Moravian Messenger

MAY 2024

A celebration of an exciting new agreement between the Moravian Church and the Church of Ireland

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On Monday 18th March, a wonderful service took place to celebrate the Armagh Agreement. The Armagh Agreement is a new and very special agreement between the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church in Britain & Ireland, which was passed at the Synods of both churches in 2022, having been agreed in 2021. The agreement enables inter-changeability of ordained ministry between our two churches.

On the day of the service, the weather, which was windy, wet and rather chilly, contrasted significantly with the warm fellowship which was felt during the entire service. The service took place on the day following St Patrick's Day, a very significant day for the Church of Ireland.

The service was in two parts, with a Service of the Word celebrated at St Patrick's Church, Ballymena, and Holy Communion celebrated at Gracehill Moravian Church, also Ballymena. In addition to the general congregation, made up of members and friends of the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church, there were people specifically invited from the Moravian Church, the Church of Ireland, the Church of England and ecumenical bodies, including the Irish Council of Churches.

Prior to the start of each part of the service, at each church, a tree was planted by children. The children and the trees symbolised the hope that the Armagh Agreement will help both churches to grow and flourish together, bearing much fruit for the kingdom of God. On hand to help with the planting were the Church of Ireland's Primate, Archbishop John McDowell, and Bishop Michael Burrows, who leads the Church of Ireland's Commission for Christian Unity & Dialogue. From our own church, a helping hand was given by our two bishops present - Sr Sarah Groves and Br Joachim Kreusel.

The congregation was welcomed to St Patrick's Church by the Bishop of Connor, George Davison, and the Rector of St Patrick's Church, Canon Mark McConnell, and to Gracehill Moravian Church, by bishop and minister of the Gracehill congregation, Sr Sarah Groves.

In his sermon, Archbishop McDowell drew on his recent experience of attending an ecumenical conference for bishops - a conference that Sr Sarah Groves had also attended. At the conference, a person had said, 'What belongs together has also been brought together.' The archbishop then asked for what reason had the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church been brought together, through this agreement? The archbishop suggested that St Patrick's words, in his Confession, provided an answer. St Patrick wrote, '… the one and only reason I had to go back to that people from whom I had earlier escaped was the Gospel, and the promises of God.' The archbishop hoped 'it is not far-fetched to say that we have been brought together in the wide arc of God's providence for the sake of the Gospel.'

In various ways, ordained and lay people, from both churches, participated in the service. Scripture readings were read by Reuben Rea, Sr Emma Kingham, and the Revd Melanie Sloan. Canon Dr Helene T Steed led the prayers of intercession.

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Editorial

Push Back Against Poverty

There are times when I am tempted to give in to despair. Wars and rumours of wars, vicious military dictatorships, climate change and injustice seem to be all around us. And these things cause desperate suffering, famine, ethnic cleansing and mass migration of populations.

Sadly, a knock-on effect for us is that we think that there is nothing that we can do, things are only getting worse and that our efforts are too paltry to change anything. But that is simply not true. If what I give to charity enables life to be saved by paying for medicine or it builds one home or improves one family's chances, that is a wonderful thing. If 10 or 100 of us do the same then it is an amazing thing. That would be charity or love. You probably know the story of the starfish …

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, 'What are you doing?' The youth replied, 'Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die.' 'Son', the man said, 'don't you realize there are miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference.' After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, 'I made a difference for that one.'

Going further - what if 10 of us or 100 of us ask why the medicine is needed, or why the house needs building or why the family needs their chances improved and what is holding them back. We would then understand the issues behind these problems. That would give us empathy with those in need.

What then if, understanding the issues, 10 of us or 100 of us undertook to challenge the system that restricts the medicine or makes people homeless or restricts families. Perhaps that would begin to change things and that would give us solidarity with those in need.

Chrisitan Aid week is 12th-18th May, and I am so proud that our Church is a founder member of both Christian Aid and Christian Aid Ireland. During that week we will be asked to give to Christian Aid to ease the problems that others, across the world, face. We will also have an opportunity to learn more about the situations that those in need are dealing with. Lastly we will be challenged to act for them and with them in changing the circumstances that keep them poor.

How we mark Chrisitan Aid Week can give a signal to our politicians that they need to hear. They need to know that voters in their constituencies care about issues here and abroad and that the Churches care about poverty and want them to act on poverty too.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

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

We are endeavouring as PYCC 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.

Our hope is 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. 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.

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

HERE ARE THE EVENTS IN MAY

Lancashire

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

Sunday 26th May - Dukinfield has their monthly Youth Service at 11am. It is a family all-age worship service and everyone is welcome. It is well attended by the Guiding and Scouting sections as well as those who are part of the Sunday Church.

London

Saturday 18th May - 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).

Northern Ireland

Every term-time Tuesday - Gracehill Church Hall hosts the Parents and Tots Group from 9.45am-11.15am. £1 contribution from parents and carers.

Each Sunday in May - Gracehill Children's Church starts in Church at 11am and moves into the Church Hall at approximately 11.20am for age related activities finishing at 12 noon. Any money brought to Children's Church goes to the young person's YPMA total.

Yorkshire

Saturday 4th May - Horton Moravian Church from 10am-12pm offers tea, coffee, cake, halal snacks and under 5s provision. Prices ranging from 50p-£2 for tea/coffee/cake. All are welcome and children must be supervised.

Sunday 19th May - Lower Wyke Moravian Church at 10.30am: Café Church, refreshments and fellowship with 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.

2nd and 4th Sunday - Lower Wyke hosts a 14+ Senior Youth Club from 7pm-9pm. Subs are £1.50. All are welcome.

