenge us with different ideas during our services. We are all so grateful for her leadership and look forward to new challenges to enrich our worship in 2025.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, peaceful 2025.

**Sr Linda Barraclough**

## Gracehill MWA, Northern Ireland: Festive Coffee Morning

Saturday 30th November heralded an early commencement of Christmas activities in Gracehill, as the MWA (Moravian Women's Association) hosted our annual Coffee Morning. There was an enthusiastic turnout from the congregation and wider community to enjoy a creative selection of festive treats ranging from traditional mince pies and scones to Welsh cakes (Bishop Sarah's speciality!) to indulgent creamy pâtisseries.



© Sr Ruth Johnston

Seasonal harp and piano music from Sisters Cherith and Leah provided a most congenial ambiance for the gathering. Tables were filled with laughter amongst friends, engaging conversations with new people and an overarching sense of Christian joy, companionship and unity in Christ.

Our MWA would like to express sincere gratitude to Gracehill congregation for their prayers and generous support of our charitable projects.

**Sr Ruth Johnston**

## University Road Belfast

At University Road Belfast Christmas 2024 was filled with worship, joy and fun. From the lighting of the first Advent candle through to the Feast of the Epiphany there was a lot happening and much to celebrate.

The Christingle service on 15th December, as always, attracted a large congregation; the church was looking beautiful and the children of our thriving Sunday School led worship in music, song and drama as they acted out scenes from the Nativity.



© Sr Claire James

The traditional service of nine Lessons and Carols, led by Br Derick Woods on 22nd December was followed by the Sunday School Party. This was a special occasion in more ways than one as it was also the 90th birthday of

Sr Annie Speers, one of the longest serving members of the University Rd congregation. Sr Annie was joined for the celebration by family members from home and abroad and Santa was a surprise guest!

The Christmas season activities culminated in an outing to the pantomime organised by Sr Lynsey Cunningham on 5th January



© Sr Lynsey Cunningham

2025. Some 39 members of the congregation, including both youngsters and the young at heart, set off after morning worship and a pizza lunch for Beauty and the Beast at Belfast's Waterfront Hall. The young people were equipped with Panto party bags prepared by the Cunningham family, and a great day out was enjoyed by all.

We rejoice in the warm fellowship of this Christmas season and give thanks for the bonds within our church family which continue to strengthen and grow. None of these activities just 'happen' of course and we are indebted to all those who put in so much of their time and effort, especially our Sunday School leaders and helpers, to ensure they were a resounding success.

**Sr Carol Ackah**

## Ockbrook, Derbyshire



© Br Joachim Kreusel

On Saturday 21st December, we had Open Church in Ockbrook. It was a lovely event and everyone present enjoyed the fellowship with music, raffle and refreshments in a very festive atmosphere.

And another well attended Christingle service.

**Sr Adriana Davey**

## Gomersal, Yorkshire

We started our Christmas festivities with a very successful Christmas Fayre. This was held on the last Saturday in November, with mince pies as well as biscuits to accompany the tea and coffee.

At the beginning of December our Ladies Fellowship held their annual Christmas lunch at a local restaurant. The meal was delicious, and a very good time was had by all. The same evening a carol service with the Spen Valley Divisional Guides took place in Church.

Some of our ladies knitted Christmas Angels and along with others from Churches Together in the Spen and District area distributed them to shoppers in Cleckheaton.

A Carols, Crafts and Christingle family event was held on Saturday 14th



© Sr Norma Machell

December and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The following day our Nine Lessons and Carols service took place. The lessons expertly read, and it was such a pleasure to sing all the familiar carols again.

The Christingle Service was well attended and went really well. On Christmas Eve we held our Holy Communion Service.

Happy New Year to all our Brothers and Sisters everywhere.

**Sr Norma Machell**

## Wellhouse, Yorkshire

December as was to be expected was a busy month. We started the month with the Sisters' Carol Service and Faith Tea, to which friends and two brethren were invited - it was a good afternoon of fellowship. On the 15th we held our service of Nine Lessons with Carols in which many of the congregation took part. On the 20th we met to prepare for the 120 Christingles we hoped would be sufficient for the Sunday, and then on the 22nd we held our Christingle Service - we had just short of 120 there.

The Katie Philpott School of Dance performed three short numbers and a young lady accompanied by her granddad on guitar sang a song. It was all really enjoyed and appreciated by the congregation. This last year the dance class have supported a local charity: 'The Forget Me Not Appeal' for a local children's Hospice in Huddersfield. The Church Committee at Wellhouse decided that we would donate our loose cash collection at the Christingle service to support the dance class and the charity. We collected £228 which meant the dance class sent in a total of £600 to support the charity.

On Christmas morning we met at 10.15am to celebrate once more our Saviours birth.



© Katie Philpott

On the 5th January due to the weather conditions it was decided to cancel our service, to ensure we kept everyone safe.

