MORAVIAN MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2026

Welcome to Church House Fulneck



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On 1st September, Church House opened its doors in Fulneck, beginning a new chapter in the life of the British Province. After 69 years at Muswell Hill, our administrative home has moved north to Fulneck in West Yorkshire, and we are gradually settling into our new surroundings.

For now, Church House has found a home at the west end of the old school buildings. This is in itself a temporary arrangement and our plans for the Robinson Building form an important part of that longer-term vision.

Of course, over the course of more than 300 years of Moravian history, we have been no strangers to moving! Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Wiltshire and London have all played their part in the administration of the Church. And, as I recently discovered, Fulneck has a wonderful history of hosting Church leadership that goes back rather further than our present arrangements.

A few weeks ago, Paul Peucker (Director and Archivist at the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania) wrote to me from Herrnhut, where he was undertaking research in the archives. He had uncovered something rather delightful. In 1768, the Unity Elders Conference, then based in Zeist in the Netherlands, travelled to England for an extended stay. From 6th to 28th July, its members resided in Fulneck, holding their meetings at what the minutes describe as 'Bankhouse bey Fulneck.' The Bankhouse Inn, albeit in a newer iteration, is still there today!

After their stay in Fulneck, the Unity Elders Conference travelled to Lindsey House in London, before eventually returning to Zeist. More than 250 years later, we have made something of the reverse journey.

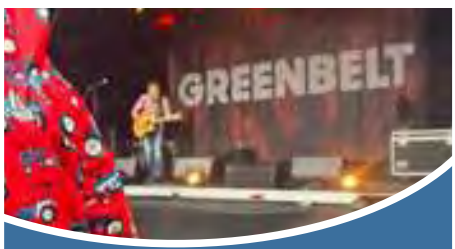
I like this connection with our past. It reminds us that we have previously adapted our arrangements to the circumstances of the time.

And so, here we are in Fulneck.

The first few weeks have been busy, as you might imagine. There have been boxes to unpack, new systems to establish, and the inevitable challenge of discovering where everything belongs. I am enormously grateful to everyone who has worked so hard to make this transition possible, particularly our colleagues who have taken on the considerable task of establishing a new Provincial office. We have been gratefully supported by a wider relocation team including Br Edwin Quildan, Br David Howarth and Sr Jane O'Donnell.

We are delighted to welcome Cara Dyer as our Finance and Operations Manager and Chantal Erasmus as our Administrative Support Officer. Together with the Provincial Board, they are helping us set up new ways of working and supporting the life of the Province. Lorraine Parsons along with our archives will

(continued overleaf on page 122)



Greenbelt 2026

(page 123)



Unity Board 2026

(page 124)



Rev John Wilkinson (1937-2026)

(page 125)

EDITORIAL

Each month of the year has its own rhythm with things that we each enjoy or dislike. For me November is the beginning of winter but without the madness of December or the bitter cold of January. It is a month around which memories hang, like spiders' webs caught in winter sunshine on gates and hedges.

The whole feel of the beginning of the month is looking back with All Saints Day on the first of November. I love recalling the saints who have run the race before us. The saints in our own personal memories who helped us come to faith and helped us stay in faith. This includes the incidental people whose paths we crossed and whose own faith helped us to grow and understand more. Then there are the saints from history, from the Moravian Church or from other Churches whose lives of faith who have kept and preserved the Church and developed the theology we now understand.

As I started this editorial, I began to write down a list of the saints who have influenced me. I will offer this list to God on All Saints Day to thank him for those faithful personal memories and historical people.

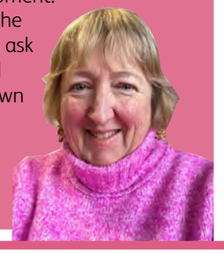
All Souls Day on the second November is a sort of wrapping up of all memories and thanksgiving. It is often called the 'Commemoration of the Faithful Departed' and is a chance to thank God for all those Christians who have been called home before us, the 'Church Triumphant' as opposed to those of us living who constitute the 'Church Militant'.

As a minister I think of all the funerals I have taken and all the Burial Grounds I have helped to tend over the years - the seeds of the faithful, sown in a garden of love and peace, whom we believe will rise to new life in Jesus. I draw most comfort from a phrase I learnt from Herrnhut - where those who have gone before us are called the 'Upper Congregation'. Through baptism we become united to one another in and through Jesus. We become part of the body of Christ and remain together even through death.

Charles Wesley put it so well in a hymn verse:

One family, we dwell in him,
one Church, above, beneath;
though now divided by the stream,
the narrow stream of death.

I know that you will only get this Messenger on All Saints Day or later but perhaps you too could sit down during November and write your own list of all who have been important to you in your faith development. We should give thanks to God for all the faithful who have gone before us and ask God to give us grace to live as faithful believers today and every day in our own settings and contexts.



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

Welcome to Church House Fulneck

(continued from front page)

also make their home at Fulneck in due course, another important connection between our past and future.

For me, one of the most exciting aspects of this move is the opportunity to think differently about what Church House can be. It should not just be a place of administration, important as all our tasks are. I hope it can become a place of welcome, conversation, collaboration and hospitality.

Fulneck itself is a great setting for this next chapter. It carries centuries of Moravian history, but it is also part of a wider, living church community, with its own opportunities and challenges.

There is still much to do, and we certainly haven't got everything figured out. But we are here, the kettle is on, and the welcome is genuine.

So, whether you are visiting for a meeting, passing through Yorkshire, or simply curious to see our new home, please do come and say hello.

And if you can't find us at Church House, perhaps try the Bankhouse Inn. Apparently, there's a long-standing precedent!

Sr Roberta Hoey
Provincial Board

Hurricane Melissa Appeal

The British Province is supporting recovery efforts following devastation left by Hurricane Melissa. To donate now, please contact Church House or go to
www.justgiving.com/campaign/hurricanemelissaappeal

NOTICES

Addition to the YPMA Update published in September

Many apologies for not including University Road, Belfast in the list of returns from 2025. I am happy to say that 14 young people collected £920.00. Well done to you all and thank you very much. I promise not to miss you out in future.