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A celebration of an exciting new agreement between the Moravian Church and the Church of Ireland

(continued)

The prayers, Bible readings and hymns were wonderful. I was deeply moved by the two styles of worship, which contrasted with each other, but complimented each other so beautifully.

Following the service and tree planting at Gracehill, there was a glorious buffet meal for everyone, in Cennick Hall. During the meal, Sr Roberta Hoey, Chair of the Provincial Board, shared some profound words and thoughts with us, in a short speech. Reflecting on the agreement, she said, 'It's been a combination of years of dialogue, understanding and prayerful consideration on all sides.' She added: 'For us (the Moravian Church), ecumenism is not merely an abstract concept; it's a lived reality, it's an imperative that calls all to engage in dialogue, collaboration and partnerships as we strive for unity in Christ.' During the meal, a celebratory cake was cut by the Rt Rev Michael Burrows and Sr Sarah Groves.

The service was very moving and a fitting celebration of an exciting agreement between the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church. I am sure I express the feelings and hopes of us all, when I write that I pray that the Armagh Agreement will grow and flourish in the years ahead, bearing much fruit for the kingdom of God.

Br Philip Cooper
Provincial Ecumenical Officer

An address at the Service of Celebration to mark the Armagh Agreement between the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, dear Friends,

It is with profound joy to be able to address you all on this truly historic occasion - a culmination of years of dialogue, understanding and prayerful consideration.

As the Chair of the Provincial Board of the British Province and as President of our worldwide Unity Board - I am delighted not only to extend the warm greetings of our Church here in Britain and Ireland but also from our wider global context. For us, ecumenism is not merely an abstract concept; it is a lived reality - an imperative that calls us to engage in dialogue, collaboration, and partnerships as we strive for Unity in Christ.

To all who have played a role in making this agreement a reality, I offer my heartfelt thanks. The journey to this moment has been marked by humility, openness, and a genuine desire for reconciliation and understanding. You have taken your time, and engaged in meaningful dialogue, acknowledging our differences while also celebrating the richness of our respective traditions - you have found common ground.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us also look forward to the future with anticipation. The establishment of the reference group provides a valuable forum for guidance and communication as we navigate the implementation of this agreement to realise the full potential of our relationship as we find home in each other.

On a personal note, beyond my official role, it is not lost on me that I am here today as a sister hailing from and grounded in the Irish District, but also as the daughter of a maternal line rooted in St Michael's Parish Church, Trory. As leaders in this region, we must humbly acknowledge the groundwork that is continually laid by our church members and parishioners who have worked and lived alongside each other for years crossing many denominational lines to bring hope and restoration. For this reason, I hope that we regularly recommit to each other as we move forward.

The agreement recognises the special opportunities where we have parishes and congregations but also in theological education, and such possibilities open the door to enrichment and outreach that we may not yet imagine. The challenge before us now is to deepen our lives, working together to give concrete expression of our delight in the Lord. I commend the reference group as they develop: Mr Roy Totten, Rev Dr Canon Helene Steed, Rev Dr Bob Cotter, Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Mr Mark Kernohan, Rev Philip Cooper, Rev Michael Newman, Rt Rev Sarah Groves.

May God Bless your endeavours abundantly.

Thank you.

Sr Roberta Hoey

British Mission Board (BMB) News

On 22nd April Sr Roberta Hoey, Sr Jane Carter (representing the BMB) and Br Jørgen Bøytler (Unity Board Administrator) will be visiting Nepal and Ladakh, India. The purpose of the visit is to initially enter into discussions with the committees and congregations in both areas to consider the best possible ministry support. There will also be an opportunity to meet with the new Provincial Board of the South Asia Moravian Church, following their election in January, to constitute their roles and objectives during the inter-synodal period. Please remember the committees, congregations and PEC members and the BMB in your prayers as we continue to discern the future blessing of ministry and witness in this area of the Unity.

Summer Camp Highlights

© Br James Woolford

This year's summer camp will mark an important personal milestone for me. I have been a leader at camp many times before, but this is the first time I have been asked to be the head leader charged with organising the week. Over the years, I have seen it change and develop in a wide number of ways and so I will take a little time in this article to look back on the things that have changed, and the things that have remained the same.

Firstly, I'm enormously proud that, thanks to the hard work of my fellow members on the PYCC (Provincial Youth and Children's Committee), we have been able to reduce the price of attending camp to a level that we feel means we provide excellent value for money. One of the long running concerns that we heard time after time was how expensive it was to send someone to camp, especially when you may want to send more than one child. Now, because of various adjustments, we are able to offer four nights of camp, including food and activities for just £135 per child. Whilst we know that that this may be still too much for some families, it is excellent value, and we remain very grateful to the Carol Holdsworth Trust who can help anyone who needs extra financial help which ensures anyone who wants to can come to the camp.

One of the happy byproducts of trying to reduce costs and make things better value has seen us now move to self-catering where the children take an active role in preparing and cooking lunch and dinner. Over the many years of sifting through feedback at the end of previous camps, a common complaint has been the quality of the food, which has varied from ok to awful. Last year was the first time we tried this new approach, and the feedback was unanimously positive with many people, me included, thinking the food was the nicest we have ever had. The fact that the children were learning valuable life skills and using new ingredients and recipes was wonderful to see, with hot sauce becoming a firm favourite with many of the boys.

