



*Br. John Wilkinson offers  
these thoughts about:*

## Pentecost

Ministers are taught (or should be) not to use personal illustrations. Which preface, as any of my congregations would recognise, is a sure-fire sign that a personal illustration is coming up! The only exceptions, according to my sermon tutor, would be stories that reflect to the discredit of the preacher, or reveal his stupidity. So here goes.

This year I forgot Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, as I still know it. Planning my holiday abroad, I carefully negotiated through the hurly burly of Passiontide and Easter, the May Lovefeast and Communion, and found two free weeks at the end of May, which I booked. It was only when our Church Committee noted that we are the lead church in this years Whit Walks, in Dukinfield and that I was booked to stand on the Town Hall steps with the Mayor to lead all the

churches in worship, since we are without minister: only then did the awful truth begin to dawn that old John Wilk would be in Corfu that day.

The shame of it, a minister, albeit a retired one, who forgot Pentecost! My only defence, apart from senile decay, is that my diary, although it noted Easter, did not mark Whitsuntide,

But that is a poor excuse, *mia culpa*.

It does raise the question, for me, about why the church should defend the variable dates for

Easter and Whitsuntide, against suggestions that the dates be fixed. We manage perfectly well with fixed dates for Christmas etc, and I rarely forget those, and the old necessities about employing equinoxal events to correct the calendar are long gone.

The essential point for the church is to affirm is that there was a pivotal moment, the Holy Spirit did sweep through the disciples, and constitute them into Christ's body, the church.

But did the Holy Spirit come that day because it was the Jewish Festival of Pentecost? I doubt that, because the whole point about Christ was that dependence upon the old dispensation was at an end, Temple cult and Law were no longer valid, no longer to impose burdens upon the faithful.

I believe that the Holy Spirit came just then because the disciples were there, and the timing was purely God's good will.

It follows that today, the church's true role is to gather Christ's people together and make them available to the Holy Spirit at all times and in all places, receptive to him, in the name of the one who sends him.

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In 2011 Christian Aid Week raised over £12 million pounds. Once again thousands of churches and approximately 100,000 volunteers are preparing to raise funds to help some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable in the world. Why do these people give their time and energy year after year delivering and collecting envelopes and fundraising in various ways when world poverty seems so intractable? Quite simply because they are putting their faith into action and they want to make a difference. Christian Aid believe that poverty is a scandal which can be ended. As well as giving practical aid they also work to empower poor communities to speak up for their rights, challenging structures and systems that keep people poor. Christian Aid currently works with 507 partner organisations in 47 countries around the world regardless of race or faith.

The theme this Christian Aid Week is 'Let's give the tools' and focuses on the remarkable changes taking place in Sierra Leone, a rural farming community. It is one of the poorest countries in the world and is still recovering from a bitter civil war. One in five households do not have enough to eat. When Christian Aid partner the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone (MCSL) visited the people of Gbap they encouraged the community to set up a village development committee. Change began quite rapidly and the village development committee set up a food production group with MCSL's assistance.

Seeds and tools were distributed to local farmers and they were trained to use more effective agricultural practises. MCSL also helped them to negotiate the loan of a tractor allowing the community to plough larger tracts of land. The village development committee has been established in 25 communities near Gbap allowing people to feel more empowered and enabling change to happen.

If your congregation is not involved with a house-to-house collection there's still time to do some fundraising. At Brockweir we will be holding a Soup Lunch as it's something we are good at doing and it's also a very good form of outreach to the community. Visit the website at [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk) for possible ideas and help to transform the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

A prayer for Christian Aid Week  
*Gracious God  
who bids us to love one another  
May we listen to the voices of all who  
speak out for a more loving world;  
Inspire us to gifts of love and friendship;  
sustain us when we stand together for change;  
and transform our offerings  
so that we become a part of the miracle of your love.*

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sr. Editor,  
Leominster lives!  
Leominster sings!

*Experiencing difficulties with our organists rota, we decided to do 'something' about it and our volume of praise. The something in question has turned out to be Kevin Mayhew Hymn Discs, to which we make a joyful noise, lovely but lacking in one aspect - the Moravian perspective.*

*We are now looking to enhance our worship by sourcing our Moravian hymns and music and getting them onto disc. Is there a choir in the Province or anybody anywhere who has the know-how, as well as the wherewithal to collate it all, and thus make "The Moravian Way" heard throughout the Province?*

Help!  
Doreen Davis

## Notice Board

### 60th Birthday Greetings

On the 2nd May Br. David Newman will celebrate his 60th birthday. **Happy Birthday!**

### Nanotechnology creates world's smallest school emblem?

Two Year 11 students at Ockbrook School recently visited the University of Nottingham's Nanotechnology and Nanoscience Centre as part of their Bronze Crest Science Award in a project that required electron microscope images of hair samples for a study into hair products. The students returned to school with a bonus image - the school's emblem "milled" into a hair approximately 0.1mm wide.