Sr Sue Selby *(Provincial Secretary)*

PROVINCIAL MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

WE HAVE RE-STOCKED

Now available to buy/order:

• LAMB & FLAG PENDANTS	£6.50
• DROP EARRINGS a pair	£9.00
• ADVENT STAR	£4.50
• MEN'S FELLOWSHIP 40-year ANNIVERSARY NOTEBOOK & PEN	£4.50
• CUFF LINKS a pair	£8.00
• CHRISTINGLE BADGE	£4.00
• LAMB & FLAG BADGE	£3.00
• MEN'S FELLOWSHIP PENS	£2.00
• INSULATED DRINKING BOTTLES	£5.00
• RED/GOLD & BLUE/GOLD TIES	£12.00



Please contact
Rev Kenneth Evans
on:
078550 18999
to order any items.

Greenbelt 2026

A few Moravians have attended Greenbelt festival for a number of years now. This year's was at Broughton House for the last time after being held there for twelve years. Next year 2027, is a fallow year as they search for a new home for this diverse, inclusive, faithfully active Christian festival. I'd strongly encourage and recommend that you explore some of the Greenbelt talks for the last two years which are free to access on their website: it will help to get a sense of the range of topics that are covered at the festival. Unfortunately, the worship and prayer sessions were not captured by podcast. If you fancy coming along in 2028, please speak to either myself, Sr Laura Wood, Sr Joy Raynor or Br James Woolford who have attended for many years now.

Below are a few written thoughts from myself, Sr Claire Maxwell (37 years old), as well as Br Edward Woolford (12 years old), Sr Phoebe Maxwell (7 years old) and Br Zachary Maxwell (5 years old) as to why Greenbelt is so special. I hope you enjoy reading our varied reflections.



© S. Claire Maxwell

Watching Martin Joseph in the Rain

Claire Maxwell

A highlight for me each time I go is undoubtedly the Communion Worship on the Sunday morning. Worshipping with tens of thousands at Communion is always incredible and moving - every year I end up in tears by the beauty of sharing worship with tens of thousands of us. It's the closest moment to the feeding of the 5,000 for me as we all get to eat and share communion together. This year a particular blessing was sharing it unexpectedly with a family who had come from Italy as 'they just loved it'. The worship is always varied and this year it felt particularly restful.

There were so many thoughtful talks (many of which I didn't make due to doing Greenbelt as a family). However, the ones I heard challenged me. They made me wonder about the climate and the wisdom of different generations. I contemplated if actually we were getting church wrong for many people as I heard about new expressions of church that seemed to be full of joy.

Musically I loved Martyn Joseph in the rain. It required a hot chocolate afterwards, but his singing live is really something else and his songs are as thoughtful as ever. The show that left a lasting impression on me was called 'God is a Woman'. It was a comedy that stretched the mind helpfully and definitely tickled the funny bone despite Louisa Omielan performing with a concussion injury. Please check her out as she is a classically struggling artist whose voice has much to offer.

The talks I truly treasured though happened in the unprogrammed moments. The ones between old friends who offered ongoing prayer after we had met in a queue. The quick hellos from people I've worked or studied with in the past. The overdue catchups which turned into theological reflections on how to do church for each generation, to truly honour the variety of needs. The reflections around our camp who had such a welcoming group of people (and endorsed all the excitement that a seven- and a five-year-old brings).

Greenbelt reminds me each time that God is out there. The camping side helps to ground us to a God whose creation is the first home. The spoken word prayers, stories and reflections eventually might become a book but may not.

It was spiritually refreshing and grounding, which calls me back to my roots. I can't wait for its return in 2028, and I'm determined to build in some Greenbelt spirituality into my own each week.

Edward Woolford

This year I attended my second Greenbelt festival at Boughton House where it was held for the last time until it moves to a new location in 2028. I enjoy Greenbelt because I like the music there and also meeting new people and seeing people from previous years. We stayed in a tent with my Dad, Rev James Woolford, next to Rev Claire Maxwell and her family. My highlights were: the Proclaimers, Charlotte Church who led us in a singing circle which was a great experience, and Arrested Development, a 1990s hip-hop band were super. I also enjoyed watching a show called 'Sorry (I broke your arms and legs)' which was a one man show about a year eight school boy trying to apologise to a friend after a falling out over who would be the school's head boy that ended up with his friend breaking his arms and legs. It was really funny.

One of the things that was a challenge was the rain and the MUD because the accessibility was horrific. Mobility scooters just sank in the mud, and we skidded and slipped along the way. We didn't let it stop us from having a good time though. It also didn't help that we discovered that our tent wasn't completely waterproof. At least it only leaked on my dad's side though.

Overall, I'd definitely recommend Greenbelt to anyone, young or old when it returns in 2028.

Phoebe Maxwell

I loved the skatepark. I really enjoyed who we camped with as it included my Auntie Lol and meant I got to sleep in a big tent with all my family. I really liked the acrobatics and Balloon show where the man ended up in a Giant Balloon!

Fischy music was really fun with some good songs. I got the chance to do some dancing with their songs. There was, also, a sports field where I got to play lots of different sports whenever I wanted. I really enjoyed making my own game in the craft tent. The craft tent had lots of fun activities. I got to make a Greenbelt friend I could take home there which was brilliant.

Zachary Maxwell

I loved sleeping in a tent. I had a go at circus skills which was good but hard. I got very muddy which was lots of fun!

Unity Board 2026



© Moravian Church

Members of the Unity Board September meeting that took place in Calgary, Canada.

Message to the Worldwide Moravian Unity

The Unity Board gathered in Calgary, Canada from 07-09 September 2026 under the theme: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5: 9, bringing together provincial leaders from across the worldwide Moravian Unity. Not everyone who should have been around the table was able to be here. Unfortunately, several representatives were unable to secure visas. As a result, the majority of our representatives from the African Region gathered in Dar es Salaam, and the group in Calgary and the group in Dar es Salaam met online.

During these days, we listened to reports from across the Unity. We heard much for which we give thanks to God, alongside significant financial, political, and ministerial challenges. We recognise that our circumstances differ greatly, but Unity Board 2026 reaffirmed that no Province lives or serves entirely on its own.

Our discussions also led us to consider what it means to be a worldwide Moravian Unity. For us, unity is not simply about being in the same room, nor does it mean we agree on everything. Unity is demonstrated by our determination to remain in relationship with one another. This requires us to listen honestly and to recognise our responsibilities to one another.

As part of the work of the Unity Board, we also prepared for a transition in the leadership of the Unity Executive Committee (UEC). We give our sincere thanks to the outgoing UEC, led by Sr. Roberta Hoey (British Province) as the incumbent Unity Board President, whose term of office concludes at the end of December 2026. We are grateful for their leadership, service, and commitment to the worldwide Unity during this past term.