I went into leading last year with the thought that it might well be my last year as a leader. This year will be my son's first time as a camper and it felt like a natural place to hang up the lanyard, but then I found myself once again enjoying my time thoroughly and reminding myself what makes summer camp so special and those are the things that have never changed and are what we consider to be the core values of camp. To me, these are the relationships and friendships that are forged and the growth we see in the children attending. Let me illustrate that with two stories, one from the past, and one from last year to show you how, whilst some things have changed, these remain.

I think it was during summer camp 2013 which was being held in Fulneck and camp had the tradition of holding a talent show one evening as a chance for those campers who wanted it, to show off their many and varied talents. That year I was approached by a quiet and shy boy as he was thinking about singing the song 'Pompei' by Bastille. He was very nervous and worried about people laughing at him. I said numerous words of encouragement and he plucked up the courage to get up and sing. Everyone watching encouraged him and clapped along and at the end of the performance he was literally carried off the stage by cheering campers and he looked to have grown 10 feet tall by the experience. This remains my favourite memory of camp as it wonderfully encapsulates what often happens as the campers support and encourage each other.

Fast forward ten years and to our final evening together. It had always been tradition to end with a disco but what would often happen would be the sight of many of the campers awkwardly shuffling around the edges of the room completely terrified of the prospect of dancing. Last year we invited a man who works for Church Army and is a Bhangra dancing teacher who led us all in a joyful time of dancing and music. He had also brought suitcases full of the most wonderfully colour clothes that everyone could get dressed up in and everyone got involved and cheered each other on as we took part in a glorious celebration of life and light. I know with absolute certainty that if we'd have tried to do that at the start of the week it would have flopped but because of the friendships that had grown and the comfort there now was in each other's presence, it was the perfect way to end the camp.

There is a plethora of other highlights I could have mentioned and numerous golden nuggets that I have experienced during my time with camp, from various insightful comments in bible studies, time in prayer and worship, laughter and tears being shared and moments of triumph both large and small. It is now my enormous privilege and responsibility to ensure that this year's camp brings more of the same and with my excellent team of leaders by my side and the help of our wonderful campers, I have no doubt that this year will bring many more highlights that I will cherish for years to come.

There are many ways you can be part of summer camps future. If you have a child that you think would benefit from coming, then book their place as soon as possible as it really helps with planning. If you don't, then you can help financially by making a donation to the Provincial Youth Fund, which will help provide lots of extra bits for camp that put the cherry on the cake. Most of all, we encourage your prayers, in the planning and, of course, during the week itself as we all do what we do because of the calling of God and we do it all through God's name and glory.

Br James Woolford
PYCC

Minister's Retreat 2024
- A Pocketful of Joy

'She's off on a cruise!' is probably not the answer our retreat leaders were expecting when they asked the question 'Where could we find our Joy?' Explanations followed, Sr Joy Raynor was indeed away on a cruise, and a feeling of light-hearted joviality continued to permeate much of the retreat.

As I have discovered over the past year, ministerial work can be very consuming of time and energy, and it is essential that ministers take time to recharge their own batteries in order to continue to have energy to serve their congregations. Ammerdown Retreat Centre in Somerset was a lovely setting for the retreat, a beautiful old building set in woods with a walled garden. Our rooms were comfy, the food was superb, there was a small bar for evening relaxation, and the company was invigorating, what more could we want?

Our retreat leaders, Bruce and Sarah Johnson from Derby, led our morning and evening worship with a series of Lent prayers and reflections from the Journey Community. We were joined on Zoom by some of their community for these prayers which added an interesting element to the worship. As a Moravian who loves singing, I did find the absence of music during the retreat a little strange. However, there was a hymn in our final service and, before it started, we did sing a couple of impromptu verses when one of our number spotted a song she had not sung since childhood!

The theme of the retreat was 'A Pocket Full of Joy' and each day started with an introduction to an element of joy, led by Sarah. We could then choose from, craft-based activities with Sarah, or looking, with Bruce, at some of the chapters of the book 'Hit the Ground Kneeling' by Stephen Cottrell. There were several interesting discussions about the challenges facing us as leaders, and I certainly appreciated Bruce's use of Dilbert cartoons to illustrate some of his points.

Some lovely pieces of craft were produced by those who chose Sarah's sessions, despite their creators thinking that they were not really 'arty'. I had great fun with free-flowing water colours during the prayer painting session! Those not wanting to attend the structured activities could also enjoy periods of free time absorbing the peace and quiet of the surroundings, going for a walk, or losing themselves wandering the labyrinth in the garden.

There was one very poignant session at the start where we had been asked to bring something small that brought us joy. In small groups we shared our items and then placed them on a central display. Amongst them were ornaments, shells, musical instruments, pictures, pin cushions, a table tennis bat, fruit, an olive wood cross and image of Jesus, and a poem written by a loved one. Each story of why they were special and why they

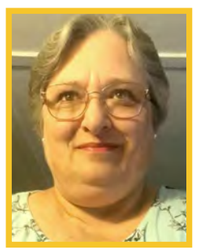
© Sr Jane Carter

brought joy was unique, heartfelt, and very moving.

Opportunities for ministers to be able to relax and recharge are very important. Yes, we are a small church, and all 'know' each other, but it is at times such as these where there is a chance to get to know each other in greater depth, to share ideas and expertise, and to be able to support each other. It is also a rare space where we can just 'be' as individuals without the external expectations of us from our ministerial roles.

Bruce and Sarah encouraged us to make cultivating joy something that we practiced as a positive daily routine. Being joyful isn't necessarily the same as being happy but having the ability to be joyful, even when things are hard in our lives, is a learned skill. They gave us the following five ways as a starter to cultivating joy in our lives:

- Notice the things that make you happy.
- Stop comparing yourself to others.
- Write and say thank you.
- Spend time with joyous people.
- Know who you are.



