Moravian Messenger

SEPTEMBER 2024

World Heritage Inscription of Moravian Settlements at the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO

My wife, Sally Ann and I were privileged to attend the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO which took place in New Delhi, India in July 2024. Over two decades of effort had finally brought the international nomination entitled 'Moravian Church Settlements' before the committee for a final decision and so quite suddenly after due deliberation and the bang of the Chairpersons gavel we were officially a World Heritage site. Gracehill, Bethlehem and Herrnhut had joined Christiansfeld to become the single inscription 'Moravian Church Settlements'. The nations of the World represented by this august body had accepted, to use the jargon, the Outstanding Universal Value of the Moravian Church movement. This means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

Following inscription there were short speeches from the US and German representatives and I concluded by saying:

'On behalf of the UK, I wilI not repeat what has already been said but I do want to sincerely thank 'Incredible India' for hosting us all so well and also the world heritage committee for approving this nomination.

I also wish to pay tribute to our wonderful international partners. Everyone has worked hard but there has also been great friendship and fun.

Gracehill, Northern Ireland, with its Moravian ethos has long been known as a place of reconciliation and tolerance. 200 years ago, in the midst of conflict it was seen as a place of sanctuary. A diary entry from that time records the following words:

'When our place appeared to all around as the only spot of safety many retired to it as to a city of refuge and we lodged and fed them without making any distinction of their being either our friends or our foes. The hearts of many who had hated us and even designed our destruction were turned.'

Historic words but still as relevant and important in our world today!

Mr Chairperson, Thank you.

There followed a whirlwind of emails, media contacts and celebration but when everything settled down the main thought was: so what does this all mean and where do we go from here?

Undoubtedly while we have come to the end of one journey we are embarking on another which will have many facets but if we think about the Moravian Church in the British Province it seems that there are perhaps three elements to consider: Profile, Place and People.

The Moravian Church has always 'punched above its weight' and exerted an influence beyond its size. There are many reasons

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Editorial

Naked Racism

The round of riots in Belfast and other cities in the UK have just stunned and appalled many of us. The tragic death of three children in Southport was simply the excuse for hatred, false information and extremism to break out and naked racism to be seen on our streets.

The correct response to such a tragedy would have been, and was in many cases, sorrow that such a thing could have happened and huge empathy and support for the families involved. Of course, there should also be reflection on why the young man carried out such an appalling act but that comes later.

Significantly, after an attack on a group of young school children in Dublin in November last year there were nights of rioting that again were stirred up by far-right elements. There are always those who make scapegoats of minorities and use women and children as the excuse.

Over the last few days, I have met with a Hindu hospital consultant who has told me of nurses who have been forced out of their home and another doctor who has shared how scared some of his colleagues are. I have met an Iman who has been attacked, a Sudanese man who has been forced out of his home and made homeless by thugs and a dear friend who is fearful of racist abuse being shouted at her in the street.

Doubtless many other members of our Church have similar stories of things that have happened to them, or people close to them. We need to show love and care to those of us who have struggled over the last weeks but also to go further to and resolve never to be bystanders. When someone tells you or sends you a racial joke or obvious misinformation, challenge it straight back. When you hear of people in your community being hurt stand with them and let them know that as Christians we stand with people of faith, people of different ethnic backgrounds and people whose first language is not English.

Of course there are legitimate discussions to be held on migration, but it is a worldwide issue and has many causes. We should remember that many English and Irish people have emigrated over the years for a better future for themselves and their families. It is sometimes said that Ireland's (north and south) greatest export was its children. There are also legitimate discussions about why some communities are so prone to rioting and being a frequent traveller through one such community the signs of poverty and neglect are obvious. How can we work for the benefit of these places too so that all feel empowered and have a valued place in our society?

Many questions and no easy answers but let Christ be our guide and the love of God inspire us, and the Holy Spirit give us the courage we need for these days to combat the evil of racism in all its forms.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

When my son told me he was going to the anti-racism protest in Walthamstow last week, my initial response was to tell him not to go, not to get involved, stay home, stay safe, don't put yourself in harm's way etc.

Of course, it was too late and he was already there, so I watched the entire event unfold on TV from the edge of my seat.

Once I realised that I was powerless to stop him, although I was still very concerned, I was also at the same time immensely proud that he would stand up against injustice. Him and thousands of others, and boy, how proud we all were weren't we? How different from the week before.

'For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing.' Simon Wiesenthal

Sr Lindsey Newens
Editorial Team

Summer Camp

Summer Camp this year was held at the Bell Heath Centre in Worcestershire from 29th July-2nd August. This year we had 22 campers, with nearly all of last year's campers returning and some new campers arriving for their first ever Summer Camp. Sadly, our Summer Camp did begin with a bit of sadness as Br James Woolford, our Camp Leader, tested positive for COVID on the first day of camp. Thankfully, we had prepared for this eventuality as a team, so I stepped in as honorary camp lead.

