MAY 2025

MORAVIAN MESSENGER

V E (Victory in Europe) Day

8th May 1945

Although I was only ten years of age at the time I do remember that day as it was such a special day. We had lived through almost six years of warfare with its air raids, the threat of bombs and the V1 and V2 rockets, the rationing of food and clothing, and missing the many called away from home for military service, some not to return. There were shortages of almost everything and we were encouraged to grow food at home with slogans like 'Dig for Victory'. They were frightening days living in the blackout and with no road signs which were taken away to confuse the invading enemy. Fruits, like oranges and bananas, were unknown. There was even a song, 'Yes, we have no bananas'! Fortunately apples were home-grown and available from time to time.

My younger brother, Robin, and I were boarders at Fulneck Boys' School and the Headmaster was the late Br L J Britton. It must have been the half-term school holiday, for on that particular day, which was a lovely sunny Tuesday, our mother decided to take us to the house and park at Temple Newsam on the other side of Leeds. When returning home we had to change trams in City Square (there were trams in Leeds in those days) and there we heard the news and saw the noticeboards saying, 'War over in Europe'. We could feel the excitement in the air. People began to put up their Union flags - we hung ours on a pole stuck out of a bedroom window when we got home.

Germany had suffered under the Nazi regime for many years and as a result of the bombing by the Allies many of the German towns and cities were completely ruined. Some of the people there were relieved and thankful when General Alfred Jodl (Army), representing the German President, Admiral Karl Doenitz, signed an agreement to an unconditional surrender. It was then that our Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, declared in a radio broadcast that 'we may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing'. That rejoicing had to be brief because although the war was over in Europe it continued in the far East until 15th August when the Japanese Emperor signed an unconditional surrender.

It was only later that some of the horrors of warfare and the depravity of the Nazi war machine came to the general knowledge of the British public. The slaughter of millions of Jewish people in the Holocaust and the treatment of prisoners of war are war crimes that must never be forgotten.

Our newspapers at the time of V E Day were full of pictures of people celebrating the peace and I remember a photo of Buckingham Palace with King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and the Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the balcony acknowledging the cheers of the many thousands of people. I know I went into Leeds sometime later in order to join the vast crowds who wanted to see Winston Churchill on the steps of Leeds Town Hall. There was so much for which to be thankful. We had come through the Battle of Britain when might so easily have been overcome by a Nazi invasion. As I say they were frightening days, and we have so much for which to be thankful.

It is truly wonderful that we have such a good working relationship with our Brothers and Sisters in Germany. I pay tribute to Br Clarence Shaw who did much to keep alive the spirit of brotherhood between the Moravian churches of Britain and the Continent. May the Unity we share bring blessing and peace as we celebrate the eightieth anniversary of V E Day.

Br John McOwat
Bishop of the Unity

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Editorial

The death of Pope Francis marks the end of a chapter in the Roman Catholic Church and the end of an era. I and many other non-Catholic Christians felt real sadness at his passing as did many of no faith and other faiths. We do not know who will become the new Pope and whether it will be someone who follows in his path or will take the Catholic Church in a different direction. But for now, we can remember with thankfulness all that Pope Francis gave us, an example of deep faith, humility, a concern for those on the margins and a deep love of our 'common home' shown in his seminal document *Laudato Si'*. This one document, more than any other has enabled people across the world to be galvanised in concern and action for God's creation.

We also remember this month the liberation of Europe on 8th May 1945, 80 years ago. This will be the last big celebration of this event that any of those who took part in the war will be able to attend. It will be so poignant as we reflect and thank God for the huge sacrifice of so many in resisting Nazism in the Allied Forces, not just from the United Kingdom but also from Commonwealth countries, Soviet Union, China, United States and of course from the occupied countries themselves.

Our freedom rested not just on our own strength but on the work of many from different places and contexts serving together. It took many nations to defeat one particular and identifiable evil. The same is true now because the international issues that face us are so complex and will not be solved by one nation or one idea.

The issues of war in various places, including Ukraine and Sudan, and conflict in so many places have different causes and need total concentration and deep attention to detail and the commitment of many nations. The same is true of the problem of migration. It is not just the fault of migrants, it is about so much more: climate change, effects of war and harsh conditions in the homeland and the massive inequalities between nations. The issues of climate change stem from the industrial revolution that has given us so much in terms of standards of living but caused imbalance in the ecological structure of our world. Other nations, quite naturally want good standards for their own people and so the imbalance continues and accelerates. This too is an issue that cannot be tackled by one nation alone.

Pope Francis called the world 'our Common Home' and we need deep connections between individuals, organisations and nations to begin to ease the problems that face us now. People and nations need to be allies not opponents to bring about peace, to seek the common good and to love the world that God created. We as Christians belonging to a worldwide Church need to be visible in working for peace and the dignity of all people. The Ground of the Unity, our statement of faith tells us that Jesus Christ maintains in love and faithfulness His commitment to this fallen world. Therefore, we must remain concerned for this world. We may not withdraw from it through indifference, pride or fear ... the Unitas Fratrum challenges all with the message of the love of God, striving to promote the peace of the world and seeking to attain what is best for all people.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

It's a small world

I was in Londonderry yesterday at the regional final of a Rotary competition. I got chatting to a retired Planner and Surveyor. We connected quite quickly as he knew my son's job who is also in planning. He then related that he had worked in Canada or rather Newfoundland and had travelled on business up the Labrador coast.