So, whilst we missed Sr Raynor and the few ministers who were not able to attend, we did indeed find joy during the retreat and left with our pockets full of it!

Sr Sue Groves
Lay Pastor at Brockweir Moravian Church

Have you considered serving on a Provincial Standing Committees? Some members offer some insight to their work and why they serve.

Faith, Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee (FOER)

When I finished my role as Provincial Youth and Children's Officer, and therefore membership of PYCC, I looked for another committee to serve the wider church on.

They all have such scary titles and to be honest even though I had some idea of what they did I was unsure which would suit me best. I knew Finance Committee was not for me, I don't have the skills required, but the others all seemed possible. I wanted to serve, and I am interested in liturgy, although not an expert, so thought I might be able to contribute to the committee when they were preparing this. A love of the poetry of liturgy, a pedant's eye when looking at the written word, and the ability to do searches on the internet have all been useful skills. But the biggest pull for me was the ecumenical aspect of the work. As Christians we are all part of the body of Christ and being Moravians is one way of expressing that. I am a member of Hall Green Community United Church and my local Anglican church so I felt I could bring a perspective that was different from the ministers on the committee. I have experienced a wide range of worship styles in a variety of churches, but you don't need to have done that to serve on the committee, the important thing is to have a passion for ecumenical working and a recognition that we have lots to learn by working with other denominations.

Lay people have lots to contribute to this committee, at the moment it is very 'minister' heavy with their way of thinking, not that there is anything wrong with that, but seeing things from the pews brings new ideas, a different perspective and a different set of skills. Can you bring that to this committee?

Sr Joy Raynor

Finance and Property Committee

From an infant through to my late teens I was brought up as a Methodist until the Church was sold for housing development. Then over 30 years ago my wife and daughter and I moved into the Sisters' House adjacent to the Moravian Church at Lower Wyke in the Yorkshire district. Our churchgoing was renewed.

Ten years ago, I was encouraged by my good friend Graham Mallinson, the then current Finance Committee chair, to put myself forward for election. As a chartered Accountant I thought I could contribute on financial matters. When Graham's allotted spell came to a conclusion I was pleased to succeed him as chair myself. A career in finance is not a requirement, just having a Christian faith and involvement in your local congregation will be sufficient. Everyone has their own unique talents to make a valued contribution to this or any other Provincial committee.

The COVID pandemic had a significant and damaging influence on Church finances, particularly regarding the viability of the two schools. COVID severely restricted the influx of the profitable foreign boarders to our shores. Despite the Provincial Board trying to keep the schools surviving, the eventual failure to save Ockbrook School and the saving of Fulneck School proved to have a heavy and severe burden on the cash flow. Despite the Church being asset-rich but cash-poor, the Provincial property portfolio had to become one way of providing funds to continue supporting day-to-day running costs. It was at this stage that the committee incorporated both Finance and Property in its title.

As the Provincial Board continues with the difficult task of providing financial stability as one of its ongoing targets, it is essential that the six places on the committee is filled with dedicated members. My own allowed term of office is near to its conclusion and my hope is that the work of the committee is continued and fully represented. We must urge that everybody supports Project 32 in their efforts to prevent the erosion of the membership base of the British Province but to also increase it in the near future.

The committee currently consists of myself, Gillian Taylor, David Cartwright, John Kilner, John Costley and Jonathan Saynor. We act in an advisory capacity to the Board regarding anything directly or indirectly on finance or property. Usually, Bishop Joachin Kreusel and Church House accountant Graeme Salt are in attendance. We try to meet at least twice a year with a face-to-face meeting and one on Zoom.

A small sub-committee makes a visit to either UBS or LGT Wealth Management (formally Vestra) who manage our investment portfolios and we receive annual updates from both companies. Other duties include assisting in the formulation of the annual Provincial Budget, reviewing interim and annual accounts, scrutinising current cash-flow statements and acting as Trustees at the AGM. Congregation assessments and property priorities are also discussed.

Br Chris Drake

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Gillian Taylor

Sr Taylor is the current President of the Moravian Women's Association and serves on the Finance and Property Committee. She has also been a member of the Provincial Board serving as Provincial Treasurer and Chair.

Tell us about your early years, education, and family

I have lived in Dukinfield all my live (apart from the eight years on Provincial Board). Having two older brothers I have always had to assert myself.

My school life was very happy, and I attended the Moravian Junior school. I went on to an all-girls Grammar School until I was eighteen when I sat my 'A' Levels. At the age of fourteen I decided I was going to be a Chartered Accountant.

How and when did you come to faith?

It is hard to pinpoint an exact time that I became a committed Christian. I attended the Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield Sunday School from the age of three. My faith grew as the Church grew. God was always present and the members were always so welcoming. However, my faith became more important to me as I got older, and this is why I wanted to serve on the Provincial Board. I thought I had a lot of knowledge that could be transferred into helping with the administration of the Province.

Tell us about your family and friends

I have two sons aged 42 and 39 and three grandchildren, 13, almost four and one. I live together with one of my sons and his family (that is the three children). I have one special friend, who is not a church 'goer', but I would class her as a Christian. She has been by my side through a lot of my incredibly challenging times.

What was your working life before becoming part of the Provincial Board and how did you integrate your faith into your working life?

I started my working life an Articled Clerk to a small/medium sized firm of accountants. After qualifying I stayed for about eighteen years, during that time I became an Associate Partner.