The newly elected UEC will serve from January 2027 until December 2028. The new UEC comprises Br. Lizwi Mtumtum (South Africa Province), elected as the next Unity Board President; Br. Algernon Lewis (East and West Indies Province), elected as Unity Board Vice President; Sr. Roberta Hoey (British Province); Br. Dave Bennett (North America Province); and Br. Jørgen Bøytler, the Unity Board Administrator. We entrust this new leadership team to the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit as it takes up its responsibilities in service of the worldwide Moravian Unity in January 2027.

The Unity Board also decided to change the title of the **Unity Board Administrator to Moravian Unity General Secretary**. This change more accurately reflects the nature and scope of the work carried out in support of the worldwide Unity and brings the title into greater alignment with the terminology used by other ecumenical bodies with which we work. We give thanks for the continuing service and commitment of Br. Jørgen Bøytler in this important ministry.

Another important conversation that continued at this meeting concerned the Moravian Church's historical relationship with slavery and the enslavement of people, a matter which was also discussed at Unity Synod 2023. Significant work has already begun in different parts of the Unity to examine this shared history, but the Unity Board recognises that we must go further than simply acknowledging a difficult past. We recognise the complicity of the Moravian Church in slavery and in the systems that sustained it.

As a worldwide Unity, we need to work together towards an appropriate apology and efforts towards reconciliation. This must include listening to communities whose histories have been shaped by enslavement and its continuing consequences and recognising the ways in which colonial histories and imbalances of power have shaped our relationships within our worldwide Church.

Under our theme, we returned during our meeting to the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." We are living through a time in which the world is being reordered around us, with conflict, division and changing relationships between nations and peoples. Our Ground of the Unity reminds us that we may not withdraw from the world through indifference, pride or fear, but are called to work for peace. In such a world, peacemaking cannot be peripheral to our calling. It asks us how we live with differences, how we address what divides or wounds us, and what reconciles us, so that the Moravian Church can bear faithful witness to the peace of Christ.

As we look towards 2027 and the 300th anniversary of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on August 13, 1727, which renewed our Church in Herrnhut, we must not merely recall what happened three centuries ago but prayerfully discern how the Holy Spirit is leading us into renewal now.

May the Holy Spirit continue to disturb, reconcile, and awaken us, drawing us deeper into relationship with one another, and sending us out into the world as peacemakers.

We left Calgary and Dar es Salaam thankful for the life and witness of the Moravian Church across the world, and we are ready for the tasks entrusted to us. We ask you to pray for one another and for our worldwide Unity, that we may remain faithful to Christ, open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and passionate Peacemakers by the grace of God.

Jesus still leads on! Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him!

The Unity Board, September 2026.

Rev John Wilkinson *(1937-2026)*

John Alfred Wilkinson was born on 23rd December 1937, to John Alfred and Mary Wilkinson. He was brother to Helen and Val; husband to Beryl; father to Elizabeth, Peter, Sarah and Helen; grandfather to Matthew, Daniel, Bill, James, Berri, Isaac and Elijah; and Great Grandfather to Kayleigh.

He was born to very humble beginnings in Hazel Grove, and was capable at school, but missed out on selection to Grammar School. The sense of injustice that John felt, that boys from more affluent families were far more likely to be selected for grammar school, shaped his future attitudes to class and opportunity. He was accepted to attend Openshaw Technical College and trained in Chemistry. Joining the Army Medical Corp for his National Service, all the time he continued to campaign for social justice.



© Helen Rumney

On one weekend away in Llandudno, he met Beryl. They married and started a home in Oldham. Liz, Peter and Sarah were all born there, whilst John continued to build a career as an industrial chemist. A move to Poynton followed, and the family was complete when Helen was born there.

John held various jobs in industry, including a spell in Amman in Jordan.

Having moved back to Portsmouth, he started studying Theology, and asked the Moravian Church if it would be prepared to support those studies. John was accepted to train for the ministry, undertaking a part-time BA degree course at Manchester University from 1986 until 1990, training at Northern College, and he had a church placement at Dukinfield alongside Sr Dorothy Moreton. On completing his training, John was ordained in 1990 at the Moravian Church Synod in Bath. He was called to serve in the Irish District at Cliftonville in Belfast, and at Ballinderry (1990-1996) when he was called to serve in the Eastern District at Harlesden, London, in 1996, and then later in the Moravian Settlement at Ockbrook, Derbyshire, in 2000, until his retirement in 2004.

John undertook a period of further study at Nottingham University, whilst at Ockbrook, gaining an MA in 2003. He retired to Fairfield with his late wife Beryl in 2004. During his retirement he took on the role of interim minister of the Salem congregation, between 2008-2009, and did much to keep that church afloat during their periods of interregnum in 2011 and later.

John loved the hills. He was happiest roaming in them, and up them. In retirement, he made great use of his bus pass to get out in the Peak District and only needed rescuing by helicopter once. He not only encouraged a love of the outdoors in his own family, but also through the Boys Brigade, taking the company out on day hikes and overnight trips, making use of Youth Hostels.

He also had a love of DIY. Whilst his efforts were generally 'functional', the execution was usually a little 'rustic'.

John loved music. He was a big fan of Radio 3 and of traditional folk songs that reflected social history.

He could lose himself in a book, reading a good thriller, cover-to-cover, in a single sitting.

In retirement, John and Beryl became members at Dukinfield, and any minister serving there could always rely on John to assist with special services, and he was always willing and ready to help whenever he could.

In his later years, he became a regular attendee of the Dementia Warriors Group at Dukinfield. He became the Warriors' spiritual guide whenever needed. The Group were good singers and one of the songs that they sang regularly was, 'The Manchester Rambler'. This song will always remind them of John, who spent many hours climbing the hills and vales of Cheshire and Derbyshire.

The pattern of his life was set at a young age, escaping to adventures when he could and striving for his own opportunities to learn and grow; and he always encouraged the same in others. John was called to Higher Service on 17th August 2026 after a long illness.

Br Peter M. Gubi

Sponsorship for Ukrainian Family

Over the past four years I have sponsored a Ukrainian refugee from Dnipro. For the last 6 months of her stay, I also agreed to sponsor her husband after he had retired and was allowed to leave the country. They have now moved into a little house of their own. My guest's son, Andreii, found accommodation at Church House whilst he was beginning his degree course at City of Westminster University. At the time he could not find a job to supplement the cost of accommodation which, in London, is extremely expensive, and so had nowhere to live. Being able to stay at Church House (sometimes having to camp out on the sofa in Gladys's office) kept him away from a life lived on the streets. He and his family are extremely grateful for the help he was given.