He was very aware of the Moravian settlements and our church in general. He had been on the ship when Rev Victor Launder and his family were going to a posting. He stayed the night at the settlement and greatly enjoyed their company and set sail again the following morning. He often wondered about Rev Launder and his family. We had a long chat about Victor's time as minister in Ballinderry Moravian Church and his subsequent retirement to the UK.

It really is a small world!

***Br Henry Wilson**, University Road*

Moravian Messenger

The editors are always looking for more articles for the Messenger from our readers. If there is a topic you would like to write about, or there is an event you would like to share, do please get in touch. And if you have any suggestions for future articles or anything you would like to see then please contact us by email to editorialteam@moravian.org.uk or call us on 020 8883 3409. We look forward to hearing from you.

Raising Faith Monthly

from the Youth and Children's Committee (YCC)

Our article this month comes from comes from Sr Lol Wood who is based in and around Kirkby Lonsdale.

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

© Sr Laura Wood

Foresty

My name is Lol Wood and I am the Family Project Leader for the Churches in Lunesdale.

Foresty began as we had discerned that in Kirkby Lonsdale people loved being outdoors and I remember a conversation I had with a local parent who said their kids 'loved being outside but it is tough with no garden'. Often families have moved here to be nearer the Lakes and the Yorkshire Dales but many of the houses in Kirkby Lonsdale don't have a garden or if they do they aren't always that big: not big enough for games. We are lucky to have Glebe field behind the Rectory and a beautiful Churchyard which we are encouraged to use for any of the projects we do. We have the space and we had heard the desire for more outdoor activities for families. Perhaps, we thought, this could be a way of exploring a new form of church community?

© Sr Laura Wood

Increasingly we had found that the word 'Church' was problematic for many of the parents in our area. For a variety of reasons, it can and does put them off. I know some people advocate using the word 'Church' in every fresh expression of pioneering ministry as it points people to what they can expect: some message about God will be in the mix. Yet we knew it would put people off who might otherwise come - people who liked the concept of exploring God but weren't so sure about being part of an institution. Also, we believed it was possible to be Church without calling it 'Church' so together we landed on the name 'Foresty'.

Foresty meets bi-monthly on the 3rd Sunday in the afternoon (after rugby, as requested by our families). Our Foresty sessions begin with a short welcome and an explanation of what our topic is and a rough sketch of what we will be doing. We have learnt to do a run through of the whole programme quickly because some who attend prefer to know what will happen next. After our welcome we usually have a scavenger hunt where they collect either pictures related to nature or objects from nature in wicker baskets. We encourage everyone to get involved but we have a rule not to pick anything that is growing. Part of our ethos is respect for the natural world.

As we regroup we share our thoughts on what we have found. After our scavenger hunt we move to our story - this is Bible based and tends to be a mix of storytelling and interaction. We know that everyone can offer insights into God and the mystery of this earth and place we call home. There are no experts at Foresty; we all learn together. After our story we usually have an activity - this might be planting something, doing some land art, baking bread etc. We always aim to link the story and the ethos of spotting God in nature into our activity. Finally, we move around a firepit where we make our own smores and we all enjoy immensely the satisfaction of melting our marshmallows over the fire. As we eat we chat and then we gradually move to singing some songs - these are worship songs learnt in the local school and are led by two pre-teens who attend - often they know these worship songs and their actions better than anyone else. Then we end with a prayer or blessing. This is usually interactive, and we may incorporate BSL as part of our prayer.

Foresty lasts an hour and a half and is my personal favourite form of church. Feedback we have had includes comments such as 'this feels most like Church to us as we learn together', 'it is so welcoming', 'it is special'. It is hard to put into words how Foresty is and what I believe happens when we meet but it feels sacred and at times a 'thin place'. Friendships are made and conversation happens easily, particularly around our firepit.

I don't know exactly why Foresty attracts such a diverse group of people but I think the outdoor element makes it easier for many. There is no threshold to cross. The space does not obviously belong to an institution, there are no places you cannot sit because so and so sits there every week. It is there for everyone. We do have some people who attend time-honoured Church and Foresty, but I would say two-thirds or more don't.

This Easter we are sharing our first Foresty Communion with liturgy written and shaped by our teens and pre-teens. Foresty will continue to evolve and be shaped by the community that attends. The team and I feel lucky to be part of this congregation and have learnt about God through and with them more than there is time to write about! If you would like more information about Foresty do email me: lol@cilfamilyproject.org.

Faith, Identity and Culture:
The Journey Forward

On 6th February 2024, I had the privilege to participate in a retreat, coordinated by Br Mark Kernohan, Acting General Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches, at the Dromantine Conference Centre. Though I missed part of the day, I had the privilege to hear the Rev Ruth Patterson as she reflected with participants on the theme of journey, as a closing thought on the one-day retreat theme, 'Pilgrimage to Unity'. I was particularly struck by the observation made by Rev Patterson, that once there is a breakthrough on a journey, there is really no going back. Bishop Sarah Groves challenged me to develop a little further and share the comments I made as part of the discussion.

My thought, then, is this: there is a moment on every journey when we realise that returning to where we started is no longer possible. This is the testimony of people seeking asylum - once we break through to new understanding, experience, or reality, there is no way to reset life to its earlier state. Unlike a computer with a refresh button or an option to return to factory settings, human life generally moves in one direction - forward, even with ups and downs.