Many Campers and Leaders endured long delays on their journey to Summer Camp whilst others had arrived surprisingly quickly, so our first day was a bit of a busy one as Sr Claire, Sr Libby and Sr Rachel sorted people into their rooms. Once everyone had arrived and settled in we began with creating our usual set of Camp Rules, organising everyone into their house groups and enjoying our food prepared by Camp Cook Sr Claire. Our evening's activity was a competitive quiz! We ended our shared time together with our first Simmer Down session led by Sr Claire. The theme at Camp this year was 'Belonging', so we looked at belonging experienced by the different disciples of Jesus via Godly Play. We then were encouraged to contemplate the story further in a creative way using pens and paper or playdoh. Juniors went to bed whilst Seniors began to play the game Werewolf. I hope this might give a small insight into the variety of what happens at Camp even within the first day. Our aim is to keep the young people engaged so that feelings of home sickness aren't too strong but also allow enough space for them to simply relax and get to know one another.

Like last year, at this Summer Camp, the young people helped prepare their food and wash up. The feedback from the young people last year had been so positive; they enjoyed making and trying the food, including new foods, at camp. We found this year that many did enjoy the cooking, including some putting in requests for recipes to try and make together next year. However, one or two struggled more with the washing up this time! These times together in the kitchen did seem to encourage a sense of belonging amongst their house groups. It was also a moment when the Summer Camp Leaders could get to know their house group teams better. The kitchen this year was bigger but also hotter, so we were particularly thankful for anyone who helped in the kitchen. Particular thanks go to Claire for her organisation and finding recipes that all the young people would try and enjoy making. Sr Joy came to camp for a day and spent a lot of that time supporting Claire in the kitchen; special thanks go to her too.

© Sr Laura Wood

Every day we had a Bible Study led by Sr Rachel, Br JD and Br Louis. Every Bible study linked to our theme of belonging and often involved conversations and some activity or craft. We also had Simmer Down each night which, aside from the first night, was split into Juniors' Simmer Down and Seniors' Simmer Down. These varied in style but the aim was to create a calming reflecting time for everyone ahead of bedtime. This year the Simmer Downs were led by Sr Lol, Sr Libby, Br JD and Br Louis.

Particular highlights of the week were the Problem Solving Activities offered by the centre on the Tuesday afternoon. It was fascinating to see how Juniors tackled things versus Seniors. Both had natural leaders in the group, people who were great at championing and encouraging, individuals who thought creatively and could solve a problem sometimes quicker consequently if they were heard by the group. Listening and teamwork were essential for these activities, and it was great to see their communication strengthening throughout the time.

Another highlight was the High Rope Course for Seniors and the Climbing Wall for Juniors. All showed immense bravery on Wednesday afternoon as they approached these sports. The Climbing Wall was tall and steep. Many of the Juniors had never been on one before so they had to learn not only how to climb but also do the important job of belaying for one another too. Once they had climbed the wall once, they then attempted to climb it blindfolded!

Meanwhile the Seniors were experiencing the challenge of a high ropes course. This involved a lower level (which still felt very high) of balancing across wooden steps, passing through a net etc at the height of the trees. They then had the option to repeat this but higher still! It was wonderful to see how they encouraged and supported one another to complete these courses. Afterwards some of the Juniors attempted the lower level and were equally courageous whilst a few of the Seniors had a quick go at abseiling down the side of the Climbing Wall. Everyone ended by having fun on the zip line.

After this exciting afternoon we ended the day with a film night and popcorn plus our daily Simmer Down time.

Our Thursday highlights were the Mini Olympics led by Br JD who was the perfect person for this role. We had a mix of true competitive sprinting with a selection of primary school sports such as egg and spoon and the sack race. We ended this time with a water fight; very much welcomed by all as we had a perfect week of hot weather. Needless to say, all were soaked by the end, including the leaders! Our final highlight was the Ceilidh in the evening. This had been sourced by Sr Claire. Many had never experienced a Ceilidh before and were surprised to see a band appear before teatime to set up. It was such a treat to have live music and a professional caller who was able to teach us all the right moves and positions for our ceilidh dancing. I hadn't realised how much ceilidhs were a true team activity, and it seemed a fitting end to our week centred around the theme of belonging.

A huge thanks goes to Br James: his excellent preparation, positive nature and the fact he was happy to be contacted despite having COVID throughout Summer Camp meant we had a good week. Personally, I want to thank the whole team. Br JD, Sr. Libby, Sr Rachel, Br Louis and Sr Claire; thanks for your dedication to make Summer Camp the best camp despite us being without our Summer Camp Leader, James. I should like to thank Sr Joy for being on call, such a good listener and offering an extra pair of hands.

Summer Camp is a place filled with fun where deep conversations happen as much as light ones. It is a place where people are brave, where they can feel safe, known and closer to God. We are hoping to continue to grow Summer Camp and are therefore on the lookout for new Summer Camp Leaders for next year. If you want to find out more information please feel free to contact me via email: laurawood027@gmail.com. Being a Summer Camp Leader is a privilege, you learn more about trusting in God and about the skills and wisdom that the young people who are connected to our church have and that, in and of itself, is inspiring. You think about Summer Camp for a long time afterwards; it stays a part of you as you know you have been involved in something truly unique, sacred and special.

Sr Lol Wood
Youth and Childrens Committee

World Heritage Inscription of Moravian Settlements at the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO

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for this but I believe chief among these are the customs, vision, cohesion and harmony of purpose that so often characterised Moravians. Increasingly the importance of such 'intangible heritage' is being recognised and appreciated. Think of the Christingle!