I then moved on to being an Accountant and Company Secretary for a company which sold garden buildings. It was whilst working here my faith was tested. Business can be ruthless and dealing with people challenging but I think I brought my faith into the decisions I made. The greatest complement I had was when one of my drivers, whose wife had tried to commit suicide, often knocked on my office door, when returning from a trip. He said that he always felt he could always talk to me.

Tell us about the roles that you held within the Church and something about the joys and frustrations that you experienced in them

I have been a member of the Dukinfield's congregation committee which soon turned into being Treasurer. I represented them at Synod and at this, my first Synod, was voted on the Finance Committee. In 2008 I was elected to the Provincial Board as a part-time member and was given the position of Provincial Treasurer. In 2010, I was voted on as a full-time member of the Board and served for eight years. In the later years I was Chair and Treasurer.

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

I do not think I am afraid of death, but I am afraid it may come too soon. Having diced with death twice in 2017, where God spared me, I just hope he gives me more time to see more wonders of His creation.

What can we learn from other Churches and other faiths?

I was a Guider for over 20 years and was as a commissioner for over ten of these. This meant attending services in all denominations. We can always learn from others, and this can be seen in a number of our congregations, where we are happy to worship as united churches. Also, we must not discount other faiths and I am sure if we took the trouble to study their beliefs we would find some similarities.

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

People these days think they are too busy. Also, there are more activities held on a Sunday and outside of the Church. I hope that by example we can slow people down to think about their spiritual life. This is something I could not do without.

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

I like a good crime drama and my favourite book is 'Pride and Prejudice'. The drama comes from a logical mind as I like to work out 'who did it'. I studied 'Pride and Prejudice' for 'O' level and it just became one I go back to reading again and again.

The place where you feel closest to God?

When I am driving the car (with no passengers) or walking my dogs. I seem to think more about God and what He wants me to do next.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

I do not want a grave. I want people just to remember me not to think that they must tend a grave. However, I would like people to think 'She did well'.

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

I have no major regrets but hope my life has been an asset in some small way. My joys must be my children and grandchildren. To see them grow and I hope that I have been a good example and given them a good foundation to live their lives.

One thing I hope, which I doubt I will see, is peace in the world.

A personal response to the Articles about Church Membership and Project 32

published in the Moravian Messenger earlier this year

Adrian Wilsdon's excellent articles about the decline of the Church are, for me, among the most interesting and thought provoking I've seen for a long time, and they did get me thinking.

We can all agree that the Christian Church in this country has been in decline for a long time. Adrian's piece shows, beyond any doubt, the extent and seriousness of this. But is this not inevitable? I've often thought that life mirrors nature. A seed falls, a sapling takes root and provided it survives this early most vulnerable time, it then grows fast and vigorously. Then it comes into its prime: strong and healthy, but eventually it goes into decline with hardly any new growth, parts of it grow rotten and drop off and eventually all its strength is gone, and it withers and dies. During its life it will be affected by external forces such as weather, climate and any other change in environment.

It seems to me that this principle also applies to human activity. Civilisations, empires, nations all come and go in this way, and so too do the institutions and organisations of which they are formed. The high street, cinemas, theatres, seaside piers etc. are some recent examples which come to mind in our own culture - they've had their day. And the Church is not immune from this natural process.

So as an institution within our society let us consider what point the Christian Church has reached in this process. To my mind Adrian's articles point to late autumn, approaching winter. So, what has actually happened?

As a 'sophisticated' society we no longer believe in the old-fashioned concept of God - the Bible and all that. We have new gods more appropriate for our time such as money, possessions, 'celebrity' etc. We are no longer a Christian country.

In addition, the environment is becoming more hostile. Nothing is the same anymore. Many of the old certainties that we could depend upon are no longer there. Who can we trust anymore? People in public life seem selfish and are often untruthful. Cheating seems to be normal everywhere. As a nation we seem to have lost our sense of morality. The difference between right and wrong is no longer clear cut.

Yes, there are many honourable and trustworthy people and institutions about, but the really big players, the ones who have power and influence - politicians, banks, the police, big business etc. - do seem to have lost their way. Again, Christian ethics no longer apply.

But surely this is precisely the time when the Christian Church should take the lead. The conditions are perfect. In the past, despite all its faults, the Christian Church did at least, in the spirit of the Gospels, give a moral lead, mainly through the teaching in their schools and other institutions which the Christian Church ran. Many able and clear-thinking clergy with a social conscience and a clear sense of right and wrong enjoyed significant status in society and had a real impact.

But today, how can the Christian Church exert any moral leadership when some of its clergy have committed such appalling crimes against the most vulnerable people in their care, to such an extent that the Church now has to be regulated by the state?

Regrettably the Christian Church today lacks credibility and has a massive task to rehabilitate itself in our present society, let alone become 'sustainable' (one of Project 32's objectives for the Moravian Branch of the Church).

Let us have a look at how one or two things have changed during the period of decline shown in Adrian's articles.

In the main, Church congregations no longer live close by or around their church. When they did so there was a sense of belonging, and communication was very easy. There was lots of informal contact both individually and in small informal groups, which is vital in any really successful organisation,

As already mentioned, the Christian Church no longer provides a moral compass. In parts of the Church the leaders are sometimes uncertain and conflicted in themselves. There is often no clarity of vision on such matters as the role of women, homosexuality or political correctness to name but a few. Although perhaps something positive has come out of the decline of the church and its consequent loss of influence.

Despite all this, as Adrian has shown, some parts of the Christian Church are doing well, just as there are some healthy branches on a dying tree. In particular the Charismatics and Pentecostals on one hand and the conservative Church Society on the other. My impression of the Charismatic movement is that in our country this movement began with the influx of people from the Caribbean in the 1950s-1970s. Most were, I suspect, good traditional church people coming from a part of the world where their church was still in the summer period. Church on Sunday in Sunday best, children to Sunday school, praying together as a family, with good moral standards. Possessing self-respect and showing respect for others.