This realisation is especially true in matters of faith, identity, and culture. Many long for a return to a simpler past, whether in personal life, religious tradition, or national identity. Some Christians hope to recapture an earlier, purer expression of their faith. Some people wish their country could return to a time before globalisation and diversity reshaped it. However, these desires rest on a fundamental misunderstanding of history and human experience: there is no going back.

The Journey of Faith: No Reset Button

In the spiritual life, many believers go through moments of renewal and rediscovery, but these are never about returning to a past version of faith. They are about moving forward into deeper understanding. Some Christians look back to the early church, the Reformation, or a particular era of revival as a model to reclaim. While history can inspire us, we cannot recreate the past. The world is different, and so are we.

Even within the Bible, faith is always a forward-moving journey. Abraham was called to leave his homeland and go to a new place (Genesis 12). The Israelites left Egypt but could not return, no matter how much they longed for the security of the past (Exodus 16:3). Jesus spoke of putting new wine into new wineskins, warning that trying to force new realities into old structures leads to destruction (Mark 2:22). Christianity itself is built on the idea of movement - growth in grace, transformation, and pressing toward the goal (Philippians 3:13-14).

Yet, some yearn for a 'reset' to what they see as a purer Christianity. They wish to return to an age before modern challenges - before scientific questions, cultural shifts, or theological debates and complicated belief. But no era of Christian history was without struggle, and every generation faced its own challenges. Instead of longing for an ideal past that never truly existed, we are called to meet today's world with courage and faithfulness.

The Illusion of Returning to the Past

Having lived away from my home country for 25 years, I have often reflected on the idea of 'going home'. But home is never exactly as I left it. The streets may be the same, but the people, customs, and culture have evolved. When I return, I bring with me the experiences and perspectives I have gained elsewhere. I cannot step into my previous life unchanged, and my home country is not frozen in time.

This is true for nations as well. Some people yearn for a past where things seemed simpler, where everyone shared the same values, traditions, and backgrounds. But history is never static. Societies are always evolving, shaped by migration, technology, and changing ideas. No country can return to how it was decades ago - nor should it try. The richness of diversity brings new opportunities and insights, even if it also brings challenges. I sigh with exasperation when I hear politicians proposing policies to undo diversity of ethnicities, as if to turn back time.

Christianity itself spread through cultural change and adaptation. The early church was a Jewish movement, but it expanded into the Greek and Roman world, transforming as it went. Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has taken on local expressions while remaining true to the gospel. This adaptability is a strength, not a weakness. If we resist change, we risk turning faith into a museum exhibit rather than a living relationship with God.

This breaking through of the threshold is also true of the Moravian Church, whose history is characterised by a series of people movement. The early Moravians were pushed out of Bohemia/Moravia though Poland into Germany. Within a decade of their arrival, their gaze was lifted to new horizons, which led to a century long threshold breaking missionary journeys that established the Moravian Church throughout the world. The church has become incarnate of different cultures in the North America, Central America, South America, Africa and the Caribbean. We are now blessed with myriads of Moravian identities. Thresholds have been breached and there is no going back to an ideal, singular past. As the British Province wrestles with its existential crises, the history of threshold-breaching can inspire us to see that our thriving will depend more on breaking new grounds than on repairing the old.

Navigating Change with Wisdom

If we cannot go back, how should we move forward? The answer is not to abandon the past but to learn from it as we step into the future.

Embrace Growth, Not Nostalgia: instead of longing for the past, we should seek wisdom from it. What values and truths remain essential? What mistakes should we avoid repeating? Nostalgia can blind us to the struggles of the past and make us resistant to the opportunities of the present.

Adapt Without Losing Core Values: change does not mean losing our core values. The church has always adapted, whether through translating the Bible into new languages, using new technology for evangelism, or addressing contemporary ethical issues. The key is to remain faithful to Christ while engaging with the realities of today's world.

Build Bridges, Not Walls: in a diverse society, we can either fear change or see it as a chance to learn and grow. The church is called to be a place of welcome and reconciliation, not division. From Northen Ireland to Yorkshire, from Lancashire to the West, from the West to London, we should ask how can we break new grounds, engage new communities and embody Christ's love in a changing world.

Trust in God's Leading: the future is uncertain, and change can be unsettling. However, just as the people of God were led through the wilderness, so too will our leading be today. The Holy Spirit is always at work, not just in preserving traditions but in guiding us into new ways of living out our faith.

Journeying Without a Reset Button

Life, faith, and culture are journeys without a reset button. We cannot return to the past, nor should we try. Instead, we are called to move forward with faith, trusting that God is at work in the unfolding story of history. Whether in our personal faith, our church traditions, or our national identity, the challenge is not to recreate what was, but to faithfully live in what is - and to step boldly into what is advancing.

Br Livingstone Thompson
Minister of University Road and Kilwarlin Moravian Congregations

Moravians in Conversation
Wednesday 21 May 2025

Dear sisters and brothers throughout our Unity!

Our next Moravians in Conversation will be on **Wednesday May 21st**.

This quarterly event brings together Moravians from the four geographical regions of the Worldwide Moravian Church to share the Daily Text and a focused discussion relevant to the church today.