Our profile is important as it allows us to not only exert influence but also highlights our existence and attracts interest and new members as we seek to live out our faith in our communities and the wider world. I hope that being a 'world heritage' church will echo around every Moravian congregation and community and that simply by 'being there', often unwittingly, we are planting seeds that one day may bloom into faith.

In Moravian documents we often read the phrase 'Our Place' when referring to the Church or Settlement. As a Province we are blessed with a wonderful estate spread across the country. There are many interesting and historic buildings. However, old buildings are not always inspiring and can seem a liability, but I suggest we try to see these sites as 'Places of Potential' - potential for the Church and potential for their communities. It is not about a dead past but a living future.

It would however be naïve to consider that the opportunity presented by heritage does not also bring challenge. This is perhaps well encapsulated in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury: 'Peter speaks of the Church as Living Stones (1st Peter 2:5 'you also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house'). The challenge is to ensure that our church buildings function as servant not master. Our historic stones exist to serve our living stones.'

We often refer to 'restoring' old buildings. If seeking funding we might also describe 'regeneration' of the site. The dictionary definition of 'restore' is to bring back or re-establish but the definition of 'regenerate' is to bring new and more vigorous life, to revive or to grow. The result of restoration is regeneration. We do not just restore a building and then let it sit there, we go on and use it - we bring new life and growth - we are restoring for a purpose. We should aim to achieve the full potential of 'Our Places' so 'our historic stones serve our living stones' and provide living hope for our communities.

Lastly, but most importantly are the people. Of course, the core of our Church is our congregations and the weekly worship and activities in which they are involved. Increasingly we are living in a digital age where priorities, perception of time, place and spiritual awareness are radically different even from a few years ago. This has been accelerated by the pandemic. In a 24-hour digital society, communication, the concept of belonging, and indeed how we demonstrate care is changing. We need to embrace this for all age groups but particularly for our young people who are the future. We need to practice not only physical hospitality but also 'digital hospitality'. With a renewed focus on the Moravian Church we must do all we can to make people welcome and we must engage with them about things that matter and are relevant to them. We should aim to use all the gifts we have been given in the task of witness and mission to inspire, support and encourage people in their place and time.

The gift of transnational World Heritage Listing will enhance our profile, highlight 'our places' and hopefully be a means to attract and inspire people as we share our faith now and for generations to come.

As Rev Dr Jørgen Bøytler, minister of Christiansfeld, and the original visionary of the Moravian World Heritage aspirations, said in his address to the 2018 Synod of the British Province:

'So, is our future in our history? Well, our history is important, it shapes our identity as Christians and it interprets our identity as Moravians. We have a glorious history of mission, of fellowship, of Christ focused understanding of faith, a history of equality and brotherhood. However, we need to use the historical heritage wisely, so that we are not stuck in history, but ask our Lord to give us creativity, inspiration, imagination, spirit and courage to meet the ever-changing world, which is ours, in our generation … In other words, history and tradition is not a goal, but a means to reach the world with the good news today.'

Br David Johnston
Gracehill

The Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland

Held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, 18th-22nd July 2024.

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It was wonderful to be back at The Hayes Conference Centre for another Synod. The opening service was led by Br David Howarth and the preacher was Richard Reddie who is the Director of Justice and Inclusion for the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). Richard spoke passionately on the theme of Synod, 'A heart of resilience', with readings from Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:16-30.

Br Philip Cooper as chair welcomed everyone to Synod. We were blessed to not just have congregation deputies, ministers and staff but also guests from the wider Moravian church and many Ecumenical guests. Sr Roberta Hoey, chair of the Provincial Board, officially opened Synod offering her thanks for everyone's attendance.

The first proposal was one of appreciation of the service that Br Paul Holdsworth rendered to the church as minister, a member of the Provincial Board and a member of the British Mission Board. Many people, friends, ecumenical colleagues and church members shared their personal reflections and memories of Br Paul.

Following on from the Statement of Inclusivity that was agreed at the last Synod, this year we agreed to the proposal to adopt a Statement of Safeguarding,

'The Moravian Church recognises that every human bears the divine image of the God who loves the whole world (COUF #871). The Church serves the world by challenging humanity with the message of the love of God, seeking to attain what is best for all (COUF #10). Church communities are therefore called to be places where God's love is demonstrated and where all are welcomed, valued, and safe from harm, especially the most vulnerable in society.'

As usual reports were brought by the varying Provincial Standing Committees including the Provincial Board report of Board of Management to Synod. There was time for questions and clarification throughout the presentation.

Each day began and ended with prayers which were led by Srs Lorraine Shorten and Susan Quildan-Foreman. Br Peter Gubi led our daily Bible studies which were all on the theme of Synod, 'Embracing a heart of resilience'.

Dotted around the sessions we welcomed our various Ecumenical guests who brought us greetings: Br Richard Reddie from the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Br Paul Rochester from the Free Churches Group, Br Damian Jackson from the Irish Council of Churches, Br Roy Totten from The Church of Ireland, Br Mike Royal, General Secretary of the Churches Together in England and Br David Ashton representing the Church of England.

