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MORAVIAN MESSENGER

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Holy Week and Easter in Nepal

During Holy Week, we hold special services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, where all three congregations gather at different times. The Baneshwor church service takes place at 4:00pm, while a combined service for Khokona and Chyasikot congregations is held at 6:30pm at the Khokona church.

The Maundy Thursday and Good Friday service includes reflections on the Word of God, focusing on the narrative of the Upper Room gathering and Communion and reading from Good Friday. The service features hymns and Holy Communion, and at times, foot washing is also conducted. Pastors and leaders often lead this symbolic act by washing the feet of congregation members who feel comfortable participating. This practice has been deeply meaningful, serving as a humbling reminder of Christ's example of servanthood when He washed His disciples' feet.

Easter in Nepal

Easter in Nepal is an ecumenical event, bringing together believers from various denominations in a grand celebration. Each year, we join a city-wide procession with fellow brothers and sisters, walking through the streets of the Kathmandu Valley. We carry banners and hoarding boards displaying resurrection quotes while singing songs of victory. The joyful sound of guitars, the Madal (a traditional drum), the flute, and other folk instruments fill the air, creating an atmosphere reminiscent of the Israelites marching around the walls of Jericho. This public celebration, despite cultural and social challenges, is a powerful declaration of faith, drawing over 20,000 people to a common venue.

If we do not participate in the Easter rally in a given year, we organise our own Moravian Easter service at the church. The Moravian Worship Band leads us in praise and worship hymns during a combined service, followed by a potluck meal featuring special dishes from various ethnic groups. This day is filled with joy and anticipation as we come together to celebrate the hope and victory of Christ's resurrection.

Br Shanti Pradhan
Nepal

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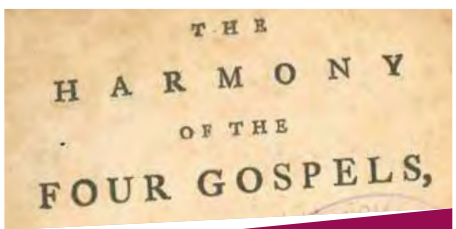

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Editorial

It was so lovely to read Br Shanti's account of the celebration of Easter in Nepal. It gave me a real sense of the joy of the resurrection celebrations in another country and another culture. I loved the idea of joining together with other Churches to celebrate together as an act of witness to the wider community which is not of a Christian heritage.

Yet these open celebrations are not without threat in various places. To openly show yourself as a Christian in a place where the predominant culture is not Christian is an act of bravery in itself. And it is a potent reminder of the dangerous situation of those first Christians believing in the incredible truth of the resurrection of Jesus within the setting of settled Judaism and secular authorities who saw Jesus as a threat to be removed.

In contrast our lovely and faithful celebrations in our Churches, Burial Grounds and over Easter Breakfasts can give the impression of being cozy and safe, particularly with easter chicks and lamb. But the resurrection is far from safe, and it remains a threat to so much of what we blindly take for granted in this world.

The world we live in and experience tells us that death is final. Money rules and the poor are helpless, and the meek do not inherit the earth! Unkind words hurt more than kind words sooth. Understanding is a poor second to making rash assumptions and hasty judgements. Social media likes matter more than friendship. Revenge is sweet and all punishment is deserved. My needs are more important than your needs and the needs of people we can't see don't matter at all.

However, Jesus' resurrection smashes through all the power games, false premises, hurts and griefs of this world. It shows us a God, our God, who cares so much for his beloved creation that he sends his son to heal the breaks and bind up the broken hearted; to forgive the sinful and to take on the failures that trap us all. This mission of God, this mission of mercy involves taking on our nature and being betrayed, beaten and his body broken by the roar of the crowd, the power apparatus of Government and the powerful religious institutions of the day.

This mission is not a failure, it is a triumph, occurring three days later in the quiet of the early morning before the Jerusalem commuter rush. It's witnessed by grieving women, some fishermen and a bunch of others amounting to 500 in all. But this victory is not seen in the way that the world understands through power, armies and money, but in the hearts of children, women and men who turn to this man Jesus and follow him through their faithful and sacrificial lives.

It is a victory, seemingly understated but actually of cosmic importance. It is a victory that lasts, there are not defeats or retreats now. It's the last word, God has shown his power for life through love to the end, beyond death and into new life. This is a victory that lasts to the end of time and is big enough to include us all if we but trust in God and his son our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

Help with Summer Camp needed

Summer Camp - General Camp Leader / Supporter

Could you be a general leader for summer camp? We are after people who are happy to help practically on the ground. Not so much focused on running activities with kids as maybe going around and ensuring that kids are where they should be. Helping to keep the space tidy and ensure the smooth running of the camp space.

You will be required to go through a Safe Recruitment process including a DBS and Safeguarding Training (done as a team pre-summer camp).

Summer Camp - Leader with kids

We are looking to recruit more summer camp leaders to work directly with our young people aged 10-18 years. A willingness to help plan sessions which can include running games, fun activities and film nights.

As a first-year recruitment we would not expect you to lead Bible Studies but would wish for you to support others in the running of Bible Study sessions. It is essential that you have a passion of sharing the love of God and the joy that comes with it.

You will be required to go through a Safe Recruitment process including a DBS and Safeguarding Training (done as a team pre-summer camp).

Contact ***Br James Woolford - james.woolford@moravian.org.uk*** to express your interest in either role and please let us know a bit about yourself and current experience.

Notice from the Provincial Board

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It was with great sadness that on the 24th of March the Provincial Board in our capacity as Fulneck School Trustees announced our decision to plan for closure of Fulneck School at the end of the school year in July. Over the past several years the school has seen a decline in pupil numbers combined with increasing costs beyond our control. Despite the best efforts of the school and Trustees, the school is no longer financially viable.

The Trustees, Board of Governors and the school are committed to ensuring that the school year finishes as intended. The Trustees have reorganised our responsibilities to ensure that the needs of both the school and the wider Province can be balanced. I am temporarily stepping aside from my position as Chair of the Moravian Church Provincial Board, and Br Michael Newman will be spending more time than usual on provincial duties, to allow the two of us to focus on the school over the next few months. Br David Howarth will be the interim Chair of the Provincial Board during this period.

Please keep all those affected by the closure of Fulneck School in your prayers.