We'll meet at the following time:

15:00/3pm London

16:00/4pm Berlin/Cape Town

17:00/5pm Dodoma

09:00/9am Kingston

10:00/10am New York

11:00/11am Paramaribo

The topic of this meeting is **Commemorating the 1700th anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (325 A.D.).**

The first ecumenical council of the Church which took place in Nicaea 1700 years ago is a significant moment of shared history in our journey towards unity. The Council gave rise to the adoption of the **Nicene Creed**, which is still a central statement of faith for many - although not all - Christians. Paths have diverged since then with schisms and the establishment of new churches and movements within the Christian family.

The work of Christian unity in its many forms, from informal contacts and friendships to formal models of structured theological dialogue, from local community to international level, aims to bring us back to our essential spiritual bond and belonging in Christ, so that together we may better follow the example set for us by Jesus of loving service to all, especially those who are most vulnerable.

The Nicaea 1700 anniversary this year provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the progress of our ecumenical journey, deepening our relationships and renewing our vision and commitment.

Questions:

1. What does 'Christian unity' mean to you in the context of your own experience?
2. What do you think might be limiting the vision of unity for the Church?
3. Think of the participants gathering for the Council of Nicaea. What do you imagine were the hopes of the participants gathering for the Council of Nicaea? How does this compare to the hopes you encounter in ecumenical gatherings today?
4. Has speaking about the ways in which Christians of different denominations have hurt each other been part of your ecumenical experience? If so, have you found these conversations to be helpful?
5. Where do you see the potential for the Church's vision of unity to enrich the wider society beyond the Church?

Greetings,

Frederik Grüeberg and Michael Newman.

The following Nicene Creed in its ecumenical version could give us also some orientation:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Report of the Irish District Spring Conference

The Irish District Spring conference met at Gracehill at the end of February and under the Book of Order we had 20 delegates attending rather than nine under the old rules. This adds to greater debate. The district went through all the required elements of a district conference, namely safeguarding, elections, our Treasurers report which was received with acclaim as Br John has become excellent at managing the four accounts attached to the district namely district fund, MWA district fund, Men's Breakfast fund and the youth fund. Local to the Irish district we heard reports on the ecumenical body, the Irish Council of Churches, and also on the Moravian Church of Ireland 'Armagh Agreement'.

The Provincial Board report was welcomed, and the Provincial Board was congratulated on the change of format setting out key deliverables to the Province and creating more accountability. It was thought that this format was a positive move forward. The meeting continued with more debate and decisions on the Republic of Ireland fellowship, the Irish Moravian history and heritage society, the Irish district archives and the digitising of their records, our attendance at the Balmoral Show (similar to the Yorkshire show) where our stand could be observed by up to 120,000 people, Gracehill UNESCO update, and a discussion regarding outreach in the summer for holiday churches in two of Northern Ireland's holiday resorts.

The synod proposal on environment issues was discussed at length and it was agreed that members of the district would be given an opportunity to attend a conversation between Br Roy Douglas (Professor at Queens University) and Sr Lynsey Cunningham (Head of Propositions on Climate at Nat West) This would be the starters for the debate and would be held live and by Zoom. A full discussion took place on Project 32 and the NCD (Natural Church Development) survey which showed a blessing to those churches who had undertook it and an increase in membership where actions had taken place. One of the actions that required work is passionate spirituality which noted that Ministers were usually the lead on this but in Northern Ireland such was the culture that a lot of people having it did not like showing or talking about it. The district agreed to meet again on Saturday 7th June as it was felt the more time district meets the more happens.

Br Mark Kernohan
District Chair

Fulneck School

Last month, with deep sadness we confirmed the heartbreaking decision to plan for closure of Fulneck School at the end of the current academic year in July 2025.

This decision follows a comprehensive strategic review which began last year in response to long-term challenges the School has faced. Fulneck has seen a gradual but significant decline in pupil numbers over recent years - a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing shifts in the independent education sector. At the same time, rising costs, many of them outside our control, have made it increasingly difficult to sustain the school financially.

Throughout this review process, the School management, the Trustees and Governors have explored every possible avenue to secure a viable future for the School. We considered a range of options, including partnership, merger, and new financial models. Sadly, no viable alternatives or investment offers materialised, and the conclusion became unavoidable.

This is not a decision that has been made lightly, and we are acutely aware of the distress it will cause to pupils, parents, staff, alumni, and many within the wider Moravian community. Our priority is to ensure that the remaining school year proceeds with care and dignity. The Trustees, alongside the Principal and school governors, are committed to supporting each pupil in their transition to a new school and to helping staff navigate the uncertainties ahead, including offering counselling support.

The legacy of Fulneck School is considerable. For nearly 275 years, it has been a place of learning, service and community. Alumni include politicians, architects and actors, as well as several ministers and church members. The grief that many people feel is a sign of how deeply this school is loved.

We recognise that many in the Moravian community will have questions about the impact of the closure on the Church, including the future of the School property. We ask for your understanding and care in this sensitive time, as much remains in progress and there will be opportunities to discuss these matters in due course.

Please hold all those affected - pupils, families, staff, governors and alumni - in your prayers. We remain deeply grateful for your compassion, and for the love and history that Fulneck represents to so many.

Sr Roberta Hoey and Br Michael Newman
On behalf of the Fulneck School Trustees

Betty Webb, a member of the Bletchley Park codebreaking team during the second world war, died aged 101

Noted in the newspaper obituaries last month was the death of Charlotte 'Betty' Webb who worked at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire deciphering enemy messages during the second world war and who was among the last of the surviving Bletchley codebreaking team.