We were also glad to be joined by Brs and Srs from around the Moravian Unity: Sr Lilian Stuger-Kembel representing the European Continental Province; Br Jørgen Bøytler, Administrator of the Moravian Unity, was invited to share updates of the resolutions of the latest Unity Synod held in South Africa last year; Sr Roslyn Hamblin brought greetings from Barbados in the Eastern West Indies Province, as did Br Richard Lwali, General Secretary of the Moravian Church in Western Tanzania.

There was an interesting and forward-looking presentation from Fulneck School by Elizabeth Dawson who is the chair of the Trustees and Devin Cassidy, the new head who has been in post for one year. Their report looked honestly at the past, present and future and the school which is showing encouraging signs of stability.

There were some low points to Synod as we had to vote on proposals of the closure of two congregations and one Society. Sr Sandra Windmill shared a history of the Kingswood congregation and her sadness at the church having to close after 278 years of faithful service. Salem congregation had ceased to worship but the members have joined with the Royton congregation. Sr Hannah Coope praised both congregations for adapting and coming together to continue worshipping and working for our Lord Jesus Christ. Sr Patricia White spoke about the work of the Stoke Newington Society throughout its 63 years of service.

On Sunday morning the elections began to fill the vacant positions on the Provincial Board and Standing Committees. Sr Roberta Hoey was re-elected for another four years of office. This will be her final four years as a Board member as 12 years is the maximum allowed. Sr Jane Carter and Br Michael Newman were also re-elected as non-stipendiary members of the Provincial Board for four years each.

One of the proposals debated and passed was how we encourage members to nominate themselves for the Provincial Board or standing committees. It was agreed that more information was required about the work and roles of the committees, and the Provincial Board and Church Book committee have been tasked with reviewing the process and reporting back to Synod in 2026 with their recommendations.

Memorials were brought to Synod from the Moravian Women's Association, the Men's Fellowship and Br Paul Greenhough brought his report as YPMA secretary. At the end of his report, he announced that he was regretfully stepping down from the role after 44 years of dedicated service. A proposal was brought to share appreciation of his service to mission work and this was received with great acclamation.

There was also a session to share updates of the Project 32 committee and their work and then we all had the opportunity to discuss the Provincial Strategy.

On Sunday evening Synod came together for a service of Holy Communion using the Rite of the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church. The service was led by the Irish District and Sr Sarah Groves reflected on the recent agreement between the two denominations.

Monday came around very quickly and the final nominations for roles for Synod 2026 were filled and Synod was officially closed for another two years. Thank you to Br Philip Cooper and all the staff for helping Synod go smoothly throughout the weekend. It was a positive, constructive and reflective time all held together in prayer and the desire to serve God and God's church through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Sr Lorraine Shorten
Minister for Bath Weston and Bath Coronation Avenue Moravian congregations

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A Clerk's View of Synod

After an early rise on Thursday 18th of July, I embarked on my second journey to Synod as assistant clerk with lovely travel companions from Gracehill Moravian Church. Having attended the British Province of the Moravian Church's Synod once before, I had a fair idea of what lay ahead this time and felt (a little) more equipped for the task.

What I found this year at Synod reinforced my previous impression that it is a place of serious decision making in regards to the direction of the Church, but also of fellowship and laughter as Moravians come together from a range of churches in the Province to discuss, sometimes debate and vote on, important issues pertaining to the British Province of the church as a whole.

Each day was well scheduled with pockets of time for coffee, tea and fellowship (with occasional tasty treats to give us some energy!) as well as generous mealtimes. One thing I have garnered from my time at Synod, is how important these times of eating together are for fellowship and refreshment amid very busy days. The food provided by the Swanick Centre was varied and tasty and certainly gave us the fuel we needed to take on all our roles and tasks with energy and enthusiasm.

Mornings started with prayer and Bible study, this set the tone of the day and reminded us that our shared faith in Jesus united us. Keeping a prayerful attitude is of paramount importance during, at times, long, tiring days.

Sr Sally Ann Johnston was the main clerk, and I was her assistant with Sr Sue Selby as the minute typist. As clerk and assistant clerk, our role was to ensure that Synod was recorded accurately; we took notes of greetings, votes on proposals and report deliveries. I must extend a special thank you to Sr Janet Cooper for her help towards the end of Synod. Despite never being taught shorthand at school, the ever-patient Sr Sue managed (somehow) to decipher my scribbled notes and produce an altogether tidier typed version of events.

There were many memorable moments for me over the period of Synod. I enjoyed listening to Br Peter Dornan and Br Stephen Maxwell's presentation on Project 32. This was highly inspirational and very challenging. The time of reflection offered in response to this project in small groups was also a lovely opportunity to get involved as a staff non-voting member of Synod. I also was humbled and inspired to hear greetings from Moravian representatives from across the Unity, as well as ecumenical guests from across the wider Christian Church body.

As well as mealtimes, after the business of the day was completed, the attendees, including ecumenical guests and staff could all relax in the lounge. This was another time of fellowship and building connections with brothers and sisters from varied Provinces of the Moravian Unity and different denominations present.

Admittedly, at times, Moravians can feel very much part of a small denomination, but this Synodical gathering reminded me that we are a part of a wider Unity with a presence in many nations across the world. We may be small, but we must continue our mission in God's strength and not our own. Our Lord reminds us in Matthew 13 v31-32, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.' What an encouraging truth!