Best wishes,

Roberta Hoey
On behalf of the Provincial Board

Project 32:
A Journey of Renewal and Transformation

© Br James Woolford

Laying Foundations

In June 2021, a vision took shape within the British Province of the Moravian Church. Recognising the need for revitalisation, the Provincial Synod established the Project 32 Implementation Board, chaired by Br Stephen Maxwell. This initiative sought to breathe new life into the Church, focusing on growth, spiritual renewal, and sustainability.

By 2023, an essential element of this renewal began to flourish - the Holy Habits initiative, led by Br Edwin Quildan and a faithful team of Holy Habits Champions. This movement aimed to nurture core spiritual disciplines and deepen the faith journey of individuals and congregations. Meanwhile, on 1st June 2023, a crucial milestone was reached with the appointment of the Project 32 Co-ordinator, setting the stage for structured implementation.

Listening and Understanding

To build meaningful change, the first step was to listen and observe. From July to September 2023, a thorough analysis was conducted - examining statistics, surveys, and past initiatives. It became increasingly clear that prayer was foundational to any transformation. With this conviction, the Province committed to a biannual Provincial Prayer Day, a spiritual discipline designed to strengthen and build collective faith and perseverance. These prayer gatherings began on 6th January 2024, followed by 17th June 2024, and the 6th January 2025. Watch out for June's initiative soon and be intentional about participating in person and in your local church.

By October 2023, Project 32 sought a metric to assess church health - something beyond mere numbers, capturing the heart and vitality of congregational life. The Moravian Church adopted the Natural Church Development (NCD) approach, a tool to measure spiritual health and tailor strategic plans for each church's unique needs.

Educating, Empowering, and Equipping for Change

As 2024 unfolded, the work intensified. Throughout the year, Project 32 Champions were appointed in each participating church, receiving training in four key tranches: January, April, September, and December. With each training wave, churches embarked on the year-long NCD process, beginning with a Health Survey based on eight key characteristics of a thriving, sustainable church. This was followed by strategic planning, practical implementation, and periodic reassessment to track progress and measure impact.

Looking Ahead through 2025

With a firm foundation laid, 2025 marks a pivotal moment in Project 32's journey. The final round of the first annual process of NCD surveys is nearing completion, with the last eight churches expected to finish by April 2025. This means that, for the first time, a comprehensive health assessment of 26 churches across the British Province will be available, offering invaluable insights into strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. In the coming months, we will examine the findings and their implications in the *Moravian Messenger*, working under the Provincial Board to contribute to plans and strategy.

Project 32
Building a Healthy Church for the 21st Century

From Diagnosis to Action

With data in hand, the next crucial step is analysis and diagnosis - identifying key evidence, recognising symptoms of decline, and discerning the underlying root causes. The challenge ahead is both urgent and needing patience requiring courageous yet measured action. Project 32 is not merely about identifying problems but about actively tackling the causes of decline and fostering sustainable growth.

This period presents a critical window for transformation, a moment in history where decisive action can pave the way for lasting renewal. With the Project 32 Implementation Board serving as a catalyst, each Moravian congregation and every member is encouraged to embrace change with faith, wisdom, and boldness.

Measuring Impact and Continuous Improvement

The journey does not end with assessment. Instead, under the leadership of our conquering Lamb, communicating His will through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the focus shifts toward continuous learning and improvement. As churches and members implement changes, they can track their progress, learn from mistakes, plan their approaches, and ensure that renewal efforts lead to meaningful, long-term growth.

Project 32 needs to be more than another exercise. We want it to become a movement of faith, prayer, outreach, commitment, and hope. To bring glory to God, by being a testament to the power of prayer, the importance of listening, and the unwavering belief that, with God's guidance, the Moravian Church in the British Province can move into a healthier, spiritually enriched and sustainable future.

Br Peter Dornan
Project 32 Coordinator

Br Paul Greenhough - 67 years' service to Young People's Missionary Association (YPMA)

Where do I start? Whilst attending my first Synod in August 2024, as always, I was encouraged and supported by Br Paul, and I knew I was in good hands. It was announced there that he was stepping down as General Secretary of the Young People's Missionary Association and taking a well-earned retirement. I sat feeling emotional and in awe hearing the tributes the delegates from around the Province were standing to make in honour of Br Paul and his dedicated work to YPMA.

I felt a little overwhelmed as it was my first time at Synod and I hadn't spoken at the microphone to address the room. Despite my nerves I could not let the moment pass without standing to acknowledge his work and achievements and to let him know how extremely proud we are at Lower Wyke to have such an amazing man in our congregation dedicated in every sense of the word to God, the Moravian Church, our home congregation, his friends and family.

As many of you will know the idea of the YPMA started with Rev Ronald Lloyd in 1957 with the aim that our children would learn more about Moravian mission work overseas and to share his knowledge with the children. His idea was that the children would pray for the work being done overseas and that the children gave a small donation out of their own spending money to help to support the work being done.

YPMA was quickly established across the Province; children collected money and were encouraged to donate a little of their own spending money. The children had their own collector's card, with their own name on the card to encourage ownership of the initiative. Family members were encouraged to donate as well. It was important that there was to be no door to door collecting and that approach continues today. Congregation members are also encouraged to donate via a child in the congregation or in fact collect themselves.

Rev Ronald Lewis was assisted by Rev Wilfred Mortimer in running the association and later Br George Wilkinson from the Horton congregation took over the running of the association from Br Wilfred Mortimer and became the General Secretary up until 1980. It was at this point that Br George recommended Br Paul to the Provincial Board as his successor as the next General Secretary for the Province, which he did in 1980 and continued the dedicated work for 44 years to 2024 following his already key role as YPMA Congregation Secretary at Lower Wyke from 1957-1980 resulting in a tremendous 67 years' service to YPMA.

Rev A J Lewis wrote the YPMA hymn which was set to the tune Diadenata, No 125 in our Moravian hymn book: 'Jesus our king thou art'. During the 50th anniversary year, Br Paul asked Br Paul Gubi to write a second verse which he did as well as adapting the words to the original verse but without changing the hymns message.

YPMA services are held annually in churches that have collecting members. To begin with collectors, receive the main YPMA badge and in the beginning, there were only two bars that could be collected: silver worth up to £5 and gold worth £10. Back in 1957 this would have been a lot of money to collect. The Province total for a year would have been less than a £1,000.