At the moment, his sister, Liliia, her husband, Illiia, and their 5-year-old daughter, Maya, are living in Kyiv which now resembles a war zone. Power sources are continually being bombed, drones and missiles are now being used to target homes, schools, hospitals as well as vital infrastructure and life has to be lived in bomb shelters. My guest, Nataliia, and her husband, Yurii, are desperately looking for a British citizen to sponsor Liliia and Maya so that they can come to the UK where they will be safe. Illia will have to remain in Ukraine as do all men between the ages of 18 and 60 unless there are special circumstances. Liliia is a fluent English speaker having spent time in Canada before her marriage.

The UK Government requires sponsors to house 'guests' for a minimum period of six months. During that time, the host should receive a monthly payment to offset additional costs, and they should also receive advice from the Refugees at Home group.

If someone could offer a home for a Ukrainian mother and child for six months, then please contact me or their local Refugees at Home group for more information. Much patience and understanding will be necessary on both sides as hosts and guests become acquainted with each other. There may be problems for the guests adjusting to a less traumatic and stressful situation in addition to leaving Daddy behind. Concessions will have to be made with use of the kitchen/bathroom and space will need to be provided for the storage of food items and playthings. At least one large bedroom will be needed.

Please prayerfully consider this request.

Sr Maureen Colbert
Horton Moravian Church

The Other John Kilner

While digging around in my family history, I spotted someone called John Kilner, who served in the army during the First World War. That obviously attracted my interest as it is what I too am called. He isn't in fact a relative - there is absolutely no connection between us beyond the name. Yet I still found his story interesting because it seems very typical of what so many people face when their country goes to war. So, here is some of what I have learnt about the person I now think of as 'the other John Kilner'.

John William Kilner was born in 1884 in Cumberworth, near Denby Dale, in West Yorks. At the time, his parents were running a pub there - the Prospect Hotel. Before the pub, his father had been a farmer. Afterwards he continued to own land, as well as a butchery and delivery business. He was an employer and a member of the district council. So it seems that John William came from a humble background but not an especially poor one.

The society John William grew up may have had its shortcomings, but it was confident, energetic, and close woven. The dramatic economic growth in the nineteenth century had paved the way for an explosion of organised religious, sporting and social activities. To take just some examples:

1868 - Trades Union Congress begins
1883 - Boys Brigade founded
1888 - Football League created
1890 - County Cricket Championship established
1890s - Labour Party established
1903 - Workers' Educational Association set up
1910 - Methodist Church hits peak membership (841,000 estimated)

So, John William would have had a range of opportunities for recreation, socialising and self-improvement - all within his local community.

One of the difficulties about researching an historical figure is that, although you can quite easily find the facts and the dates, it is much harder to learn about the person's inner life - for example, what they liked and disliked, what their opinions were, whether they were happy, or indeed whether they were a 'good' person.

Nevertheless, what we do know about John William in the pre-war period suggests that his life was very much on track. By 1914 he is 30 years old; he is living in the area where he grew up (so would have had a network of family and friends); he has experienced one childhood trauma (the death of his mother when he was 16) but that is now over a decade behind him; he has a wife (Lucy Foster, they married in 1909) and three children (he and Lucy would eventually have six); and he has steady employment (at Naylor's clay works in Denby Dale). So, as far as we can tell from this distance, it looks as though John William is doing alright.

By the late Spring of 1915 his life had changed dramatically, as war had broken out and he had volunteered for the army. He actually joined one of the so-called 'Pals Battalions' - a social phenomenon of that era, which didn't exist anywhere else and hasn't been replicated since. The Pals concept was that if a Local Authority took the initial responsibility for recruiting, housing, feeding, and training a battalion of a thousand or so men, that would ease the immediate pressure on central Government (who were really struggling to build up the army as quickly as was needed). Moreover, by recruiting people from a restricted local area, who had often worked for the same employer, or played in the same sports team, or been to school together - and on top of that, promising them they could stay together during their service - it would make the army more attractive to people who might otherwise be hesitant to volunteer.

There were eventually around 200 of these battalions (so well over 200,000 men) - and the town of Barnsley raised two of them with John William being one of the last to volunteer. Barnsley had started recruiting their first battalion in September 1914 and John William didn't join until after Easter 1915.

Why was John William so (relatively) slow in coming forward? Perhaps there was a work or family reason which had delayed him (we do know that his fourth child was born in late 1914). Perhaps he had tried to join, been rejected, and then tried again - there were many examples of that. Perhaps, as a 30-year-old family man he had felt out of place amongst the early waves of recruits - who were predominantly single men in their early twenties or late teens (indeed quite a number were below the minimum age, which was then 19). Perhaps he was a contemplative sort of fellow who needed to think things through properly before he acted. Whatever the reason, he did eventually step forward and on 24th April 1915 he became soldier number 1130 in the 2nd Barnsley Pals.

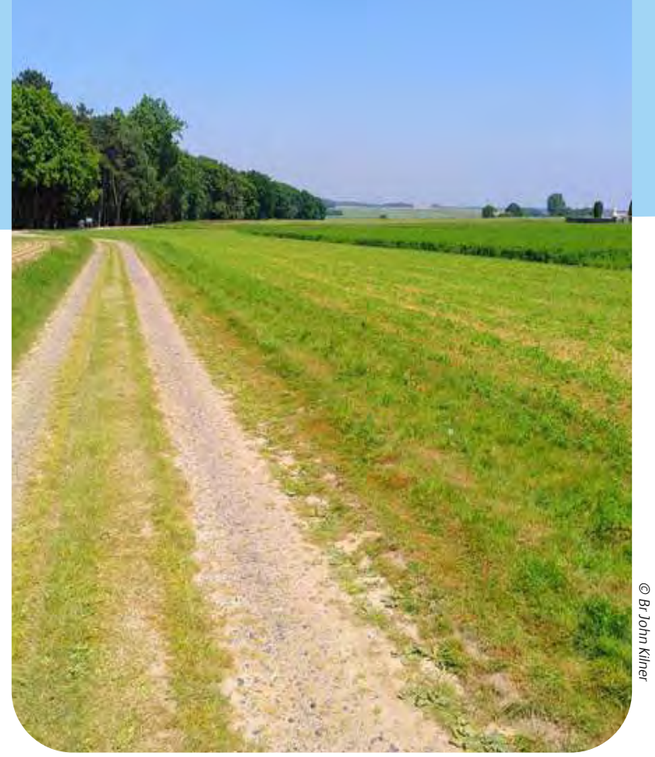
By the Autumn of 2015 he and his fellow Barnsley recruits found themselves on Salisbury Plain and the war was getting much more real. In an anonymous article for the local paper, one of John William's fellow soldiers wrote that:

> *'We are at last on Salisbury Plain and there is a feeling of subdued excitement, a subconscious thrill passing over the lads during this period, probably the eve of their departure for the Front. It is a feeling that the task they originally volunteered to do, when they gave up their work to join the New Army, is about to commence; the task of actually doing their bit …'*

Sure enough, during the Autumn of 1915 they were given orders to go overseas. The plan was that they would be given leave for Christmas, but they would be back on Salisbury Plain by 26th December when they would depart for Egypt (to guard the Suez Canal).