Sadly, through prejudice such people were often not made welcome in the established Churches here - back to the question of lack of moral compass again - and so they founded their own churches with the tradition of music, movement and spirituality which characterised their ancestors. Therefore, a new and vigorous movement, at the beginning of its natural cycle split off or seeded from the old tree with vigorous growth and vitality, clearly defying the decadent and corrupt aspects of our society - all underpinned by prayer.

What about the Church Society at the other end of the spectrum? Adrian's work shows that this is also relatively successful. It certainly came as a surprise to me, but thinking about it, Christian Churches normally do well when under pressure or persecution. In the Soviet era the church in Poland remained strong. Again, a bit like a tree under pressure, its roots grew stronger. The more the authorities clamped down the more resilient it became. People couldn't go to church, but they kept the faith. In their hearts they knew the gospel message was right and they kept the faith in their homes and in small discreet groups. Real prayer was the key, and so in a related way it seems to me that the Church Society perhaps also sees itself as under siege when perhaps in their perspective much of their church has become polluted and has succumbed to the standards of modern society. They are perhaps in their minds 'keeping the faith'.

Having done all this ruminating, I began to wonder what the implications of all this might be for Project 32. Unsurprisingly, it seems that in seeking to underpin everything in prayer they're right on the money. But I can't help thinking that, given Adrian's articles, that this is a well-worn track: we've all been here before. I'm a bit uncomfortable that everything seems to be a business model, systems driven with corporate language to match. I am sorry if this sounds critical. I admire how the team are doing something to turn things round and wish them well.

To conclude on a personal note, recently I found myself, at around midday, in a packed church in Stratford down the road from where I live here in east London. It was rammed, standing room only. Young working men presumably in their lunch hour, men and women of all ages, families, pushchairs everywhere. I asked a young man beside me what it was all about, but he had very little English and didn't really understand. It turned out that this was the weekly Mass for Ukrainian people in the area. The sense of spirituality was palpable; these are people who have faced real danger and hardship. Their singing in the orthodox style was heart stopping, almost moving me to tears. Everyone was seeking hope and consolation in God, and thereby 'keeping the faith'. All this possible because, (as Moravian Congregations in Germany have done recently), the Franciscans of Stratford, whose church this is, (and in this case putting aside the centuries of antipathy between the Roman and Orthodox churches), opened their doors to those in need.

Everyone in church that day would have been totally bemused by Project 32. Such notions as corporate prayer, an Energisers Prayer Sheet and an NCD Champion would leave them puzzled. And yet here, quite spontaneously, was the essence of the Project 32 aspiration: to open peoples' hearts through prayer.

Just a final thought: in my experience, the real power of prayer comes when praying together as a family. A few moments of silence with no noise or other distraction and then a few moments of prayer. Some verses in the Psalms are so powerful, they speak across the millennia. Or perhaps something from the Moravian tradition, or perhaps ask the membership and beyond what form of words have been powerful in their lives and share that.

If every member of every Moravian Congregation were to assemble their family once a day at a suitable time for five minutes of real prayer, spoken out loud together, we may yet see Project 32 buck the trend.

Br Michael O'Sullivan
Harold Road

Report of the Lancashire District Conference Spring Meeting

The meeting was held on Zoom on the morning of 9th March. All three churches in the district were represented and Br Quildan attended as PEC representative.

The election of officers was then held, the appointments being as follows: Chair Sr Janet Warr; Secretary Sr Margery Sutcliffe; Messenger correspondent Sr Margery Sutcliffe; District Youth and Children's coordinator Sr Kerry Cain.

Br Quildan provided updates on the situation at Ockbrook where the lease is expected to be signed within the next few weeks and Salem where the sale is very close to completion. Regarding the ministerial cover for the district, this is still under review and no decision has been made to date. The Directory of ministers, retired ministers and lay preachers is still under discussion with a further meeting scheduled in two weeks.

The District gathering was confirmed and will go ahead on 30th October at Fairfield.

Lancashire District are currently holding joint Bible Study sessions on Zoom with 14-18 people joining the sessions.

Project 32 is progressing and Sr Patsy Holdsworth was appointed as the Lancashire District's Liaison. However, it is envisaged that this role will be shared with Project 32's Champions from the congregations.

There then came a discussion about this year's assessment of £499 per member. Br Quildan stated this should really have been £600 per member but had been kept down. He was asked whether there were any plans to absorb more costs of Ministry from the assessments as Fairfield had for many years paid an assessment in excess of what members paid in. It was acknowledged that many congregations struggle to find the full cost of the assessment and Br Howard is arranging a meeting for the Treasurers in the district where such matters can be discussed and options explored.

Br Quildan reminded the meeting that credentials for Deputies to Synod must be in by the end of March and emails have gone out regarding this. The papers for Synod will be sent out by 4th July and Fairfield will hold a pre-Synod meeting on 9th July.

Br Gubi updated the meeting to say he currently has five participants undertaking the Worship Leaders course and there are four people undergoing training as Lay Preachers at the Northern College which is overseen by Br Michael Newman.

It was noted that there could be up to three retirements in the British Province in the next 18 months.

The meeting was reminded that funding is available to help with the cost of attending Summer Camp and ministers were asked to make sure that congregations were aware of this support and to approach their ministers for details.