During Br Paul's time as general secretary collectors began to collect more than £10 and so Br Paul thought that it was time to introduce another bar, firstly the £25 bar closely followed by the £50 and £75 and now all the way up to a £300 bar. The design of the lamb and flag badge and bars have never changed in design since 1957 other than additional coloured bars being produced to represent the different monetary donations now collected. In recent years YPMA has collected around £10,000 per year and since the association began well over a million pounds.

Over the years that Br Paul has been in charge he has worked alongside the Provincial Board to find out where the need was overseas which was identified through their travels and mission work, and then Br Paul would choose the project that would be supported each year.

It was also during Br Paul's time as General Secretary that he thought that although work overseas was incredibly important, it would be also important to support small projects in the British Province, Water Aid being one UK charity that worked to support India and Africa. He then decided that each year YPMA would support a non-Moravian project.

Some of the many projects over the years include bikes for ministers to travel from church to church, school buses, tumble driers, orange tree's, even laparoscopes. Occasionally Br Paul would be sent photographs of the items funded by YPMA and he has then shared this with congregations and collectors to see for themselves where their money has been used. A small amount of money is also given each year to Star Mountain and Elim Home. Twenty plus countries have been supported by YPMA over the 67 years of YPMA.

Br Paul has done a small amount of travelling for YPMA and when it was the Silver Jubilee in Rajpur he was asked to go and represent the Provincial Board. He was there for a week and during his trip visited one of the projects which was a playing field that was created with money from YPMA for Institute at Rajpur and was given the honour of opening the playing fields. Whilst on this visit Br Paul tells me that he was asked by Br Thsespal Kundun to chair a meeting for him regarding India becoming an independent province. India had been asked by the Unity Synod to think about their independence. Br Paul chaired the meeting, and Br Burke Johnson from America was present from the American Province and they discussed how they would go about making this happen. Apparently, Br Thsespal said 'over to you Br Greenhough, how do we go about it'. So that was the first meeting and Br Paul told the meeting of his experience, the British Province and how it is organised from Synod, Church Committee's, Congregation Council Meeting and how decisions were made. They are now a Province in their own right but who knew that it all began with a small meeting in 1978, when Br Paul visited Rajpur on YPMA business.

Another highlight for Br Paul and his wife Sr Marilyn, was in 2010 when he was asked to represent the Provincial Board for YMPA work at the Queen's Garden Party. The pair of them thoroughly enjoyed the experience and felt very honoured to be asked to attend.

I am sure that everyone will join me in thanking Br Paul for all his hard work and dedication to YPMA over the past 67 years and wish him well with his retirement from this prestigious post.

We now welcome Sr Sue Selby as our new General Secretary of YPMA, and I am sure Sr Sue will do an equally good job following what I am sure was a thorough handover.

Here's to another 67 years of collecting for YPMA!

Sr Zoe Cooper
Lower Wyke

South Asia Moravian Church Mission Province Second Synod 2025: 'For such a time as this'

© Br Joachim Kreusel

Between 16th and 20th January this year delegates gathered at the Park Village Hotel, Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu, Nepal to meet for the Second Provincial Synod of the South Asia Mission Province. Ministers and deputies from India and Nepal were represented along with the South Asia Mission Province Provincial Board, Chaired by Br Shanti Kumar Pradhan and the British Mission Board (BMB), Sr Jane Carter, Sr Roberta Hoey and Br Joachim Kreusel and the Unity Board Administrator, Br Jørgen Bøytler. We all arrived safely however my suitcase remained for several days in Doha airport in Qatar!

Sessions began on the Thursday with Br Thsespal Kundan in the Chair and Br Simeon Kamei the Vice-Chair. Br Tin Shaw of Myanmar was elected as the President of Synod and Br Joachim Kreusel as the Vice President. Br Joachim welcomed Synod by leading the opening service.

The first order of business was to guide new deputies through the processes of Synod including how to deal with proposals, amendments and the voting procedure. I think we, in the British Province, who may have attended our Synods for several years very much take this process for granted, but it can be a steep learning curve for those who are attending such a meeting for the first time.

Each morning began with prayer and Bible Study reflecting on women's experiences. I led the first Bible Study taking inspiration from the book of Esther (4:14) and exploring the theme for the Synod 'For such a time as this'. Br Thsespal led the second morning's study using Hagar as his subject and on the final morning Br Ebenezer Gangmei reflected on Hannah's situation.

Reports were received from the Provincial Board presented by Br Shanti Pradhan; the British Mission Board, presented by Sr Jane Carter and the Unity Board presented by Br Jørgen Bøytler and Sr Roberta Hoey.

One of the first sessions was led by Sr Roberta Hoey outlining the importance and functions of inter-synodal committees. There were no such committees at the time, but consideration was given to the election of a Book Committee to continue the ongoing work of updating and refining the SAMP Book of Order and to prepare for the next Synod. A Book Committee was duly elected. The important subject of financial sustainability was also discussed and the need to elect a Finance Committee to enable the Province to work towards financial independence and stability. Committees are elected from the four Provincial regions ensuring an even spread of representation. For the Finance Committee, two members were elected from the floor of Synod and others would be appointed regionally.

The Synod followed the pattern of some Provinces and Unity Synod of splitting into discussion groups to consider proposals prior to gathering in a plenary session to come to a conclusion regarding final wording and voting. This works well for this particular Province because of the broad geographical spread of the congregations and the split over two countries with different governments and laws.

On the first evening the Provincial Board and the BMB took the opportunity to visit local congregation members in Kathmandu to discuss ongoing concerns about ministry provision. On subsequent evenings each congregation had the chance to bring news about new work and projects. This was an important sharing opportunity. Unlike the British Province where our congregations are at their furthest about 200 miles apart (or maybe across the Irish Sea), the breadth of the South Asia Mission Province is about 3,500 miles between Ladakh and Manipur so opportunities to meet are less frequent and costly.

There were a number of proposals brought to Synod. Some were to refine the wording of the Book of Order. Several proposals dealt with the governance of Moravian Institutes. The gathering based in Silchar, North East District was recognised as an official Fellowship. The provision of long term and further education for minister's children under the support of the Provincial Board was agreed. The District of Central, comprising Rajpur and New Delhi Fellowship would henceforth be known as North West District.

The final election was for officers for the next Synod to be held in 2026. Chair Sr Vani Pradhan, Vice-Chair Br Thsespal Kundan and Reserve Officer Br Simeon Kamei.

Br Joachim led the closing service including the Cup of Covenant.