Clearly the Christmas of 1915 was shaping up to be a memorable one for Barnsley, with all 2,000 members of its Pals battalions being home together for the first time - and the last time before going overseas with all the risks that entailed. It was decided that this the two battalions would form up on Christmas night in different locations half a mile or so away from the station and then march through the town with their bands playing before boarding the special trains which had been laid on to get everyone back from leave. In their report, the local paper didn't spare the hyperbole. They wrote that:

> *'… the streets in the city centre were besieged by men, women and children. [the streets] were never so densely packed with human beings in the history of the Borough ...the density of the crowd prevented any organised procession of the troops taking place…'*



© Br John Kilner

The battlefield today - British trenches in the wood on the left, German trenches to the right (beyond the edge of this photo). John William and his colleagues were lined up along the far end of the wood.

Certainly, the last part is true. The crowds were so dense that the parade idea was abandoned and it was all the soldiers could do to push through the crowds individually to reach the station.

The stay in Egypt turned out to be brief. By mid-March they were in France (landing at Marseilles) and on 3rd April they went into the trenches.

Apart from the ongoing need to defend the trenches, there was another reason for the 2nd Barnsleys being in France. They were to be part of what we now know as the Battle of the Somme but which, before it happened, was generally referred to as the Big Push. This was to be an assault on a grand scale. The British would attack a 15-mile stretch of trenches (or 18 miles if you add in the twists and turns of the trench system) and precede that with a week-long bombardment during which 1.5 million shells would be fired.

When the battle began - at 7.30am on 1st July 1916, the 2nd Barnsley's were placed at the extreme northern end of the attack. This meant that to the left of them, everyone would stay put. To the right of them everyone, for the next 15 miles, was to move forward.

We do not know exactly when or how J.W.K. was wounded but it was probably during the first few hours of the battle.

The next firm trace we have of him is on 12th October when he attends a medical board at the Endell Street hospital in London. They find he is permanently unfit for future service, so he is discharged from the army with a 'Good' character and a full disability pension of 25s a week (£1.25p).



The memorial in France, erected in 1998. © Br John Kilner

The me dical board said that he was suffering from spinal concussion and hemiplegia. Spinal concussion is a rather old-fashioned term, but it means your spine has been shaken about so much that it has affected (usually temporarily) the ability of your nerves to send and receive messages from the rest of your body. So very much the sort of injury which might result from standing in a trench in a bombardment - which is what had happened to John William. Hemiplegia means that you have paralysis (to a greater or lesser degree) on one side of your body - again, completely consistent with what he had gone through in France.

We do not know how normal a life John William was able to lead subsequently. In 1939 he is still being described as 'ex-service, disabled' but the 1921 census shows him as being in full-time work. All we can safely say is that his injuries were serious enough to bring an immediate end to his time in the army and that they stayed with him to some degree for the rest of his life.

If we now attach numbers to his military experience, we get this summary. He spent:

- 8 months in training;
- 3 months guarding the Suez canal (whether it needed it or not);
- 3 months in France, partly in the trenches and partly preparing for the Somme;
- 1 day in a full-scale battle;
- 44 years living with the consequences (he died in 1960, aged 75).



I have never been a pacifist. Sadly, it seems to me that circumstances do arise when force is the most reasonable option - in the sense that it can prevent something even worse from happening (for example Ukraine). One of the questions we need to ask ourselves, though, is whether, when the shooting stops, we can look people like John William in the eye and tell him that his sufferings were worth it in order to deliver a greater good. For people who were wounded in the Second World War, or in the Falklands, or indeed in Northern Ireland, I would have no doubts about giving that reassurance. But for the First World War it seems to me that the issues are much more finely balanced and I am not entirely sure what I would say to John William, my namesake.

Br John Kilner
Bath South Congregation

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Br John Cooper



Br John is the Treasurer of Cliftonville Moravian Church and the Irish District. He is a long-standing member of Provincial Synod and the Provincial Finance and Property Committee.

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

As a 'son of the manse', I spent my early years in Pertenhall, Baildon, Leominster and finally Cliftonville, leaving at the age of 23 to get married. My early years revolved around home, church and school. Holidays were often visiting grandparents either in Bath or Gracehill for a couple of weeks in the Summer - these involved travelling by train and sometimes ferry. Later on, I attended summer school which was always good fun.

I moved from Leominster Grammar school to Belfast Royal Academy when I was 12 - what a shock that was. I asked about woodwork class but was told that they do Latin, not woodwork!

After A levels I attended Queen's University, Belfast to study Civil Engineering and spent my career in the construction industry.

Mum and Dad could make and mend all sorts of things (as could Grandpa Weir) - something I inherited from them - and in recent years after I repaired Mum's washing machine for the third or fourth time, she thanked me but then said she would really prefer a new one next time!

I am still a member of a local Men's Shed and I enjoy making items for schools and community organisations.

Olga and I have two boys, both married and living quite near us, we now have four grandchildren, one boy and three girls and we are proud to be part of their lives as they grow up.

How and when did you come to faith?

I think I came to faith naturally, as I grew up in a Christian environment. I was confirmed as a teenager and attended summer camp for many years which helped me in my journey. I particularly remember a sermon at summer school by Rev Fred Linyard in which he asked, 'have you been converted yet?'

How did living through 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland affect you?

Looking back, the troubles were an awful time but living through them, we just got on with life. Family, church and work continued as best as possible despite the violence. We became used to the necessary police roadblocks to divert us from terrorist incidents ahead. Many evening activities were curtailed. We read the local papers and listened to the radio to find out what was going on but rumour still fuelled conflict.