Mrs Webb gave up her domestic science course in Shrewsbury and inspired by her father's first world war service volunteered for the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) aged 18. She believed it was her German language skills that then led to her being recruited in 1941 to the government's wartime codebreaking centre in Buckinghamshire.

Born in the village of Richard's Castle, about seven miles from Leominster, her father, Leslie Vine-Stevens worked in a bank and her mother Charlotte (nee Harris) home-schooled both Betty and her sister. Charlotte, a music teacher, sent 14-year-old Betty on a foreign exchange for a month to Herrnhut in 1937. There is no record of them within the archives of Leominster Moravian Church, but being only seven miles away, some contact may have made with the local congregation to arrange the exchange. The congregation had a membership of 50 and held various services attracting many non-Moravians in the preceding year including 'Foreign Mission Services', lectures on the Moravian Church in Czechoslovakia and John Cennick, and lantern slide shows from missionaries.

The Guardian obituary notes that 'in later life Betty vividly recalled the disquiet of the modest Moravian host family over the tense political situation and compulsory youth camps on Sunday mornings' during her time in Herrnhut. An interview six years ago with The Independent records that Betty 'saw no reason why she should give the classroom Heil Hitler salute that was compulsory for her German exchange and all the other girls at the school. "What did I do?" Trying not to laugh, Mrs Webb raises her arm and flops her hand about most irreverently. She also remembers Christina, a Jewish schoolmate of her German exchange. "She sort of clung to me. It was only years later that I realised she might have been trying to get out of Nazi Germany by making a friend of me."'

This exchange helped to develop her language skills contributing to her work at Bletchley particularly when unknowingly handling coded SS and Gestapo messages for the first two years there, after which Betty was promoted to paraphrasing and transcribing Japanese communications. After the war she went on to help with Japanese codes at The Pentagon in the US. Like everyone else who had served at Bletchley Park, she kept her work there secret until 1975, when the operation was finally allowed to be made public, but it was not until in her 90s that she wrote a book about her part. Betty was awarded the MBE in 2015 and later awarded France's highest honour in 2021: the Légion d'Honneur.

Lancashire District Conference Spring Meeting

The meeting was held on Zoom on the morning of 1st March. All three churches in the district were represented and Br Quildan attended as Provincial Board representative.

Minutes of the previous meeting in October 2024 were agreed and then the election of officers was then held, the appointments being as follows.

Chair Sr Janet Warr; Secretary Sr Margery Sutcliffe; Messenger correspondent Sr Margery Sutcliffe. No District Youth and Children's coordinator was appointed.

During the matters arising it was confirmed that the district gathering would take place on 29th June at Fairfield and Sr Claire Summers has agreed to lead the service.

Conference was pleased to report that Sr Julie Andrews had taken on the leadership of the district Bible study group and although that group has temporarily been paused whilst Br Woolford runs the Lenten Study Group; it will resume after Easter.

The matter of a reduction to congregation assessments during periods of interregnum had been raised previously and Br Quildan confirmed these were to remain payable in full.

There followed an update on work being done/considered to help protect the Environment. In the district we have undertaken installation of solar panels, planting trees and rewilding. Br Ingham suggested that Provincial Board consider doing away with paper payslips for retired ministers as most seem to use emails.

Progress is being made on the Natural Church Development project and Fairfield have had a meeting for members, following which a plan will be submitted to the church committee for its consideration.

During Br Quildan's report from Provincial Board he highlighted that the churches mission and ministry efforts are to be focused on marginalised communities.

It was noted that there has been no new take up of the Lay Preachers course, nor for ministers to undergo training. There are however at least two ministers retiring this year and one new minister completing their training this summer (Sr Janet Cooper).

We were reminded that summer camp will be held at Bell Heath from 29th July to1st August and that volunteers of all ages are welcome.

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on 11th October 2025.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe
LDC correspondent

‘What I Believe’

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Br Daniel Newman

Br Daniel is a member at Hornsey Moravian Church, who serves on the Book Committee and provides technical support at Synod and elsewhere.

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

I was born in Manchester and lived in Fairfield. When my dad entered ministry, we moved to Baildon, then Fulneck where I attended Fulneck School, and most recently to Hornsey Moravian Church in 2021. That year I graduated with a degree in Geography, half of which was during the pandemic. Currently I work in retail with The Lego Group in Leicester Square. I enjoy spending time outdoors, especially walking, watching films, and playing video games.

How and when did you come to faith?

I have been going to church for as long as I can remember. Being a Moravian runs deep within both sides of my family, so I have always had some faith from an early age. My faith fully developed when I gained my own individuality and the confidence to ask questions about parts of my faith that I didn't understand. When I learned that there isn't just one answer, that faith is unique to everyone, that is when I understood my own faith and place as a Christian.

Tell us a bit about your life and work in London

Living in London is completely different to anywhere else. When waiting five minutes for a bus or train is a long time, that's when you know you're a Londoner. However, there are lots of positives: the heritage and places to explore, and the diversity of people and cultures that have shaped it. Working in the tourist centre is both fun and tiring. I have grown in confidence and learnt how to interact with people of all ages, and playing with LEGO every day is every child's dream.

You are younger than many folk in the Church - do you find that a challenge?