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on 12th October 2024.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe
LDC correspondent

Invisible Poverty

© Br Edwin Quildan

I am writing this in the week where we heard of new plans by the government to criminalise homelessness. Under proposals that form part of the UK government's flagship crime bill, police in England and Wales are to be given powers to fine or move on rough sleepers deemed to be causing a 'nuisance'. This has understandably provoked outcry and placed the issue of homelessness and the poverty that surrounds it, at the top of the national news agenda, and rightly so.

Homelessness is all too visible in our towns and cities, and there are numerous charities that work to support these vulnerable people.

However, what about other members of our society who are living in poverty? We hear the use of food banks has increased dramatically over recent years, but, unless we work in a food bank, do we actually see the people who use them?

Child Poverty affects almost a third of all children in the UK, and yet this poverty is almost invisible. We don't pass a school child in the street, wondering if their uniform was obtained by a grant from universal credit, or whether they ate their last meal of the day at lunchtime. These children go back to their homes, and we are none the wiser.

At school, children who are living in poverty can at least be warm, dry and receive a free school meal. Yet instead of being a safe place for them to be, they are often punished as a direct result of living in poverty. Many children do not have beds to sleep in, or have to take turns with other siblings, and some have chaotic home lives which result in a lack of decent sleep. An inability to concentrate on schoolwork, falling asleep and disruptive behaviour leads to detention and this punishment is a direct result of their poverty. These children are not expected to achieve good results from their education.

Br Alan Holdsworth is a member of the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and has been campaigning tirelessly for many years against child poverty. In 2018 he brought a proposal to Synod and has been key in raising awareness of this issue to the Province. He also sits on the Mission and Society Committee, and, on Thursday 14th March, the committee welcomed Lizzie Flew and Leo Nathan from CPAG who gave us a presentation on their work.

CPAG was founded in 1965, and that year they wrote the first of many letters to the Prime Minister, stating that half a million children were living in poverty. This number is now 4.2 million. They campaign on all the issues that are causing child poverty and seek to raise awareness on all aspects of its causes and consequences.

There is no doubt that child poverty is something that our government should be tackling to alleviate, yet there are still policies in place that create more child poverty, and this needs to be addressed. Seven years ago, the two-child limit policy came into force. It meant that any parents having a third or subsequent child after that date would not qualify for additional support through child tax credit or universal credit. Abolishing the two-child limit is the most cost-effective way of reducing child poverty - it would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and a further 850,000 children would be in less deep poverty at a cost of just £1.3 billion.

There are actions we can take to make child poverty a more visible issue, raise the awareness and change the lives of so many children:

- Become a member of CPAG and keep informed of the vital work they are doing.
- Ask your MP what they are doing towards ending child poverty.
- Ask the other parties what their policy on the two-child limit would be if they won the general election.
- You can make a donation to CPAG by sending it to Moravian Union, Sort Code: 40-52-40 and Account Number: 00023436 or we can take a card payment at Church House by phone. All donations received will be Gift Aided where possible and forwarded on to CPAG.

Sr Lindsey Newens
Mission and Society Committee

Fetter Lane, London

Fabulous February at Fetter Lane - not a comment on the weather, but the title of our half-term event for younger children and their parents and carers. Once again, we teamed up with Abby and Phil Howe from the Chelsea Salvation Army to create an afternoon of crafts, outdoor fun, songs, puppets and fellowship. The highlight for the children at least was a chance to decorate a pancake with as much sugary goop as they wanted. The activities aimed to cover both Shrove Tuesday traditions and Valentines, with love in all things.

A school holiday event is one way of making our wonderful space available to the wider community. Another initiative is our Friday Open Day when we invite anyone passing to join us for a cup of tea and some chat. We are also listed as a Warm Space, providing a few hours of respite and company. The visitors range from old friends to tourists from abroad, to neighbours who 'never knew you were there'. Some visit completely by chance while others have found the Close in their tourist guidebooks. Whatever their reason for coming through the gate, we try to be welcoming without being overwhelming.

As a small congregation, we are interested in new ideas for reaching out to the community around us. If you have any suggestions for things we can try, please get in touch!

Sr Cynthia Dize

Hornsey, London

It has been a while since there has been any news from Hornsey, so here is a brief roundup of the year so far.

After our morning service on Sunday 18th February, we had another of our wonderful congregation lunches. These are always perfect opportunities for us to share fellowship and chat with one another, whilst enjoying the very tasty food put on for us by Sr Sonia Pessoa and her team, which is much appreciated by all. I am sure it won't be too long before the next one.

In mid-November we started up our weekly Warm Welcome, for a second year. Every Tuesday afternoon we welcomed a regular group of people, some of whom were from the congregation and others who had seen the posters locally. We enjoyed tea, coffee, and biscuits together as we attempted tricky jigsaws, boardgames and puzzles whilst having classical music playing in the background. We had our last Warm Welcome at the end of February. Everyone who went along was very grateful to the volunteers who made it possible for Warm Welcome to happen.

We continue to have our weekly Bible Study every Wednesday evening which is held on Zoom and attended by a regular group of our congregation members. Throughout Lent, instead of the Bible Study, there was the district Lent Study with the theme of Breaking Bread, one of the Holy Habits.

Our monthly Lego Club is still going strong: we have some families who have been coming along since we started the group over a year ago and welcome new faces each month. It is proving to be very popular and well loved by both children and adults alike. It is always such a joy to see the children interacting with one another and the wonderful creations they come up with following the theme which is given to them when they arrive.

© Br Michael Newman

On Sunday 17th March we held our Congregation Council meeting after our morning service. At this meeting, we elected two new Church Committee members, Sr Michelle King and Sr Jean Wilson.