We look forward to serving our Lord with commitment and with confidence in 2025 and meeting whatever challenged come our way, whether we are paid or un-paid workers.

**Br Kenneth G Evans**

## NOTICES

### Serving the Church

Serving the Church and serving Jesus Christ is a joy and makes this world a place worth living. Following Jesus is a blessing that we Christians have been given. Each path that God leads us on gives us new life, insight, and wisdom. God calls all of us in different ways at different stages in our lives. If you have reached a point in your life when you are wondering, 'what is the next step?' or 'Where is God leading me now?' If you find your heart being stirred as you attend worship, finding yourself restless sitting in the pews, or at home at your computer, and you feel something stirring you to go deeper into the work of the church, then it is probably time to start thinking through these thoughts with someone.

Exploring your call is an important task and should be done with others as part of a faithful conversation.

If you are interested, please contact [joachim.kreusel@moravian.org.uk](mailto:joachim.kreusel@moravian.org.uk). We look forward to speaking with you and pray that you are willing and able to listen to God's voice calling you on in your Christian walk as you seek to follow more and more deeply Jesus.

*From the Church Service Committee*

*Sr Lorraine Shorten (Chair of CSC and minister for Bath Weston and Bath Coronation Avenue congregations)*

## TOTE BAGS FOR SALE

ONLY £5 EACH



### Funds for Bath Weston Moravian Church

To order contact: [Lorraine.shorten@moravian.org.uk](mailto:Lorraine.shorten@moravian.org.uk)

Charity Number: 251211

## FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Provincial Diary for February		
4-5	Provincial Board meeting	Church House
15	Yorkshire District Conference	
	Midlands District Conference	
18	Faith & Order Committee meeting	
20	Church Service Committee meeting	
22	Irish District Conference	
27	British Mission Board meeting	

## CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

### Received into Membership

15th December 2024 Pam Platt Royton

### Deaths

27th September 2024 Laura Henry Hornsey

9th October 2024 Leith Davis Hornsey

5th November 2024 Jane Launder Gracehill

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- 1-7 World Interfaith Harmony Week
- 2 Moravian Annual Prayer Day for those affected by slavery
- 9 Racial Justice Sunday ([www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk))
- 11 World Day for the Sick
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 28 Ramadan begins - Muslim

# LABRADOR

## More adventures



© Br Robert Hopcroft

### Continuation of Br Hopcroft's memories following his call to Labrador in 1971

By 1974, I had been appointed as School Principal as the Johnsons had returned to the USA. Following a well needed holiday with family back in the UK, we returned to Nain with a better idea of what another winter would bring - or so we thought.

We had a full complement of staff, with new staff members from a wide range of places including Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Newfoundland in Canada, Colorado and Massachusetts in the USA and ourselves from the UK being the only Moravians. During our first two years there Bobbie and Dick Johnson and ourselves had been concerned that while all school subjects were taught in English, we felt it was important that the younger generation did not lose their Inuit language and skills. With this in mind we began a programme of inviting local people into school to teach soap stone carving, traditional embroidery and after two years Inuit was added to the school timetable. In addition, at Primary level we realised the primary reading books were often full of examples of pictures of things that the children had never experienced such as sheep, cows, trains, traffic lights etc. Wendy and Bobbie got together to write and illustrate some stories which included seals, whales, snow houses, dog sleds and snowmobiles. These stories were well received in Reception and Grade 1. We then heard of a reading scheme produced by the North West Territories Education Board which were far more appropriate for indigenous people. These were ordered and used regularly to teach reading.

Danielle was thriving as a toddler and she loved the snow. On 'balmier' days Wendy took Danielle out in her parka, snow boots



© Br Robert Hopcroft

and winter gear and although she had never seen a beach she enjoyed making snow castles with her bucket and spade! Rides in the ski-boose towed by the Skidoo was always a delight too.

I think I had forgotten to mention that we had acquired a dog, she was named Scrabble and a Heinz 57 variety! Her name

arose because one night when she was still a puppy, we got up to discover she had eaten a number of the wooden letters from our Scrabble set! She followed Danielle around wherever she went and was a delight to us all.

That autumn the winter came early with temperatures falling rapidly. Our winter supplies had arrived and were safely stored away. We were now accomplished at ordering our winter needs. However, towards the end of November the last boat of supplies was due and the bay had frozen over completely. The Bona Vista had dropped anchor in the bay and was frozen in. What happened next was a sight to behold. As the boat was trapped, all the supplies had to be unloaded onto the ice. All the community came together with

snowmobiles and sleds and the freight was transported from the ice into the store. It took more than a day, but eventually the task was completed and the following day, two Labrador Airways planes made their first flight of the winter on skis. This gives an idea of just how quickly it could change from open water to thick winter ice at that latitude. The boat then stayed put, awaiting an ice-breaker to come and break open a channel in the ice so that it could return safely south to Goose Bay for the winter. It caused an interesting talking point in the town and a great source for creative writing in the school!

**Br Bob Hopcroft**

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