Although there were four days of business there were many opportunities for fellowship during breaks and at meal times. Probably the best discussions and preamble to business were made over rice and fragrant meat and vegetables. There was also worship in many forms and the opportunity to share in worship with the Khokona Congregation on Saturday morning with Br Bøytler preaching and Br Shanti translating a reflection on the Samaritan woman at the well. Sisters who had met at the Women's Conference in November also met with Sr Roberta and Sr Jane to exchange ideas about how the women's work might be explored in South Asia with ideas from the MWA (Moravian Women's Association) being shared.

Despite bearing witness in this region since the 1800s, South Asia as a Mission Province is still in its infancy and it will take many more Synod's to refine its structure and governance. However, the Provincial Board is dedicated to the process and have met consistently and frequently during the inter-synodal period and will continue to lead the Province with commitment and a strong and visible faith in God. Please continue to pray for the South Asia Mission Province and all our brothers and sisters in Christ who witness to the growth of the Kingdom.

(By the way my suitcase appeared late on Friday, so respectability was eventually restored!)

Sr Jane Carter
Chair, BMB

Gracehill Archives Exhibition:
Moravians in Ireland

© S Sarah Groves

On Saturday 25th January 2025 we had our second archives exhibition in the Moravian Church Hall at Gracehill. This was the day after the 'great storm' so we were slightly worried about how many people might venture out that day! We need not have worried as all those who turned up were really interested in what we had put on display!

Our first exhibition, last year, had been a show of what we had in our archival stores in Gracehill - documents, photos, maps etc. - in preparation for our World Heritage bid! This time we decided to concentrate on the topic of the 'Moravians in Ireland'. Sr Roberta Thompson and I thought that this would be a wonderful opportunity to get together with the other Moravian archivists in N Ireland and ask them to produce materials from their own church resources. My thanks go out to Srs Violet Best and Esther Law, and Brn John Costley and John Cooper. It is amazing how much information can be found in Ballinderry, University Road, Cliftonville, and Kilwarlin respectively! My one wish would be to see it altogether in one place - for easy access and security.

We started the day with a very interesting talk by Lorraine Parsons on Moravian Archives. She answered a lot of questions about the foundation of archive collections. What a wealth of knowledge Sr Lorraine has and I was glad to see her office is as untidy as ours - with boxes to unpack!

As well as documenting the Moravians in Ireland, Roberta and I decided that we would also highlight the work of one important Moravian from Gracehill: Br Anderson Weir who still lives in his parents' house (I daren't give his age!). Anderson has produced maps of the Gracehill area with some of his own beautiful artwork and he has compiled books, data lists etc. on our burial ground. Many of these are an enormous help when carrying out genealogical research - not only is each grave named in a booklet but there is also one with the names in alphabetical order. This can be so much more helpful than having to search through a, sometimes not-so-easy to read, diary. Thanks to Anderson for his dedicated work.

As for the exhibition, we set out a table for each current church and for Dublin whose diaries etc. are held at Gracehill. Each table had a John England sketch of the church in question. As we had set out a lot of our own materials last year, the Gracehill table simply concentrated on our successful World Heritage bid. Dr David Johnston provided files of information including a handwritten letter by Sr Roberta Thompson in 2003 from the very first meeting - 22 years ago!

A few of the many interesting items from the other churches were: the long handled money cup collector (no one could escape paying!); a letter signed by Br Zula regarding his plans for Kilwarlin; the pamphlet from Dublin setting out the Sisters' duties (not sure I could follow them); a list of Ballinderry's past ministers; the site plan for replacing University Road's bomb damaged windows in the 1970s and last but not least, work carried out over the years by the amazing Sr Edna Cooper. We still have many of her boxes of work waiting to be opened!

Apart from the items from our current churches it was very interesting to look back in time at the many preaching places throughout Ireland that no longer exist. From a John England sketch map we traced lines to places like Kilkeel and Bingian in Co Down, Clifden House and Crossard in Co Clare, Arva in Co Armagh, The Billies in Co Monaghan, Cootehill in Co Cavan and more common names like Gloonan and Portmore in Co Antrim. A lot of research is waiting to be carried out!

This was a really interesting exhibition to prepare - interesting because of the many wonderful items which came from all the current churches, from the archives of Dublin and from the tracing of many of the preaching settlements which have now unfortunately disappeared. We have so many interesting items in all our churches here in Northern Ireland and many of us are coming to work together to share these treasures. Many thanks to all our Moravian Archivists in this country.

Sr Jackie Neill
Gracehill

Br Dick Porter reports on the Spring Conference of the Yorkshire District, held at Fulneck on 15th February

The Moravian Church has suffered a steady decline in membership over the last 30 years, the Yorkshire District spring conference was told.

Br David Howarth, of the Provincial Board, said: 'If we do not take decisive action now, we risk facing further decline or even closure.'

He said to evaluate and re-prioritise the church's mission, the focus would highlight three needy areas: poverty, housing and youth engagement.

The Board was also reviewing financial and property assets to make sure they were being used ethically, as well as looking at supporting marginalised communities.

To bolster youth participation, grants of £4,000 for each of the Eastern, Irish, Lancashire and Yorkshire districts have been allocated.

Every congregation member is urged to join this collective effort. Br Howarth said Yorkshire was blessed with a strong team of lay preachers.

In other news, it was reported that volunteers are needed to help lead summer camp this year. The camp will be held at Bell Heath in the Midlands from 30th July to 4th August. It was reported that the team of leaders was believed to have been too small last year and in all ten volunteers are being sought. The camp was enjoyed by 26 young people last year.

On the election of Yorkshire delegates, the role of chairman was left vacant. Br Kenneth Evans will chair the spring meeting, but a new chairman is still being sought.

Sr Diane Thornton will again be secretary, and Br Bob Hopcroft will be treasurer. Youth work will be handled by Sr Libby Cooper and Br Glyn Dickinson, and the *Moravian Messenger* correspondent will be Br Dick Porter.

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews her sister, Sr Sue Groves

Sr Sue is the Lay Pastor of Brockweir Moravian Church.