Yes and no. I am very comfortable chatting with people older than me and enjoy listening to stories and knowledge that is shared. However, I do sometimes feel like the odd one out. I'm the one that people look to when there is a technical issue that needs to be addressed, but I'm more than happy to help when I'm needed. It allows me to give back to everyone who have always been kind and welcoming to me and gives me a sense of place within my own congregation and the wider church.

What do you struggle with in your personal faith and what gives you strength and comfort?

With how complex and busy life has become, I have recently found myself connecting less with God. I will always love God for everything he has and will give me, and I will continue to be a faithful member of the church. At the moment, due to work, I attend church less than I would like to, this makes every service I attend more meaningful and gives me the strength that although I may not be able to connect with God at the moment, he is always there for me and will be ready whenever I return.

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

For my own issues, I never feel angry with God as I am at fault. Global issues are more complex. Recently, the news has been bleak keeping us guessing what will happen next. I often find myself thinking even if things do get better will they worsen again. We should be looking forward to the future not crossing our fingers and bracing for the worst. Why is God letting these happen again and again? Why are the innocent the ones worst impacted? Whilst I know God is all-loving, I do sometimes find myself questioning this.

Why are so many people turning their backs on the Church and how can the Church be more relevant to people?

More and more, Sundays are taken up by extracurricular activities. Promoting church activities on Saturdays or school holidays may bring in more families, such as the Lego Club we hold monthly at Hornsey. Children are exposed to the internet at young ages, they might ask 'Why should I go to church when I can find a YouTube video and watch that instead?' and attention spans have become much shorter due to apps such as TikTok. Creating short videos on social media could be a good start. It can't be done overnight, and we will need to adapt but I believe that we can persevere.

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

My favourite book is *Dune* by Frank Herbert. I first read it after the 2021 film adaptation came out and found myself instantly immersed. It has gone on to influence other sci-fi works such as *Star Wars*. My favourite musical duo is Daft Punk and recently I have delved into 70s rock including Led Zeppelin and AC/DC. My favourite film is *Tron: Legacy*, a bit of a guilty pleasure, it has an outstanding soundtrack by Daft Punk melding classical and electronic music, and brilliant visual effects.

The place where you feel closest to God?

Going for hikes in natural landscapes, particularly the Yorkshire Dales. The sloping hills and valleys provide a space where I feel at peace, and I can let all my worries go knowing that God will be there to listen.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

I would stick with the Moravian tradition of my name, age and date of death. Highlighting that no matter the life we all live, we are all equal and are seen by God as such.

Why do … Safer Recruitment?

I am often asked 'why do any recruitment process for posts in church?' After all, people have been volunteering for years for roles within the church - and we haven't had any problems with that! I could dispute the last part of that statement as we have no real idea of how much harm has happened in church, not just that caused by those looking to abuse other members of our congregations but harm to the volunteers themselves. Safer recruitment cannot completely eliminate all risks, after all, people are involved, but it will reduce the risk to both volunteers (and paid workers) and those the church comes into contact with.

The Moravian Church Safer Recruitment procedure can be found in Section 2 of the Safer Space guidelines (the red file) and is currently being updated and new training designed.

BUT why does it matter? Why do churches need to think in a more business way about recruitment? Here are five reasons:

- As a church it is the second point in the Safeguarding Policy that every church has and renews yearly. Although this speaks about those working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, it can be argued that every role in a church will have some element of working with these vulnerable people.
- Churches are seen as 'soft' targets by certain sections of society. They welcome everyone. That is wonderful and what the church is called to do, but it does open the church to paedophiles, and those wanting to use the opportunity to abuse others.
- People appointed by the churches are seen as 'safe' by the community we serve. Parents rarely ask to see safeguarding policies or procedures or ask if the volunteers have had a DBS/AccessNI. Families will not ask if the pastoral visitor from the church has been checked to ensure they are not going to run away with granny/grandpa's money. They will assume there has been relevant checking before the volunteer/worker begins the visiting. Churches are trusted by most of society.
- Even 'nice' people can be abusers.
- Having a role description will lay down the parameters of the work a volunteer (or paid worker) is going to undertake and will allow the volunteer to clearly say 'that is not what I signed up for'; to know who to report issues and concerns to (this can be anything and not just safeguarding concerns); and help them to manage how much they do. We all recognise how 'jobs' in church can expand and become overwhelming, and impossible to complete, leading to volunteer burn out. Simply knowing that it isn't your responsibility to buy the snacks for the youth group, or that it is your responsibility to buy the milk for the coffee, sets minds at rest and reduces the worry some may have.

I could go on, and if you want to know more I suggest signing up for the training - see the link below - and familiarise yourself with the process. Finally, I do need to add that even with the best recruitment processes in the world some criminals are so determined that they work around the system and if they have never been caught offending, their DBS/AccessNI will be clear, so we need to keep up vigilance within our churches, our groups and all aspects of our work.

Contact me for more information on safeguarding@moravian.org.uk.

Book your training https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1009167104977?aff=oddtdtcreator.

Sr Joy Raynor
National Safeguarding Lead

British Province of the Moravian Church invite you to join us for a

Day of Prayer

Tuesday 17th June 2025

from 12pm - 8 pm on Zoom

Feel free to drop in and out of Zoom as your schedule allows

Our theme: Deepening Faith

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82048156010?pwd=pcUW9CGH3q2dxkSUpJots3b1GCBNNk.1

Meeting ID: 820 4815 6010
Passcode: 609268

Friends of the Archive Day

Saturday 19th July 2025

You are invited to join the Friends of the Archive Day which will be held between 2pm-4pm on Saturday 19th July 2025.