One event from the troubles still resonates with me today. Gordon Wilson and his daughter Marie were caught up in the Enniskillen Remembrance Day bombing - they were buried under rubble and Marie died beside him. After being pulled from the rubble, Mr Wilson gave an interview saying that he bore no ill will to the bombers and would pray for them that night and every night. He said that his daughter was in heaven and they will meet again. As a society we were moved at Gordon Wilson being able to forgive his daughter's murderers as Jesus prayed for his executioners when on the cross - 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'.

To some extent, we are still living with the legacy of the troubles - many people suffer from poor physical or mental health, our local politics are dysfunctional, and our society is still divided in so many ways.

Tell us about your working life and how you integrated your faith into your work

All my working life was spent in the civil engineering and building industry. Each new contract meant forming new teams of engineers and tradesmen, working with a new team of structural, civil, mechanical and electrical engineers, architects, and a new client to build a completely new and unique project. My Christian faith was central to developing trust between all parties.

I met many people of faith during my working life, and these interactions were often a source of learning and joy to me.

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

All the usual things - war, famine, natural disasters injustice and cruelty can be difficult to reconcile with a Christian world view. The main comfort is of course prayer with some practical support to charities where possible.

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

No, I don't think I have been angry with God - I try and accept things as they are.

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

Our Church buildings are often old and in difficult locations. Many of our congregations are totally reliant on cars or public transport to attend church. People have many other options for a Sunday morning.

I believe that constancy in belief and practice is important to bring people back to Church.

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

My favourite film(s) has to be the first two 'Godfather' movies - showing the descent of an initially good man into despotic behaviour. My favourite author is Nevil Shute and I would pick 'Trustee from the Toolroom' as his best novel, but his most thought-provoking work has to be 'Round the Bend' - a very interesting read. My music choices include Van Morrison, and I really enjoy musical theatre - my favourite would have to be 'Les Miserables', such a story.

The place where you feel closest to God?

Closest to God has to be during private prayer but also to be in Church with others, especially at Holy Communion and at Easter.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

Name and dates would be grand.



View from the Mankovice garden *© Sr Mary Holmes*

Journeys of Moravian Women:

The impact of the Stach family

Over the centuries Moravian families have travelled widely and had a significant impact upon our history and upon local communities worldwide. Here we look at the lives of one such family, especially three of the Stach women.

Let me introduce the women and their extensive journeys. Back in the early 1700s life in Moravia (today in the south of Czechia) was difficult for anyone who wished to follow the Protestant faith. By the 1720s villagers living on the Fulnek estate had heard of land available in Saxony and so members of the Unitas Fratrum left Zauchtenthal (today Suchdol) and were the founders of Herrnhut, thanks to the support of Count Zinzendorf.

A few miles from Zauchtenthal was the village of Mankerdorf (today Mankovice). Rosina Stach (1691-1775) and her family lived, worked and worshipped there. They made a last-minute decision to leave as the militia were already at the door. Anna, the young daughter, had to be thrown from the bedroom window into her mother's arms. This was a traumatic start to a long and difficult journey.



Rosina Beck, rozená Stach

© Sr Mary Holmes

Moving to Herrnhut provided religious freedom but with that freedom came other challenges. Rosina and the women were used to living in a village that had been there for years, surrounded by fertile soil and good water sources. Herrnhut had poor soil and water supplies and was a small but growing community, with people moving there from other parts of Europe. Theological and other tensions were swirling around. All this must have made it hard for Rosina to settle into this strange environment, while trying to create a safe home for her two daughters, Anna and Rosina. Despite all of the challenges, Count Zinzendorf brought together a settled and faithful community.

The town was growing. By 1725 there was a Saal (meeting hall) for religious gatherings and by 1727 there were services that meant they did not have to undertake the walk to Berthelsdorf. Also, prayer meetings at people's homes became part of the regular pattern of worship. By 1727 even the night watchman was part of the liturgical activity as each night he would sing a verse from a hymn at each hour of the night.

Before being on the move again the family will have celebrated a few Christmases in Herrnhut. A joyous occasion but with no Moravian star or Christingle. Those traditions had not yet become an established part of our Moravian life.

By 1732 Moravians were on the move again, including the Stach family. While visiting Copenhagen Count Zinzendorf was inspired to encourage members of the Herrnhut congregation to send missionaries to two places: St Thomas, in the West Indies, and Greenland.

In 1736 Rosina sailed for Greenland with her two daughters, Rosalina (23) and Anna (13). They were following Mattheus and Christian Stach who had been among the first to sail for Greenland. Mattheus noted that 'frost is so strong that glasses burst in the cottage.' No doubt they were very grateful for the extra clothing given when they departed Herrnhut, even though they knew so little about their destination.

In Greenland they had to spend lots of time collecting food, often including seaweed, building cabins and studying the language. They called the first settlement New Herrnhut. Trust of locals was gained by the work of the Stachs and others to support the Inuits during a terrible outbreak of measles. The locals respected the willingness of these foreigners to stay and to care, both for the living and by washing the dead. This was where Rosina, the mother, lived until her death in 1775. So different from Mankovice and yet it became her home.

All the Stach women were clearly fearless and loved the challenge of travel. Rosina, the daughter, having lived for about thirty years in Greenland, returned to Europe briefly and then left with her husband Mattheus for Bethabara (USA) in 1777. Bethabara means House of Passage as it was set up to provide food while land for a new settlement was found on the Wachovia estate, already purchased by the Moravians. A new settlement was built and named Salem (today in North Carolina). By the time the Stachs arrived in Bethabara the population had reduced to about 54 people and was known as the Old Town, while Salem was becoming established. Rosina taught at the girls' school in Bethabara for a few years and after a full life her husband, Mattheus died in 1787.

Anna, that was the daughter thrown from the window in the 1720s, lived most of her life in Greenland, leaving in 1784. In total she had nine children, six of whom survived. Two of them became preachers and one was the wife of another missionary to Greenland.

Overall, the Stach family started life in what is still a very small rural village in central Europe. They travelled widely and made a significant contribution to how our church has grown. Moravians finally left Greenland in September 1900, while a trombone choir played in the harbour. Work was handed to the Danish Lutherans. The work in the Americas lives on in Bethlehem, Bethabara and Salem. As individuals these women demonstrated the importance of creating communities where everyone's skills are needed and where all could worship and demonstrate their faith in practice.