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

I am the second of four children raised in a cottage in Brockweir. Dad was at sea, so mostly it was just Mum, my siblings, and various animals: dogs, cats, rabbits, chickens, ducks, geese and a cockatoo! I attended the village school which had two classrooms and a cold outside loo! I failed my 11-plus and instead of following my sister to the grammar school, went to a comprehensive school, then studied Catering Management at college. I did OK at school but was not a natural student; today, I would probably be diagnosed with ADHD, but back then I was just considered 'mischievous' as my kindly Godmother described me! I rebelled against authority from an early age, arguing with my infant teacher when told to sit next to a child I didn't like!

How and when did you come to faith?

Sunday School led to a basic faith but when the elderly lady who taught us could no longer cope with my questions, a young Pentecostal couple took over and they inspired me to develop a fuller faith in Jesus. For my 50th Birthday, the same couple gave me a CD of the book 'The Shack' by W M Young which prompted a much wider interest in theology and faith. My Moravian identity was fostered when, in my 20s I joined Fetter Lane Congregation.

Tell us a bit about your working life - both paid work and your volunteer work

After college I worked in management in a cancer hospital and then in universities in London and south Wales. Managing staff much older me was a challenge! After redundancy in my 40s I worked for a computer company and then as a Domiciliary Carer. Health problems led to me retiring from paid work in my 50s so I became a volunteer at our village shop, reprising a role from my teenage years. I enjoy this work as it keeps me in touch with the community.

What led you into lay ministry at Brockweir?

I have always been involved with Church life, teaching Sunday School and serving on various committees. Rev Monger and Br John Berry encouraged us, as teenagers, to take an active part in services and, as member of the MWA at Fetter Lane, we took monthly services. During COVID I became more involved with pastoral duties and regular service planning on Zoom. When we were told that there would be no ministerial cover for Brockweir in the foreseeable future, I was asked if I would consider becoming a Lay Pastor. I was reluctant at first and tried in vain to find someone more qualified, but in the end I felt that God was pushing me into this role and agreed to do it.

What has been your greatest joy in life and in ministry, and what do you struggle with?

Life holds many joys, but if pushed to pinpoint one it would be my granddaughter. Despite outward appearances I do struggle with confidence in my ability to fulfil the role.

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

Yes! When I see people suffering or injustice etc, I quite often have a rant along the lines of 'I know you gave us free will, but couldn't you have given us better judgement in how to use it!'

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

I'm not afraid of death as I know that there is something wonderful awaiting us after this life. However, I am nervous about the process of getting there!

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

In the past many people had to go to church whether they believed or not, and there was little other entertainment. With a captive audience and controlled by those who wished to maintain a societal status quo, the church became part of the Establishment rather than preaching the revolutionary message of Jesus. Nowadays, to an observer, all the scandals, corruptions, and politics of hate, in organised religion, make Christianity appear to be utterly un-Christlike, so there is little incentive for them to go to traditional church even though many are seeking spiritual meaning in their lives.

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

I love 'The Green Mile' as it shows some of the best and worst of humanity. I like a good murder book but would probably choose the 'Winnie the Pooh' books as they are so relatable to life. Having been a teenager in the 70s I think we had the best music, and I enjoy all sorts of things from country to punk! I don't allow myself to play Meatloaf when driving though as it encourages me to drive too fast!

The place where you feel closest to God

There is a spot in our village with a bridge over a stream surrounded by trees where I feel particularly grounded and close to God, but whilst being in a lovely setting helps, feeling close to God is more about my mindset than a place.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

I want a couple of lines from my favourite hymn 'The love of God is wider than the measures of man's mind and the heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind'. The words of that hymn carry some fantastic theology, and I've told my children that I will come back and haunt them if they don't have it at my funeral!

The History of Gospel Harmonies

First published in the February 1993 issue of the 'Moravian Messenger'

Ancient Attempts

The Gospel Harmony used for the readings in Holy Week was, according to the preface of the 1928 edition, compiled first in German by Samuel Lieberkuhn in 1768 and put into the English of the authorised version in 1771. The latter part of this harmony was published separately in 1845, *Extract from the Harmony of the Four Gospels containing the History of the last Days of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from the Passion Week to Ascension Day*, for use during Holy week. A new version was prepared in 1928 using the text of the 1881 revised version. Behind this brief history of Moravian usage there lies a story which goes back to the very beginnings of Christianity, and to the customs of the second century AD.

The first Christians were well aware that the four gospels differed: some teachers such as Origen (early 3rd century) solved the problem by saying that the truth of the gospels was to be found not in the literal meaning but at a deeper level; others such as Marcion (mid-2nd century) chose to use only one gospel, in his case Luke's and the rest were abandoned. Pagan writers such as Porphyry (late 3rd century) used the discrepancies between the gospels as part of their attack upon Christianity.

Another solution was to make a compilation from all four gospels. This was first done in the middle of the second century by Ammonius of Alexandria, of whom little more is known, and by Tatian, a native of Assyria (modern Iraq) who became a Christian and studied in Rome. He probably wrote in his native Syriac and composed by weaving together phrases from the four gospels so that all their details were harmonised. The resulting work is known as the Diatessaron, (Greek for 'through four'), and this compound gospel was widely used in the eastern churches.

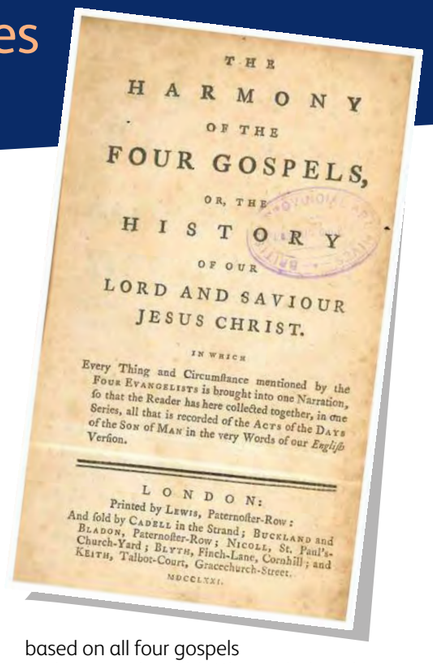
In later life, however, Tatian adopted some extreme and eventually heretical views. All his writings, including the Diatessaron, fell into disrepute. By the middle of the fifth century Theodoret, then bishop of Cyrus on the Euphrates, ordered the remaining two hundred copies of the work to be removed from churches in his diocese. Instead, they had to use what was called a 'distinct gospel' as opposed to a harmony. Despite this ban, Tatian's Diatessaron did not disappear; fragments survived as quotations in other writings and a copy is known to have existed in Baghdad at the end of the ninth century. It was translated into an Arabic version which has survived and is now our best evidence for Tatian's work.