We would like to celebrate and take this opportunity to thank everyone for their generous support over the years of the Provincial Archives here at Moravian Church House in London and invite others who would like to learn more or have an interest about the work here.

There will be a talk about the work of Dr Keevill and his wife Addie who helped to establish the Sikonge Hospital in Tanzania in 1923 and will also showcase some of the wonderful treasures within our archives. Refreshments will be provided.

Please contact the archivist, Lorraine Parsons, if you would like to join us on this day or need further information at ***archive@moravian.org.uk***.

We look forward to seeing you here at Church House.

University Road Belfast

© Sandra Biggart

At University Road we often speak about the importance of our 'Church Family', and that was emphasised when on Sunday 6th April five young people, who were already very much part of the church family from their baptism, were confirmed and received into full membership of the church.

Ruth Biggart, Jack Goodall, Darcey James, Charlotte James and Olivia James were confirmed during a moving and beautiful service conducted by our minister Rev Livingstone Thompson and Rev Kirin Young Wimberley. Rev Kirin, who brought us a powerful message on the journey of faith, depicted in the 23rd Psalm, had also conducted classes on preparation for confirmation which the young people had been attending over several months.

The family theme for the day took on further significance from the fact that all of the candidates for confirmation are members of families which have had several generations confirmed at University Road, and we were especially joyful to have three generations of each of the families present for this special occasion. Ruth Biggart's mother Sandra was confirmed in 1986 and her grandfather Derick Woods in the early 1950s. Jack Goodall's mother Nicola was confirmed in 1999 and his grandfather Charles Costley in 1967. While Darcey, Charlotte and Olivia James's mother Claire was confirmed in 1994 and their grandmother Ann Connolly in 1961.

In speaking about their reasons for coming forward for confirmation each of the young people spoke of the influence of the church in their family life and the inspiration and encouragement which their families have provided as they embarked on their Christian journey.

In the University Road Congregation we are truly blessed to have such strong intergenerational loyalty and support, and we joyfully welcome these newest members of our thriving church family.

Sr Carol Ackah

PRESS RELEASE

Moravian University announces opening of the Institute for Moravian World Heritage and History

The new academic institute will work to advance global understanding of Moravian history and culture

BETHLEHEM, PA - April 10, 2025 - Today, Moravian University announced the opening of the Institute for Moravian World Heritage and History (IMWHH), a new academic institute dedicated to advancing global understanding of Moravian history, culture, and the recent transnational World Heritage designation, Moravian Church Settlements - Bethlehem.

The establishment of the institute follows the July 2024 World Heritage inscription of historic Moravian Church Settlements in Bethlehem (USA), Herrnhut (Germany), and Gracehill (Northern Ireland/UK). These sites joined Christiansfeld (Denmark), which was inscribed in 2015. Together, they form a transnational World Heritage Site that celebrates the exceptional cultural significance of these settlements and acknowledges the Moravian Church's profound global legacy and influence throughout history.

Moravian Church Settlements - Bethlehem, which includes structures still in use on Moravian University's Priscilla Payne Hurd Campus, is now officially recognized for its global cultural significance.

'The Institute for Moravian World Heritage and History represents an extraordinary opportunity to deepen academic inquiry and international collaboration around the unique legacy of the Moravians,' said Bryon Grigsby, president of Moravian University. 'We are proud and honored to be working with the Moravian Church and our World Heritage partners in Bethlehem and Europe to bring global attention to the historic and cultural impact of our Moravian story.'

The Institute will support scholarly research, public programs, and academic partnerships through conferences, degree and certificate programs, and partnerships with institutions such as the Moravian Archives. It will be led by an executive director appointed by President Grigsby and supported by an advisory board comprising representatives from the university, the Moravian Archives, Herrnhut (Germany), the Moravian Church, the City of Bethlehem, and other international World Heritage partners.

A cornerstone of the Institute's mission will be serving as a central hub connecting all four Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage sites through collaborative research initiatives, cultural exchanges, and shared digital resources. By fostering relationships between Bethlehem, Herrnhut, Gracehill, and Christiansfeld, the Institute will strengthen the transnational bonds that make this designation uniquely significant on the world stage.

The Institute will also work to pioneer digital humanities initiatives that bring Moravian history to life for global audiences. Through digitization of historic documents, 3D modeling of architectural features, interactive mapping of Moravian global influence, and development of virtual reality experiences, the IMWHH will make centuries of Moravian cultural heritage accessible to researchers and the public alike.

These digital tools will not only preserve fragile historical materials but also create new opportunities for scholarly discovery across disciplines.

As a semi-autonomous institute within Moravian University, the IMWHH will promote interdisciplinary learning, cultural preservation, and international scholarship, positioning Moravian University as a center for Moravian heritage research and education.

The institute will be housed on Moravian University's Bethlehem campus and will begin offering academic courses early in 2026.

For more information, visit moravian.edu/institute-moravian-worldheritage.