Sr Mary Holmes

Fulneck

Please accept that my writing is based upon texts and articles that have been written drawing widely upon our international Moravian archives. I trust that my writing accurately reflects the originals and I accept as my own any errors.

Fetter Lane, London

End of the summer at Fetter Lane

August and early September was a busy time at Fetter Lane as we hosted the fourth of our series of history talks under the umbrella of 'Across Seas and Centuries'. This final talk, entitled 'From Beyond the Grave', was delivered by the Provincial Archivist, Sr Lorraine Parsons. Those buried here in God's Acre represent the social scale from top to bottom and Sr Lorraine painted vivid pictures of a few of them. The audience particularly enjoyed hearing about Sr Mary Lewis, a printer who had experienced a number of life's ups and downs, all recorded in the 18th century congregation records. More detail than you might expect and certainly intriguing.

We also welcomed a return visit from Sr Roslyn Hamblin, on sabbatical from her ministry in Barbados. Who is Jesus to us? She suggested thinking in terms of Physician, Protector and Problem-solver - the three 'Ps'. We were invited to consider how we meet Jesus in our own lives.

Sr Roslyn along with Br Edwin Quildan, helped us to manage our two-day children's activities in the last week of August. The theme was Noah's Ark and the task was to build that vessel from cardboard collected over the summer. It looked great, was fun to construct and to paint. But maybe the most fun, after the Ark had safely done its job, was to spray it with foam water blasters. It was a warm day, so nobody minded.



© Sr Cynthia Dize / Br Michael Newman

Sr Ann and Br Austin Daniel, Martin and Sharon, Sr Claire and Br Michael Newman, and Sr Jennifer Dunrod.

On 6th September we marked the end of the summer and the end of another Fetter Lane chapter with the final service taken by our Minister, Br Michael Newman. Apart from saying farewell to Br Michael and Sr Claire, we welcomed a new member of the congregation, Sr Jennifer Dunrod, and congratulated two couples celebrating their 40th wedding anniversaries - Br Austin and Sr Ann Daniel and their niece, Sharon and her husband Martin, all the way from Oxford.

A happy end to the summer with good food and chat tempering our sad feelings at losing Br Michael. We are grateful for his pastoral care as well as his multi-faceted practical support of our small congregation. We wish him and Claire a constructive, purposeful and joyful time in Fulneck.

Sr Cynthia Dize

Horton, Yorkshire

Autumn has arrived with very welcome rain in Yorkshire. Although we didn't get to the stage of a hosepipe ban this year our fields, gardens and countryside have all suffered and 'God's own County' has turned a straw colour instead of green! However, a small miracle occurred, because within a few days of the rain starting the grass changed and green re-appeared - such a welcome sight and one we tend to take for granted and one I am sure we all give thanks for.

Over the summer, in addition to our normal church services, a special family service was held, we also shared a service with Lower Wyke and we continued with various outreach activities - local churches together coffee mornings, a fashion show, our summer birthday group where we played 'Beetle' and shared a hot lunch, a holiday craft session for young people and a shared service with Lower Wyke.

Our own Br Owen took on and completed the Three Peaks Challenge in June and raised money for Dementia UK - well done, such an achievement.

We hope everyone stayed well over the hot, dry summer and you all enjoyed a time of rest and renewal. Sending greetings from the congregation at Horton.

Sr Linda Barraclough

Horton's Church Committee had a day retreat in Malham on 12th September, based in Malham's Methodist Chapel. The weather was not kind but, on the way, we saw a rainbow which gave us a lot of hope.

Our theme was reflecting on passages in the Bible that explored our use of time. Together, we shared in a variety of ways including highlighted lists and colourful clay about how we use our personal time. We considered carefully what gave us joy, what was 'simply for a season' and what felt like something we would like to stop.

After lunch at a local cafe, we scrapped our planned walk and started the afternoon with a cuppa and some cake in the chapel. We played a shortened game of 'Picteureka' which helped warm us up to the theme of seeing things a bit differently from different angles or perspectives. We then took time as a church committee to reflect on what gave us 'joy' over the years of Horton's Church history to the present day. This included some fabulous things that have happened in the past but no longer do, alongside current ministry and mission work. We dug a little deeper into the importance of recognising how even things that have given us joy in the past might be 'of a season' and if they were to suddenly return might not be where God is calling us to be today. We explored how God leads us and discussed the tricky reality of 'obligation' and how this cannot be a main motivation for us as a community. God's spirit, which is full of love for us, encourages us to find a life in all of its fullness, rather than operating from a sense of 'we must'. We shared personal reflections throughout this session intertwined with the wonderful history of Horton Moravian Church and its varied expressions of faith.



© Sr Claire Maxwell

We finished by curating some candle holders that reminded us that God's light is with us through the joyful times as well as the darker and scarier moments, and that we follow a God who calls us to live in the light.

We finished with a Cup of Covenant service together before leaving to return home in the one car - with many thanks to Sr Maureen Colbert for driving us there and back.

Once more a rainbow was spotted this time on the way back: 'a promise from God' as someone mentioned in the car. It was good to retreat together.

Sr Claire Maxwell

Gomersal, Yorkshire

One of the joys of living in Gomersal is having Oakwell Hall and Country Park on our doorstep. Oakwell Hall is a beautiful Grade 1 listed Elizabethan manor house furnished as a 17th century home, with over 110 acres of country park surrounding the hall. Charlotte Brontë visited the hall in the 1830s and the hall lives forever as 'Fieldhead' in her novel Shirley.

There is a special feeling to be able to link two local historic landmarks, our Moravian Church and Oakwell Hall, so it was a pleasure this summer for our Walking for Health group to choose to meet and walk at Oakwell Hall.

Gomersal Walking for Health group meets once a month under the leadership of Victoria Wright, and we are very grateful for her input and planning.



© Sr Victoria Wright

Walking is a simple way to boost your mood, reduce anxieties and improve well-being. When you walk with a group it gives opportunities for connection and friendship.

This visit for our group ensured that we enjoyed the benefits of nature, exercise, companionship, and history. Truly a win-win activity that helped our social, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

If anyone is interested in starting a walking for health group more information can be found online at ramblers.org.uk or check with your local authority.

'Walk and be Happy, Walk and be Healthy' as Charles Dickens wrote (Household Words, 1858).

Sr Karen Norris

Lower Wyke, Yorkshire

2026 has been another busy year at Lower Wyke. In many ways church life has replicated life in 2025 but has moved forward. Ecumenical relationships are still strong with the other denominations in Wyke, and several members work in the Food Bank and Meeting Place. The later now offers food and drink, advice on finance, help with life in general and a listening ear in a setting of safety, security and fellowship.