Sr Rachel Hamilton
Gracehill

Choices, Decisions and Trust:
A Conversation at Fetter Lane

© Br Herbert Daly

Every now and again the moon plays its tricks on us and there is one more Sunday in the month than our regular excellent ministry team at Fetter Lane can cover. On days like these somebody else may take a turn at leading the service, and on Sunday the 28th of July, it was my turn.

At Fetter Lane we are very blessed. Our location in the west part of London, just off the Kings Road, was once part of Sir Thomas More's estate. The God's Acre we care for is beautiful, unique and full of history; a picturesque field framed with lush vegetation in the middle of Chelsea. Our chapel is small, as is our congregation, but we meet happily and regularly whenever we are able.

Of course, leading a service is a great responsibility. How to get there on time? What will the hymns be? Will we use the liturgy this time? If so, which one? What if nobody even turns up? What if everybody turns up?! It is often also a challenge to find a theme that suits the day and the gathering, particularly when it comes to those in between days tied to no obvious subject.

So choices! Choices and decisions. This became our theme.

Our bible readings softened the ground. Matthew 14:22-33 described how when Jesus walked on the lake, his disciples were frightened by the miracle and didn't know him. Peter asked to join him as proof of his identity. Although initially he did well, Peter's doubt got the better of him, and he began to sink. Only Jesus' hand could steady him, giving us the well-known phrase 'Oh Ye of little faith' - confidence and trust being key to making good choices in life.

1 Kings 3:5-12 described how Solomon asked God for wisdom - a sound underpinning for all good decisions: '… give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong' he asked. It pleased the Lord that he asked for the ability to choose well, rather than for riches or a long life or some other outcome for to personal gain.

Finally, we read from the book of Exodus 28:15-30, which described the creation of a special breastplate to be used for making decisions for the nation of Israel. The detailed description the Bible gives is sumptuous and august; adorned with fine minerals, precious metals and colourful braid. A veritable tongue twister with 'carnelian, chrysolite and beryl', 'turquoise, lapis lazuli and emerald', 'jacinth, agate and amethyst', 'topaz, onyx and jasper'. All worn over an multicoloured Ephod - an apron (not a headdress as I thought!). A list worth Googling, if only for the kaleidoscopic images!

So good decision making is precious, requiring wisdom and faith - makes sense.

A blessing of our congregation's small size is that we can engage with each other and explore our themes together using our ideas and experiences.

Starting with the small, we talked about our little choices: tea or coffee? Cake or a scone? What small choices make us happy? We shared our stories! Cheese and pickle sandwiches took centre stage. Choices when running a bath; healing salts or fragrant bubbles? How do we choose?

We talked about the importance of prayer in making good choices. About the role of finding the right information and how we might do so. Sometimes, especially where the effects are long lasting, it's important to have patience and not rush decisions that matter.

We talked about taking advice: about putting faith in others to help us make the best decisions. When I want a really good meal at a restaurant, I'll often ask the Chef what they would recommend. I've rarely been disappointed. Knowledge sometimes comes from expertise which may vary with age and stage of life.

And so, we upped the stakes, exploring some big decisions: 2024 is a year of choices, with elections around the world - United States of America, Britain, France and India among others. In the USA recently, President Joe Biden decided to abandon his campaign for a second term as president in favour of his Vice-President Kamala Harris. We all agreed that this could not have been an easy decision, having committed to run and strongly expressing his determination to contest the election in November. We felt this was, in all likelihood, probably a very difficult decision but perhaps the conclusion he came to was a wise one. Changing a decision already made sometimes requires the greatest courage.

At the moment a member of our church and local historian is running a series of talks about Sir Thomas More and his legacy in Chelsea, celebrating the 500th year of his estate (please see www.moravianclosechelsea.com/events for details). The first event was a screening of the 1966 Academy Award winning film 'A Man for All Seasons' which documents the struggles of More in serving both the Catholic Church and the will of King Henry the Eighth. We discussed the challenges of his dilemma. Was it better to try to work with power and guide it wisely or to oppose power even though it may cause your downfall? More, as most will know, eventually chose the latter and in conversation we agreed that he had made the right decision: being true to his conscience and true to his faith despite the cost to him personally.

Sometimes the best decisions, the right decisions, may not offer the best outcomes for us personally, but ultimately, for the greater good, we must see them through.

We finished our liturgy with closing prayers and The Grace.

And what about the Hymns? Well, in keeping with the theme of the day I asked our pianist Anton to choose them and surprise us. Naturally we enjoyed a fine selection: a few old favourites as well as some we rarely hear, played with passion and skill.

Our final choice was whether to have a biscuit with our tea as we left.

So that was our day at The Close, Sunday the 28th of July 2024. A beautiful summers day in our lush green grounds in the middle of Chelsea. Surrounded by trees. Among the Oleander. Visited by butterflies. We co-created a service inspiring us to consider the value of our choices and the role of faith in making them. Blessings to all who joined us.

Thank you for choosing to read to the end.

Br Herbert Daly
Fetter Lane, London

'What I Believe'

Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Dilys Howard, a retired minister living in Leominster and a member of the Leominster Congregation.