The Western Church

In the Western church the Harmony had a different fate. Victor, bishop of Capua, chanced upon a Harmony, and, never having seen anything like it, he wondered who could have written it. From the writings of Eusebius, (early 3rd century), Victor discovered that both Ammonius and Tatian had compiled Harmonies. He thought he had found an old Latin translation of Tatian's Diatessaron and began to compile something similar, but taking as his text the Vulgate, the newer Latin version of the Bible translated by St. Jerome at the end of the fourth century. Victor's Harmony was completed in AD 546.

Two centuries later his beautiful manuscript was presented by St. Boniface to the Benedictine Abbey at Fulda in central Germany. In the early part of the ninth century the Harmony in the Codex Fulda, as it had been named, was translated into Old High German and became the first of several mediaeval German Gospel Harmonies. There were also Old Dutch Gospel Harmonies, although these differ from those of the German tradition in several ways. The most famous of them is the Diatessaron of Liege, written at the end of the thirteenth century. These translations into the language of the people reflected the religious revival in northern Europe and the growing dissatisfaction with the mediaeval church from which Protestantism eventually grew. The high priests who condemn Jesus, for example, are translated as 'bishops' and the scribes as 'magistrates'!

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the production of Harmonies, often in Latin, continued in such centres as Basel, Cologne, Amsterdam and Antwerp. Some were


THE
HARMONY
OF THE
FOUR GOSPELS,
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF OUR
LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST.
IN WHICH
Every Thing and Circumstance mentioned by the Four Evangelists is brought into one Narration, so that the Reader has here collected together, in one Series, all that is recorded of the Acts of the Days of the Son of Man in the very Words of our English Version.
LONDON:
Printed by Lewis, Paternoster-Row:
And sold by Cadell in the Strand; Buckland and Beadon, Paternoster-Row; Nicoll, St. Paul's-Church-Yard; Blyth, Finch-Lane, Cornhill; and Keith, Talbot-Court, Gracechurch-Street.
MDCCLXXI.

based on all four gospels and some only on Matthew, Mark and Luke. Some offered the whole gospel, others only the events of Holy Week. Ottmar Nachtigall, for example, published a Latin Harmony of the four Gospels in Augsburg in 1523; Johannes Bugenhagen published in 1530 a short work based on the four Gospels which dealt only with the Resurrection and Ascension; John Calvin published a three Gospel Harmony in 1572. The Holy Week readings were often divided among several voices and music was added; thus they were the forerunners of the Passions best known today from those of Bach.

The Moravians

Most significant for our search, perhaps, is the fact that in 1727 Johannes Schilter published at Ulm in two huge volumes *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Teutonicarum*, a whole collection of ancient German texts. In the second was reproduced the whole of the Codex Fulda Harmony and its Old High German translation in parallel columns. Thirty years later, in 1757, the German Moravians were using a printed Gospel Harmony for Holy Week *The Story of the Days of the Son of man, compiled from the Four Gospels*. A note in the appendix states, curiously, 'This may be the first attempt to prepare a Harmony of the Gospels', which must mean, surely, that it was the first time the Moravians had done it. In 1759 a new version appeared, compiled by Zinzendorf, and in 1768 a third, that of Samuel Lieberkuhn, who had used Luther's translation of the Bible as the basis for his compilation. His preface says that he made some changes in the chronology, an important point.

Harmonising the Harmonies

When comparing Harmonies, one has to study two things in particular:

i) the way in which the individual phrases in the stories have been woven together, and then

ii) the order in which the stories have been assembled.

The four gospels do not always agree as to the order of events, and the harmonist had to choose the order he thought most reasonable. A comparison of the Codex Fulda Harmony and the Moravian Harmony reveals that there are some passages where the interweaving of individual phrases corresponds almost exactly. The episodes of *The Anointing at Bethany* and *The Royal Entry* are so similar in both versions that coincidence seems unlikely. In the matter of chronology, the re-arranging is sometimes apparent.

Both the Codex Fulda and the 1928 Moravian Harmony agree in following St. John for the date of the Anointing; it was six days before Passover rather than two days before as in Matthew and Mark. Over the date of the footwashing, however, they differ. St. John's Last Supper mentions the footwashing but no bread and wine whereas the other gospels have the bread and wine but no footwashing. Codex Fulda makes the footwashing a separate occasion on the night before the Last Supper whereas the Moravian Harmony has footwashing at the beginning of the Last Supper. Again, the old Dutch Harmonies say Judas was indicated as the traitor and that he left to betray Jesus after the bread and wine had been consecrated, an echo of the early belief that by dipping the bread for Judas, Jesus deconsecrated it. Both the Codex Fulda and the Moravian Harmony say that Judas left before the bread and wine. The first three gospels do not say when he left.

There are numerous problems like this in the study of Harmonies. The learned Dr Lieberkuhn, who had studied at the University of Jena and was recognised as one of the ablest scholars of his day, must have had some knowledge of this area. It would be very interesting to know what he knew, and what he had on his desk, so to speak, when compiling the 1768 Moravian Harmony.

Margaret Barker

CONGREGATION NEWS

Lower Wyke, Yorkshire

Change or no change - that is the question

I have a confession to make. I do not like change. You may or may not feel the same but either way I guess that change brings about a range of strong emotions. It can be frightening. It can be exciting. It can take us right out of our comfort zone.

Over the first weekend in March Lower Wyke celebrated change in many ways. Whilst the Welsh were celebrating St David's Day with leeks and daffodils, we were all welcoming the change in God's creation that the season of Spring brings. The snowdrops have pushed their way up through the hard winter soil. Crocuses carpet many grassy parks and gardens bringing a wonderful splash of colour and daffodils are bursting out in their varying shades of yellow and gold. Spring has sprung.

On Sunday 2nd March our country celebrated National Dance Day and having our own dance expert resident in the village it was an opportunity not to be missed to celebrate with her. Julie Altree runs dance schools in London Monday to Thursday and swaps the hustle and bustle of the capital for the peace and quiet of Lower Wyke at the weekends. She leads our Wake and Stretch group on Friday mornings in the Sunday School. It is an exercise class for the 'young at heart' that attracts on average a dozen willing participants who, not only exercise their bodies but enjoy friendship, fellowship and laughter together.