Ockbrook, Derbyshire

© Sr Adriana Davey

On Saturday evening 29th March we were privileged to listen to a piano concert of classical, jazz and popular pieces, performed by Greg Maskalick. To our big surprise, some of his songs were accompanied by three young talented dancers from Dynamicmotif Dance and Performing Arts Academy. The event was very successful, and we thank Greg for donating his time and talent to organise such a lovely event. Not to mention a generous collection for Church funds.

Sr Adriana Davey

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Provincial Diary for May

6-7	Provincial Board meeting	*Church House*
12-15	Ministers' and Lay Workers' Conference	*Highgate House*

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Confirmations

6th April 2025	Ruth Biggart	University Road
6th April 2025	Goodall	University Road
6th April 2025	Darcey James	University Road
6th April 2025	Charlotte James	University Road
6th April 2025	Olivia James	University Road

Received into Membership

2nd February 2025	Helena King	University Road

Deaths

27th March 2025	Elsie Chancellor	University Road

DATES TO REMEMBER

3	Beginning of Watchwords in Herrnhut 1728
12	The signing of the Brotherly Agreement which marked the Renewal of the Unitas Fratrum at Herrnhut, Saxony, 1727
11-17	Christian Aid Week (www.christianaid.org.uk)
20	Whit Monday
29	Ascension Day

NOTICES

Serving the Church

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

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

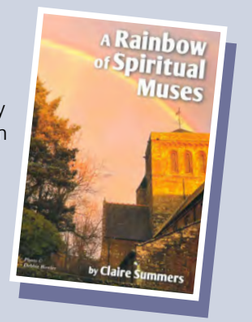
If you are interested, please contact ***joachim.kreusel@moravian.org.uk*** We look forward to speaking with you and pray that you are willing and able to listen to God's voice calling you on in your Christian walk as you seek to follow more and more deeply Jesus.

From the Church Service Committee

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

New Book Available:

A Rainbow of Spiritual Muses



We have copies of the new book of poetry written by Sr Claire Summers, for sale from Church House. The cost is £6 and a percentage of this will be sent to Sikonge Hospital for their exemption fund. Please contact the Bookroom at Church House on 020 8883 3409.

Death

We have been informed that Sr Penelope Margaret Farrer, daughter of the late Rev. Robert Gerald Farrer (1916-2012) and Gertrude Mary Jones (1907-2001), and member of the former Kingswood Moravian Church, died on 24/03/2025 aged 80 years old - she had recently been living in a residential home in Kingswood.

Mural: Ian Curtis

A series looking at favourite memorials

© Br David Howarth

Travelling along Fairfield Street, Manchester from the bottom of the Mancunian Way towards Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station, you enter a traditionally industrial part of the city. Continuing along the narrow straight road towards the station you will come to an iconic Manchester public house situated on your left. The Star & Garter, a typical Manchester 'boozer' with a long history dating back, as myth has it, to 1803 (initially located one hundred yards from its current position), has played host to many a weary traveller, local drinker, party goer and film crew over its two hundred plus year history. However, a more recent addition has enhanced its appeal as a local landmark even further.

For many of a certain vintage and musical taste, the 18th May 1980 is etched into our memories. Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party had only been in power for a year or so and Manchester wore the scars of a forgotten northern city with a mixture of pride and defiance. Once dubbed Cottonopolis for its leading role within the Industrial Revolution, things looked far from rosy, but into this context came four young, energetic, rebellious young men from Macclesfield, Salford, and Stretford: Joy Division, a post-punk band of drums, guitars, and singer Ian Curtis.

Formed in Salford in 1976, following that now legendary concert by the Sex Pistols at the Lesser Free Trade Hall, Manchester on 4th June 1976, Warsaw, later to be known as Joy Division, went on to have some success with their albums, Unknown Pleasures (1976) and Closer (1980).

In their early years, Joy Division, like so many up-and-coming bands before and after them, would criss-cross the country going from gig to gig, and it was on one such occasion on 27th December 1978 that Ian Curtis had his first epileptic incident while travelling back to Manchester from London. A period of hospitalisation followed, then a time of transition and acclimatisation for Ian, his family, and the rest of the band.

As their popularity increased touring started to take its toll on Ian, and his epileptic events became increasingly frequent. Many occurred while on stage, with the audience occasionally thinking they were part of the act. The almost constant travel and resulting lack of sleep only made things worse.

Those who knew Ian at this time believed that he felt ashamed and depressed, and the rest of the band became increasingly concerned about their friend and lead singer. Ian's first attempt to take his own life was on the eve of a concert in Derby, leaving the band unable to perform as a four-piece. This was 7th April 1980. A few weeks later, on 2nd May, the band performed at the University of Birmingham, this being the last time Joy Division would perform with Ian out front.

It was only a matter of a few weeks later that on the eve of the band's tour to America, Ian took his own life at home in Macclesfield.

Much has been written about men's mental health, and others are far more qualified to speak about it than me. Ian was not the first, and sadly he will not be the last to take his own life due to his struggles.

The mural now painted on the gable end of the Star & Garter public house on the outskirts of the centre of the city of Manchester (together with others in other locations) stands as both a reminder of a musical genius taken too soon and as a husband, family member, friend and colleague, and yet it is also a poignant example of how we should all look out for both our own and others mental health.

Ian Curtis, together with Peter Hook, Stephen Morris and Bernard Sumner had the world at their feet, but it was not to be. If struggles with mental health can affect people like Ian, it can affect any of us.

Br David Howarth
London

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