Tell me about your early life and background

I have 11 ministers in my family background from both sides of the family. My Welsh grandfather was down the pits as a boy, educating himself at night school until he was able to go as a missionary to the Coloured people of the Western Cape, South Africa. They are a race apart, not the same term as was used in the USA and speak Afrikaans. My father was bilingual, and his first churches were to Coloured Congregationalists in the Eastern Cape. I was baptised into the one in Port Elizabeth. Soon after, Dad accepted the position of principal of the Lovedale Bible School, near the non-white university, Fort Hare in Alice, Eastern Cape. He taught there occasionally but his main job was teaching black evangelists, who would go back to the rural areas to preach.

The apartheid regime took over when I was four. Even the churches were separate. Even now, the white Presbyterian stone church is one side of the street, and the Coloured Congregational Hall the other. We attended both on different occasions. I remember singing duets with my sister in church, winning a scripture prize and eating delicious home baked goodies in the hall across the street. I went to a white junior school, but we also mixed with Dad's church associates in the multiracial Congregational Church although not of our own age. There was a fair amount of political unrest.

How and when did you come to faith?

I don't remember a time when I did not say my prayers and believe in God, although I had Him seriously mixed up with my father in my head as a child! The political situation became untenable, so Dad accepted a call to a United church in Que Que, in South Rhodesia where I went to senior school. As he prepared us for confirmation, he encouraged us to express our own beliefs. From there I read English at the multiracial University of College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and qualified as a teacher under contract to the Government which became illegal after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Political upheaval continued during this time. I also had my singing voice trained at the College of Music and began singing solo with the top choirs and orchestras in Rhodesia. I met interesting people of different backgrounds and faiths and decided that I was a seeker.

What led you into ministry?

After university I taught in white schools, mainly English and music, and also some individual teaching. I married and had three children, two girls and a boy, giving up full time work while they were little. We spent four years in Germiston, South Africa, so my husband could study metallurgy. The Presbyterian Church was not very welcoming, and the Congregational church far away in Johannesburg, so I helped build a Church of England in our suburb. Politically, this denomination is too right wing for me, but I liked the leaders and a remark from the priest about me was my first inkling of a call to the ministry. It was a time of political upheaval once again and then we went back into the height of the guerrilla war in Rhodesia, where my husband was called up into the police, becoming a radio operator in the bush every six weeks. All this time I tested my call, speaking to every minister I came across. Dad said, ' Don't you have enough to do?' but agreed with the consensus that I should begin studying. I chose a distance college and a diploma, judging the degree as not sufficiently hands on. It took me seven years to complete as I coped with a return to full time work and teenage children. I did my probation at the Congregational church, Harare, Zimbabwe, was ordained in 1998 and served them for a further two years as a non-stipendiary minister. I found this very hard, so when the Presbytery of Zimbabwe called me to another church in Harare, I took early retirement from my lecturing job at the Polytechnic, having given my own church due warning of the possibility and served the Presbyterian church for nine years.

What led you to Leominster and the Moravian Church?

The year 2000 was hard. I began full time ministry but after five months lost my leg in an RTA. I spent three months in hospital while a surgeon fought to save my other leg. I went back to preaching in a wheelchair, then crutches, then a prosthesis. I was given an automatic car and drove for three years until someone wrote it off, driving into the back of me. Meanwhile, the political situation in Zimbabwe had deteriorated after independence and the Zimbabwe dollar plummeted in value. Food was in short supply and savings became worthless. My husband developed emphysema, which was not helped by his work environment. I knew he would never retire before me, so I retired at 65, the normal age. Medical care for both of us was inadequate and unaffordable, so we spent six months in South Africa instead, but it was not much better. We came to the UK on holiday, and our daughter persuaded us to stay. Because we were British subjects, and had no money or property, we were given a pension here, so we just used our return tickets to settle our affairs. We chose a flat in Leominster and when I looked out of our kitchen window I saw a belfry. There was no URC church, and transport to Hereford was difficult, so I attended the Moravian church belonging to the belfry. It happened to be our 250th anniversary. I was welcomed with open arms and didn't dare not go back!

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

No, but my husband was because he could not accept that a loving, all powerful God could allow suffering, a very common problem. We had many long discussions, and I always came back to God wanting us to choose because we are not his puppets. Love cannot be forced. Evil exists, so we choose between that and good. Also, the natural world has its own scientific laws which we still don't fully understand – witness climate change. God can intervene, and does but we call these miracles.

Are you afraid to die? Do you believe in the resurrection and what will it be like?

No. I could easily have been killed when I lost my leg, and when I came round in the hospital I felt a wonderful sense of calm, not fear. I was thankful to be alive, because I knew I still had tasks here on earth, and I didn't want my family bereft. I believe that Jesus rose from the dead and met the disciples in a body that ate and drank and could be touched, but also came and disappeared mysteriously. Members of my family and others have seen close recently departed very vividly, and I believe

(continued overleaf)

Fairfield, Greater Manchester

As a settlement Fairfield has attracted much interest over the years. To encourage visitors from far and near we offer organised tours so that people can be welcomed and hosted on their visit, with an opportunity to learn more about Moravians in general and Fairfield in particular; and to enjoy the use of the facilities we have available in the college.

One such organised visit was made recently by a local secondary school, Droylsden Academy. Following that visit they put the following article in their 'Newsflash' which is their online news forum. It is used here with their kind permission.