The Churches Together in Hornsey is back up and running. Last year there was a Pentecost picnic, Harvest get-together, half term children's activities, and carol singing outside Sainsbury's. On Good Friday, members from the churches congregated outside of Sainsburys to sing some Easter hymns. As I write this on Easter Monday, they are planning for a children's activity afternoon next week.

After a very busy Passion Week, we ended with a wonderful and very uplifting Easter Sunday service, led by Br Michael and Sr Susan. We were treated to Br Harry leading his Steel Band, Sr Olive singing for us accompanied by our organist Br Klaus, and as a congregation we did a wonderful job of the Hosanna Anthem, in the words of Br Michael, 'That is the best you have sung it in my time here'.

Sr Claire Newman

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Calls

We are delighted to announce that Sr Kiran Young Wimberly has received and accepted a Call to serve the Irish District as a part-time Minister on a fixed-term contract. Sr Young Wimberly previously served the Presbyterian Church. She will serve the Gracehill congregation one day a week, and the rest of the Irish District one day a week. This Call will take effect from Monday 22nd April 2024.

I am also delighted to announce that Sr Susan Quildan-Foreman has received and accepted a Call to serve the Harold Road congregation as a non-stipendiary Minister, and Sr Christine Emanuel has received and accepted a Call to serve the Bedford congregation as a non-stipendiary Minister. These Calls will take effect from Wednesday 1st May 2024.

Br Edwin Quildan's Call to serve the Bedford congregation has been formally ended. He will continue to serve the Harlesden congregation, as well as providing support to the Fetter Lane and Hornsey congregations. This will be reviewed following Provincial Synod.

Please keep Sr Young Wimberly, Sr Quildan-Foreman, Sr Emanuel, and the congregations of the Irish and Eastern Districts in your prayers during this time of transition.

Provincial Board

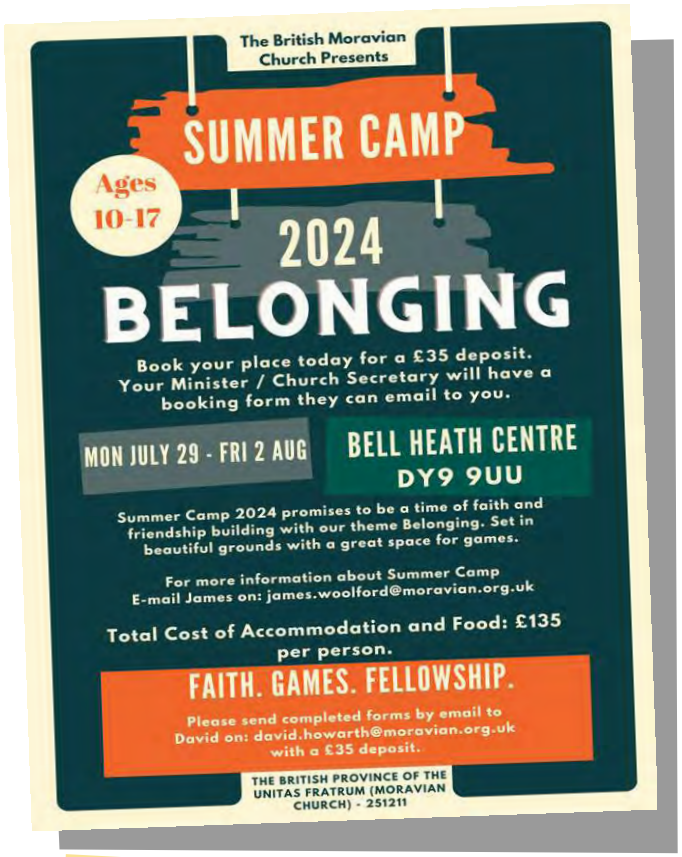
Provincial Diary for May

14-15	Provincial Board Meeting	(Church House)
20	Faith and Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee	(Online)
22	Moravian Union AGM	(Online)
23	Holy Habits Champions Meeting	(Online)
30	Deadline for Class B Proposals to Synod	

The Coronation

We were ready.
No pomp or ceremony
No perfectly practiced horses
Conveying equally rehearsed musicians.
No.
We stood on a Cumbrian cliff,
Massed in our blue hue,
Ready to ring for a King.
Our companions of red campion
And stitchwort in sparkling white
Made a flag fluttering in the sun,
And waving at the azure sea below.
Nearby a cushion of thrift sat poised
Waiting for a crown of golden gorse.
No man-made display this:
God had ensured we were ready for a King.

Sr Claire Summers



MORAVIAN PROVINCIAL
MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

COFFEE MORNING

In aid of Moravian Charities

BRING & BUY - CAKE STALL - RAFFLE & QUIZ

at

Lower Wyke Moravian Church
Saturday 8th June 2024
from 10.30am

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

24th March 2024	Charlotte Erin Grace Taylor	Fairfield

Deaths

13th Jan 2024	Yvonne Simon	Hornsey
17th Jan 2024	Dorothea Stennett-Walker	Hornsey
25th Feb 2024	Molly Richards	Hornsey
6th March 2024	Stephen James Larkin	Fairfield
29th March 2024	Fred Linyard	Ockbrook

Dates to remember!

3	Beginning of Watchwords in Herrnhut 1728
5	Orthodox Easter - Orthodox
9	Ascension Day
12	The signing of the Brotherly Agreement which marked the Renewal of the Unitas Fratrum at Herrnhut, Saxony, 1727
12-18	Christian Aid Week ***(www.christianaid.org.uk)***
19	Pentecost
20	Whit Monday
26	Trinity Sunday

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