Lower Wyke and Horton are now sister churches and members mix freely attending social events at both churches as they do with other Moravian congregations in Yorkshire. Travel between all the congregations in Yorkshire is easy!

Our three-monthly house groups are thriving and this Autumn has seen the start of an Alpha course which will run into November. So far this has been very successful with 15 to 20 new and well-grounded Christians sharing a meal, watching a video and discussing freely their faith, prayer and other aspects of Christianity introduced by Nicky Gumble: the main speaker on the video. Long may it continue!



© Sr Diane Thornton & Br Robert Hopcroft

Forest Church continues to meet every two months in our beautiful Paddock area. The young people eagerly explore nature linked to their Creator led by a dedicated team of adults. Sadly, one of the leaders, Sr Zoe Cooper, will have to relinquish her position as she has offered herself to train for the ministry. We are thrilled that Zoe has been accepted and has begun her training at Manchester College. Sr Zoe has grown up in the Moravian Church at Lower Wyke, and we will miss her wonderful contributions to church life but wish her every blessing in the future.

A plentiful supply of retired Ministers, Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders fill the pulpit when Sr Claire is at Horton for which we are very grateful. After much discussion screens have been placed in church to hopefully, further enhance the services, add a visual aspect to the words being spoken and to encourage more singing out during the hymns.

Our Proms in the Paddock and Strawberry Fair were well supported once more as was our Heritage Weekend. The village community always come together on occasions like those showing how much they value the church at their centre. People return year after year from near and far - even one family from South Africa!

The monthly meetings of Greenfingers, and Wake and Stretch continue and are an integral part of church life. However, it is with sadness that the monthly Community Lunch will finish after Christmas. It has been expertly run, led by Sr Marilyn Greenhough, for 13 years. Everyone who has attended has enjoyed the amazing variety of meals provided always served with a smile, gained new friends and will be sad to see it go. Thank you so much to the team of helpers: those in the kitchen cooking, serving, washing up; those who put up/take down the tables and prepare the room and those who bring raffle prizes month by month. Heartfelt thanks and prayers are always offered by Br Greenhough, and we thank him for those.

We welcomed back Sr Jane Carter to conduct our Harvest Festival Service in September which combined celebrating harvest and the work of one of our oldest members. Br Paul Greenhough (90) has for 44 years been a Moravian ambassador for YPMA. He has worked tirelessly to help to raise money to send throughout the world to bring help, practical resources and comfort to so many. He was presented with two engraved wine glasses in recognition of his work. In his words of response Paul said that although he had headed the organisation it was the many, many, collectors who deserve the credit. Long may YPMA continue in the capable hands of Sr Selby.

As we move towards the end of another year, who knows what 2027 will bring?

New challenges - new successes and new failures no doubt - but we must not give up! 'Time waited for no man' so let us use our time wisely to continue God's work here on earth.

Sr Diane Thornton

Statement from the Unitas Fratrum (Worldwide Moravian Church) on the unlawful incursion at the **Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre**

On Friday 9th of October 2026, a group of about 100 Israeli settlers illegally entered the property of Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center, a Unity Undertaking of the Worldwide Moravian Church and remained there for half an hour. They broke through the security fence at the rear of the Centre and entered the site. They roamed the grounds and left again via the official entrance gate. Early the following Sunday morning, once again some people entered the property illegally and vandalized a greenhouse.

The Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre is situated between Ramallah and Birzeit in the northern part of the West Bank. Approximately 100 children and young people with intellectual disabilities receive care and support from 20 teaching- and caretaking staff. On behalf of the Moravian Unity, the Herrnhuter Missionshilfe in Germany is responsible for assisting and supporting the Star Mountain.

The incident has caused fear, sorrow and great concern among the staff, the children and young people and their families.

The Worldwide Moravian Church is deeply disturbed by the reports of the incursion onto the Star Mountain premises by Israeli settlers and the damage caused to the property. Such incidents are a matter of serious concern, particularly given the vulnerability of the children and young people whom Star Mountain serves. Our immediate concern is for the safety and well-being of the children and young people, their families and staff.

This incident cannot be viewed without recognizing the wider and in many ways unfortunate situation in Palestine. The events at Star Mountain further impact upon the lives, security and dignity of Palestinian communities.



The Moravian Church stands in solidarity with the Star Mountain community and Palestine at this difficult time. We continue to hold the children and young people, their families, staff and all those connected with Star Mountain in our prayers.

We pray and work for justice, peace, dignity and security for all.

We call the relevant authorities of Israel and Palestine to secure the safety and wellbeing of the children, young people and the dedicated staff of the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre.

In the name of God of peace and justice.

On behalf of the Worldwide Moravian Church,

***Sr. Roberta Hoey**, Unity Board President and*

***Rev. Dr. Jørgen Bøytler** (PHD), Unity Board General Secretary*

October 10th, 2026.

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Death

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death of Sr Gloria David, a retired minister of the British Province, who has been called to higher service.

Sr Gloria was ordained a Deacon in 1988 and consecrated a Presbyter in 1993. During a long and faithful ministry, she served the congregations of Gomersal, Gracehill, Leicester, Malmesbury, Swindon and Tytherton, Queen's Park Bedford, Baildon and Horton, before retiring from active ministry in 2015. We give thanks to God for a life lived well in service to her Saviour and for all that she gave through her many years of ministry. We hold her family and friends in our prayers.

Provincial Diary for November

2	Mission and Society Committee	Hall Green United Community Church
11-12	Provincial Board Meeting	Fulneck
23	Church Book and Synod Committee	Online

25th November-10th December:
16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Received into Membership

6th September 2026	Peter Gubi	Fulneck
27th September 2026	Sarah Boddy	Bath Weston
4th October 2026	Jamie Mackenzie	Ockbrook
4th October 2026	Simon Dunn	Fulneck

DATES TO REMEMBER

1	All Saints' Day
5	Bonfire / Guy Fawkes Day
8	Diwali-Deepavali - Sikh/Hindu Remembrance Sunday
8-15	Inter Faith Week ***(www.interfaithweek.org)***
13	Realisation of the Headship of Christ in 1741
16-20	Anti-Bullying Week ***(www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)***
18	Church Service Sunday World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims ***(www.roadpeace.org)***
19	International Men's Day
29	First Sunday of Advent
30	St Andrew's Day

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