Medical experts assure us that dance, running, walking, or any form of exercise is good for us and can bring about change in our physical, mental and emotional health. What better place than a church in which to improve our spiritual wellbeing. Julie and some of the Wake and Stretch ladies demonstrated their dance/keep fit routines when they were invited to the Sunday morning service. They were accompanied by Peter Enright on the piano beginning with an upbeat version of The Lord of the Dance.

© Sr Claire Maxwell

The Lectionary readings for that day talked of change. We heard that Moses' face changed when he spoke with God on the mountain top and Jesus changed during the Transfiguration event. Again, it was an outward change in his appearance in front of his three disciples: Peter, James and John.

The service ended with Holy Communion: a time when we remember how Jesus changed all our lives by dying on the cross for each one of us.

However hard it may be and however hard to put into practise, is it possible that we should embrace change: change in our services and change in our way that we think of church. Change, not for change's sake, but change for the better - change that encompasses the twenty first century and attracts those searching for a solid foundation for life. Change to what? Change how? I wish I knew the answer, but it is a serious consideration or we may not be happy with the consequences.

Sr Diane Thornton

Children's Activities at Fetter Lane, London

© Br Michael Newman

In June 2023, the first meeting of our new Outreach Group took place to discuss how to build on the pioneer work that had been done by Sr Claire Maxwell. Br David and Sr Naomi met with the two of us, and one of the things we decided to do was contact Phil and Abby from the nearby Salvation Army to see if they wanted to work with us on some children's activities.

We met again with Phil and Abby in September and planned an activity afternoon during the October half term called Awesome Autumn. The programme for the first afternoon has become the template for all our activity afternoons: arrivals at 2pm, a treasure hunt in the Close, craft activities in Studio 1, drinks and snacks, story and songs with puppets in the Chapel, ending at 4pm. On the first activity afternoon we welcomed about 20 children and their parents.

In 2024, in the February half term holiday, we ran another activity afternoon called Love and Pancakes, as it was close to both Valentine's Day and Shrove Tuesday. The treasure hunt involved finding the ingredients for making pancakes, after which we decorated some pancakes and even had a pancake race. This time we had about 30 children.

The next activity afternoon was during the Easter holidays and was called Amazing April. The crafts included making chocolate Easter nests and planting bulbs in a pot which was first decorated. About 20 children attended, and it was good to have a number who were with us for the second or third time.

Due to availability of our helpers, the next activity afternoon was held on a Sunday in June and was called Champions, as it was held just before Wimbledon and just after the opening game of Euro 2024. This time we paid for someone to come and run some sporty games in the Close instead of our usual treasure hunt and crafts. We had less than 10 children, perhaps a reflection of how busy Sundays are for a lot of families.

At the end of August, we held an activity afternoon called Back to School. This time we had both outdoor games and indoor crafts. This time the numbers were back up to 25 children.

In the October half term holiday, we had another Awesome Autumn activity afternoon. We had some additional help from some trainee officers from the Salvation Army, and welcomed about 35 children, our highest attendance so far.

One of the other things that the Outreach group organised in 2023 was an outdoor event called Carols in the Close, with music from one of the Salvation Army brass bands. When we repeated this on a Saturday evening in December 2024, some of the families who had come to the activity afternoons came along to do some Christmas crafts and take part in a nativity play.

Our first activity afternoon of 2025 was in the February half term holiday and was called Fabulous February. The theme was kindness. February can be an inhospitable month, so we were pleased to welcome around 20 children and their parents or carers; some regular attenders and others here for the first time. The weather permitted an outdoor nature quiz and some bulb planting, while indoor events focused on 'Bee Kind' crafts and cupcake decorating. As usual, Abby and Phil from the Chelsea Salvation Army closed the afternoon with a kindness themed puppet show and songs.

What advice would we give to other churches? Firstly, make the most of what you have. Perhaps our greatest asset is the outside space at Moravian Close, so we make sure that we use it for all our activity days. Secondly, make the most of the gifts of your volunteers. We couldn't do what we do without the help of Phil and Abby from the Salvation Army who lead the story and songs, and the creative gifts of our own volunteers. Thirdly, communication is key. From the first event we got everyone attending to fill in an information form with contact details so that we could let them know about our future events, and we now have an email contact list which reaches parents and carers of about 60 children. We also advertise through a local school and nursery so making those sorts of connections is really important. Fourth, keep it simple. Having a simple programme that we use every time means that we know what we are doing, and the children and parents know what to expect.

Br Michael Newman and Sr Cynthia Dize

Young People's Missionary Association (YPMA)

You may be aware that Br Paul Greenhough has taken retirement from his position as YPMA General Secretary. This was a position he held for over 40 years, and I am sure you will agree with me that he certainly needs a happy retirement after such a long time.

Are you also aware that I have taken over this role since the beginning of January this year? I have been passed all of the records and items needed to carry on this job, which I am enjoying.

However, it saddens me to see that so few Moravian congregations actually carry on this YPMA tradition, which has its origins in 1957 which was the 500th Anniversary of the Moravian Church. I know that Dukinfield have collected for this cause since its inception - I was one of the first children to be a member at Dukinfield.

And so, I am appealing to the leaders of the British Provincial congregations to think whether a YPMA Branch would work within their particular church. All you need to start with is an adult in church who will be the YPMA Secretary in their congregation. They will be responsible for collecting the money weekly or monthly from the children. Next, obviously, you will need willing children who, with permission from their parents, collect money from their family, including church family.

If any church would like to start a YPMA branch, then please let me know on sue0205@btinternet.com and I will give you more in-depth information.

The Moravian Church has always been a mission church and it would be good if this could continue with the present and future young people.

Sr Sue Selby
YPMA General Secretary

Royton (formerly Westwood and Salem), Lancashire

© Sr Barbara Skiba

We have a lot to catch the province up on as our last update was the beginning of September so here we go … on Sunday 29th September, our neighbours from Trinity Methodists joined us for our Harvest Festival service, led by Br Gubi, who also led a service to remember loved ones on Wednesday 6th November. Sr Janine Parkin held a coffee morning at her home on Saturday 5th October in memory of her Mum, Sr Christine Coutts. A total of £1,014 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support. A Beetle & Bingo Night was held on Friday 18th October and once again proved very enjoyable and raised £144.50 for Church funds. This year's Christmas Fair took place on Saturday 30th November and was a great success. The various stalls were laden with goodies, prizes were won, tasty lunches were served, and everyone had a good time. A grand total of £1,466.15 was raised for Church funds. On Saturday 7th December, the ladies within church decided to set a target to bake 75 mince pies, as this year is the 75th anniversary of the MWA, but 85 were baked and £92.80 was raised for MWA projects from their sale. A Moravian Biscuit bake is planned for Easter.