Visit to the Fairfield Moravian Settlement

This week, a group of Year 8 students visited the Fairfield Moravian Settlement to find out more about the culture, beliefs and lifestyles of these early settlers in Droylsden. As part of the visit, the students had a tour of the settlement and learnt about the history of the Moravian Church. After the tour, the students visited the College and the Museum where they looked at the artefacts on display and found out how the early settlers used to dress. Thank you to Sister Barbara and Sister Carol for welcoming us to the Moravian Settlement and for such an interesting, informative and enjoyable morning and thank you, also, to Coby Haldane and Haidar Irfan who navigated the route and led the group on the walk to Fairfield and then back to school!

© Droylsden Academy

If anyone would be interested in visiting Fairfield on an arranged tour, please contact Sr Barbara Ganson on 07368 122298.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe

Fetter Lane, London:

A visitor from Barbados

With our ministers and MWA Circle Leader away at Synod, it was a happy coincidence that a visiting minister from Barbados, Rev Roslyn Hamblin, kindly volunteered to be the guest speaker at our scheduled MWA service in July. Introduced by Sr Magueda Butler, standing in for Sr Minette Flemmings, Sr Roslyn brought greetings from her two congregations in Barbados. She chose the theme of faith, illustrated by the story in Luke chapter 8 of the woman who sought relief from the pain caused by twelve years of haemorrhages. This is a passage that will be familiar to those of us who attended the MWA retreat at Drumalis in Northern Ireland in May.

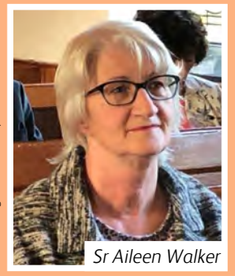
© Sr Cynthia Dize

Faith was the key, hard as it can be at times. To illustrate her point, she gave us a few handy acronyms. Forwarding All Issues To Heaven, in other words, pray. She noted that an obstacle in this exercise is often fear, or False Evidence Appearing Real. We were encouraged to consider all the ways that fear would have affected this woman, especially a woman in those times. So that brought us back to faith and a final acronym - Fear Ain't In This House.

Thanks to Sr Roslyn for sharing her insights with us and for staying to meet a number of the Fetter Lane congregation who share Caribbean roots. Greetings to our sisters and brothers in Barbados!

Sr Cynthia Dize

Kilwarlin, Northern Ireland



© Br Livingstone Thompson

Sr Aileen Walker

I begin my report from Kilwarlin with the death of one of our faithful members Sr Aileen Walker. Aileen was always there to help with catering or cleaning or whatever needed doing. She loved her church and her family, especially her two young granddaughters with whom she spent as much time as she could. She will be missed.

Services during Holy Week ended with an early morning service on Easter Sunday when we were joined by some members from University Road. This was followed by an Ulster fry breakfast which is always enjoyed by all. Ladies do the cooking, but the men are a great help washing up. Another successful service is Family Sunday when we invite members from our extended families including video calls. Another excuse for tea and buns.

Our annual Garden Party, which began in the 1920s, was this year held on a lovely summer day. Everyone enjoyed afternoon tea with strawberries and cream.

Sr Esther Law

'What I Believe' *(continued from p.105)*

they are in another dimension which includes a recognisable body but different obviously or heaven would be a bit crowded! As St Paul says, it is a mystery, but I know I will see God face to face and understand Him more fully. The rapture is also a mystery, because I don't think we can take Revelation literally because it is written in code during a period of persecution.

Some personal preferences

I love reading and watching films in cinemas and on TV and my favourite changes with my recent experiences, but I favour genres, like detective stories, documentaries and history and also certain actors and writers. Music is much the same. I love folk songs and other vocal and orchestral music , particularly of the Romantic period. Once again, I have favourite musicians, particularly singers where I can be quite fussy.

Where do you feel closest to God?

Probably in nature, especially in a beautiful environment or watching a sunset, but also daily in prayer including meditation. The best experience of God for me is on retreat where the two are combined.

What inscription would you like to see on your gravestone, if any?

Just my name and dates.

This article contains terminology, such as the word "coloured," used to describe people in the South African context. While this language is not commonly used in the UK, it is appropriate and widely accepted in South Africa, where it refers to a specific ethnic group with a distinct cultural identity.

Golden Days at Dukinfield, Cheshire

The Dukinfield Congregation were lucky enough recently to have something to celebrate - not one but two Golden wedding anniversaries have just occurred at the Church. Sister Kate Barber and her husband John, as well as Sister Dorothy and Brother Bill Evans made it to 50 years of marriage in 2024. I am sure you will share in sending much love and good wishes to them all.

Both couples wanted to mark the occasion in a special way; they asked for joint donations to be given to the Dukinfield Moravian Church Food Hamper scheme - who work with the local Tameside MBC Social Services all year round. The couples recognise that with the cost-of-living crisis over the school Summer holidays many families may find providing meals a stretch.

© Sr Christine Storey

A fantastic amount of £1,310 was raised and the Food Hamper scheme went shopping crazy to provide 50 rainbow bags of produce to families in the local area.

It reminds us of Colossians 3:14: 'And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.' This verse encourages couples to prioritise love above all else, recognising that love is the foundation for a strong and united partnership. And that partnership can then share the love of God to others.