The Christmas services were all well attended and went well. Sr Lisa Howarth led our Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on 8th December. Our Christingle Service on 22th December was led by Sr Janine Parkin. It was lovely to see so many people, especially the children, who all enjoyed the lighting of the Christingles and singing the traditional carols. 'While Shepherds Watched', sung to Jackson's tune, to close the service, was especially memorable and moving.

Sr Lisa Howarth took the service on Christmas Day, using a mixture of traditional and modern carols, which made for a very interesting and thought-provoking service. On Sunday 2nd February we joined our neighbours from Trinity Methodists for a service of Holy Communion, which was led by Rev. Dr. Kenneth Gondongwe. He spoke passionately on the theme of trusting in God in difficult times. May anyone who is going through a difficult time be reminded that God is with you, even when what you're going through seems impossible. God makes it possible.

Sr Hannah Coope

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Easter Greetings from the Provincial Board.

As we celebrate Easter, we rejoice in the hope and renewal found in the risen Christ. His victory over death is our assurance that love and life prevail. In a world facing uncertainty, we hold fast to the promise of resurrection - God's power to bring light from darkness and joy from sorrow. May this time strengthen our faith, renew our hearts, and inspire us to be bearers of Christ's peace and love.

Please note Church House will be closed on Good Friday (18th April) and Easter Monday (21st April).

Provincial Diary for April

10-11 Provincial Board Meeting Church House

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

Received into Membership

2nd March 2025	Richard Mellowes	East Tytherton
2nd March 2025	Susan Mellowes	East Tytherton
2nd March 2025	Richard Langley	East Tytherton
2nd March 2025	Carol Lewis	East Tytherton
2nd March 2025	Jane Green	East Tytherton
2nd March 2025	Jim Lutton	Gracehill
2nd March 2025	Elma Lutton	Gracehill
2nd March 2025	Reggie McDowell	Gracehill
2nd March 2025	Pat McDowell	Gracehill

Deaths

13th January 2025	Sr Sheila Mallinson	Lower Wyke

DATES TO REMEMBER

12 First Day of Passover - Jewish
13 Palm Sunday
13-19 Passion Week Readings
18 Good Friday
20 Easter Sunday
Last day of Passover - Jewish
21 Easter Monday
23 St George's Day
28 International Workers' Memorial Day
(http://28april.org/)

Some of the Passion Week and Easter Services around the Province

Bath Weston

We are holding a Maundy Thursday joint communion service at Bath Weston along with the Western District at 7pm.

On Good Friday, we join in with other churches in the community for the Good Friday walk of witness, which starts at 10.45am from Bath Weston. The walk is through the high street to Weston All Saints Church, then a small service is held.

Easter Sunday an early morning sunrise service at 7am followed by a breakfast, then the normal service at 11am.

Brockweir Moravian Church

Brockweir Moravian Church will be holding services at 7pm each evening during Holy Week, except Maundy Thursday. These services will also be available on Zoom and we extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join us to share the Holy Week readings together. On Maundy Thursday the service at Brockweir will be at 11am.

Palm Sunday service will be 6pm and Easter morning 9am: both will also be available on Zoom and on Easter morning will include the service in Gods Acre.

The joining details are below and if you would like any further details, please contact sue.groves@moravian.org.uk.

Zoom link for Brockweir Church Services:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84315872596?pwd=U25IdS84cWdIV2lLbS9JSU5nYWx3Zz09

Meeting ID: **843 1587 2596**

Passcode: **121411**

Fairfield Moravian Church

13th Palm Sunday cafe church in the College 10.30am.

14/15/16th Passion Week Readings 7pm in the Church room.

17th Maundy Thursday communion service 7pm.

18th Good Friday Service 10.30am.

20th Holy Communion 7am, then at 10.30am Egg Service.

Fetter Lane Moravian Church

Monday to Wednesday at 6pm - a hybrid service; in person and via Zoom (contact Br Michael Newman for joining details: michael.newman@moravian.org.uk)

Maundy Thursday - in person at 6pm, with Holy Communion

Good Friday - in person at 11am

Easter Day - in person at 8am followed by a light breakfast

Gracehill Moravian Church

Our Palm Sunday service is at 11am in person and will be available to watch later on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@gracehillmoravianchurch4199.

Our Holy Week services are at 8pm each night in person.

The early Easter service is in person at 8am in the Church and burial ground followed by breakfast.

Easter Day family service is in person at 11am and will be available to watch later on YouTube.

Horton Moravian Church

Palm Sunday (13th) - 10.30am Lovefeast & Holy Communion, Family Focussed service, Holy Week story telling

Tuesday (15th) - 2pm Passion week readings

Maundy Thursday (17th) - 7.30pm Joint service with Lower Wyke at Horton: sharing in a bring and share meal as we re-tell the story together

Good Friday (18th) - 11am service using Good Friday readings and liturgy

Easter Sunday (20th) 10.30am - Easter Day service

Lower Wyke Moravian Church

Monday (14th), Tuesday (15th) & Wednesday 16th - 7.30pm Passion week readings

Good Friday (18th) - 10am Walk of Witness
- 7.30pm Good Friday reading and liturgy

Easter Sunday (20th) - 7.30am early Easter sunrise service
- 10.30am Easter Day service

Ockbrook Moravian Church

All the services and readings are available to join in person and on Zoom:

13.4. 11am Palm Sunday service
14.4 7.30pm Passion week reading
15.4 7.30pm Passion week reading
16.4 7.30pm Passion week reading
17.4 7.30pm Passion week reading with Communion
18.4 10.30am Good Friday liturgy
20.4 7am Easter Morning service
11am Easter Day service

Zoom link for Ockbrook Church services and Passion week readings:

https://zoom.us/j/9441064801?pwd=NHEwVk1ZY2QrZG1rbExMOXZOOEFtUT09

Meeting ID: **944 106 4801**

Passcode: **355659**

Addresses and details of each of the above and other congregations in this Province can be found on the Moravian Church website: ***http://www.moravian.org.uk/congregations***

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