Sr Penny Weir

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Invitation to the Unity Women's Consultation

The Unity Women's Desk (UWD), a ministry of the worldwide Moravian Church, will be hosting the 5th Unity Women's Consultation from the 1st-8th June, 2025 in North Carolina, USA. We have been invited to select a delegate to represent the British Province, and the Provincial Board will fund an additional delegate to also attend. We are welcoming applications from all sisters in the British Province to apply for the two spaces available. Further information and application packs can be found online at ***www.moravian.org.uk/unity-women-s-desk*** or by contacting Church House - office@moravian.org.uk.

Consecration

The Provincial Board are delighted to announce that Sr Susan Quildan-Foreman will be ordained as a deacon on Saturday 21st September at Hornsey at 2.30pm. Br Joachim Kreusel will be the presiding Bishop and the preacher will be Br Michael Newman. All ministers attending are invited to robe from 2pm.

Sr Edna Cooper

It was with deep sadness that the Provincial Board learned of the death of Sr Edna Cooper on Sunday 11th August. We celebrate and give thanks for a life well lived in service to her Saviour and Church. Sr Cooper was born in Gracehill, and she will be well remembered in many parts of the Province for her work and contributions, where she lived and served with her late husband, Bishop Joe Cooper. Br Cooper's ministry took them to Kimbolton, Pertenhall and Riseley (1950), Baildon and Wellfield (1952), Leominster (1960), and then to Cliftonville (1963) and Ballinderry (1971). Edna was also the editor of the Moravian History Magazine from 1991. We keep Sr Cooper's whole family in prayer.

Provincial Diary for September

5	Ministers webinar	Online
10	Heritage and Archives Committee Away Day	Fairfield
17-18	Provincial Board meeting	Church House
21	Ordination as Deacon: Sr Susan Quildan Foreman	Hornsey
23-3 Oct	Unity Board Meeting	Antigua
24	Faith and Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee	Church House
26	LAMM AGM	Online

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

15th Oct 2023	Billy Sylvia Joan Courtney	Gracehill
26th Nov 2023	Leah Tracey Noreen	Gracehill
28th Jan 2024	Benjamin Daniel Stephens	Gracehill
28th Jan 2024	Abigail Kate Stephens	Gracehill
28th Jan 2024	Madeline Grace Stephens	Gracehill
12th May 2024	Leah Sarah Lorraine Armstrong	Gracehill

Received into Membership

31st May 2024	Irene Ball	Dukinfield

Deaths

22nd April 2024	Georgina Dawson (nee Millar)	Gracehill
20th June 2024	Ruby Wright (nee Kernohan)	Gracehill
10th July 2024	Elizabeth (Lily) Kitson	Gracehill
14th July 2024	Aileen Walker	Kilwarlin
11th Aug 2024	Edna Cooper	Cliftonville

NOTICES

Old Herrnhut stars / Moravian stars wanted

I have been researching the history of the manufacture of the Herrnhut Star for many years. I am looking for and would like to purchase any stars from the early days of production in Herrnhut, i.e. in the 1920s and 1930s. These were stars with metal bodies or stars with paper points and metal frames. I am also interested in the first stars with cardboard frames.

I live in Germany and am a member of the Moravian Church and can be contacted at: m.haase72@gmx.de.

Thank you very much!

Markus Haase.

Dates to remember!

	Freedom Sunday: Any Sunday in September ***(www.ijmuk.org/freedom-sunday)***
6-15	Heritage Open Days ***(www.heritageopendays.org.uk/)***
8	Education Sunday ***(https://cte.org.uk/educationsunday2024/)***
9-22	Fairtrade Fortnight: 30th Anniversary ***(www.fairtrade.org.uk)***
16	Prophet's Birthday - Muslim
16-22	World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel ***(www.worldweekforpeace.org)***
21	UN International Day of Peace ***(www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/)***
22	Autumn Equinox

Heritage Days

Bath Weston

Weston Free Church (Moravian) is celebrating Heritage Open Day on Saturday 7th September, from 12:00 to 4:00pm.

We are embracing this year's theme of Routes-Networks-Connections by partnering with the different community groups that use our Church and Hall, including fitness and well-being, charities, modelling, local history, and boy's and girls' associations. Activities and interests include stalls, crafts, entertainment, an audio-visual display, vintage vehicles, a tour of the facilities, and more. Refreshments available.

Fetter Lane - Open House London 2024

After marking the 500th anniversary of Sir Thomas More's residence in what is now known as Moravian Close, the Fetter Lane congregation will again take part in Open House weekend.

This year it takes place on Saturday and Sunday, 14th and 15th September from 1pm to 5pm.

As usual, we will introduce near neighbours and visitors from farther afield to the long and varied history of the site, from Tudor times to its place in the artistic life of Chelsea via the Gillicks, to the reinvigoration of the congregation thanks to the Windrush arrivals, and much in between.

All of this information and more can be found in a free printed booklet written by Sr Naomi Hancock. Visitors will learn about the rich history of the site, its importance as a site of biodiversity and the significance of its long Moravian heritage, past and present.

We will have a quiz sheet for children and refreshments, as well as a pleasant place to rest and reflect.

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