Alison Steele, Head Teacher, Ockbrook School, says "We believe that this is the world's smallest school emblem, so it is quite an accolade for the school". She also expressed the school's gratitude to The University of Nottingham in nurturing scientists of the future.

### Fairfield Craft Fair

Fairfield is holding a Craft Fair all day on Saturday 19th May and in the afternoon of Sunday 20th. There will be all types of crafts for sale; wood-turning, jewellery, baking, cards, etc. Refreshments will be available throughout.

# Service in Kathmandu



children in the playground, all of which are a pleasant change from what I am used to doing. The children are getting used to me and my ways and no longer cry when I enter a room! (I forget what an unusual sight I must present with my white face and rapidly greying hair.)

Although the school is a privately-run establishment with a proud history (it has been serving the community for over 40 years) it is hoped that scholarships can be found in order to enable some of the congregation's children to attend. At the moment there are no Christian

Kathmandu is a fascinating place and I feel very privileged to be here. As I am "working" at the new Moravian venture, the International Kindergarten in the district of New Baneshwor, but living in the tourist district of Thamel, I feel almost a resident. The Kathmandu church is near the school, both quite a distance from where I am living, a salubrious residence called the Hotel Silver Home (it's cheap, cheerful and quite comfortable). Being unable to grasp the intricacies of public transportation I usually walk everywhere, including church; the school minivan picks me up on its collection route so enabling me to witness sights I would otherwise be unaware of.

The International Kindergarten has 54 children, aged 2 - 6 years, in 4 classes. Not only did it come into new ownership last year but it also moved to a new area, both situations setting challenges which have to be faced and overcome with God's good grace. At the moment my presence on the minivan adds interest when parents deliver their children; as the medium for learning is English, a native English speaker is seen as a bonus. My duties include daily story reading, participating in music and dance lessons, organising a day a week doing "my own thing" and playing with the



children at the school although there are a number of Christian teachers including Sr. Vani Pradhan, the Principal and assistant pastor of the church along with her husband Br. Shanti.

This weekend (February 4th) the Church celebrated its 15th anniversary. There was a real party atmosphere in the meeting room with balloons, a disco ball, a huge invitation card and cake complete with 15 candles. I had been asked previously to rehearse the choir in the singing of

"Masithi", the first time many of them had sung in 4 part harmony, and this we sang in the service. Included in the hymns were "Majesty" and "Lift your name on high" which

were sung to the accompaniment of a pop group (bass, rhythm and acoustic guitars with keyboard, drum machine and Nepali drum). The congregation sings with great fervour which is most moving and uplifting.

At the end, whilst the instruments "jam" quietly in the background, individual prayers are offered up in a wave of sound. As at Rajpur it is customary to sing all the hymns and choruses at the beginning of the service before the children leave for Sunday School. The elder Br. Pradhan, now 84, gave the sermon based on Galatians 6, v 14 -16. The morning service concluded with Communion which Br. Nagendra Pradhan, the senior pastor, took (quite a dynasty!) May I ask you to remember the work of the pastors here in Asia in your prayers.

After a brief sojourn upstairs to the roof terrace where cups of tea were served, the celebrations continued with music from the Sunday School, ladies' groups and individuals.

There was a slide show of photos from across the 15 years which featured, on occasions, the smiling faces of Brs. McOwat and Hopcroft. Eventually the cakes were brought into position, the candles were lit and the elder Br Pradhan ceremoniously cut them. It was a joy to share such a special occasion with the congregation.

I had been intrigued by congregation members coming at the end of services to present themselves before the pastors and Mrs Pradhan senior for a blessing. Mrs Pradhan explained that this was a sign of respect. I was therefore humbled somewhat to be asked by several congregation members for a blessing after the celebrations. This small gesture has made me feel truly welcome and part of the church community. When congregation members meet after the service they greet each other with "Jai Mashi" which is roughly translated as "Praise the Lord". "Jai Mashi" to you all.

Maureen Colbert





# Diamond Jubilee...

The Queen and I have something in common - we are both celebrating a Diamond Jubilee this year.

Queen Elizabeth II became the monarch on February 6th 1952 on the death of her father, King George VI; in May 1952, I first saw the light of day. Her 60 years on the throne and my 60 years of life have run in parallel - just once did our paths cross, ten years ago at Windsor Castle during the Golden Jubilee weekend (that event was covered in a Moravian Messenger of 2002).

It means that I can sit back and enjoy the nostalgia of the many documentaries showing on TV in the run up to the "big weekend" at the beginning of June, knowing that this is the history of the world in my lifetime.

And it's been an amazing 60 years.....

I always consider myself fortunate to have been born into a family with priorities in the right order. Christian family values, regular and committed attendance and participation in church life, a sports-mad household. We did everything together - what better foundation for life?

And that continued into married life - Christian family values, regular and committed attendance and participation in church life, a sports-mad household. Marilyn has lovingly suffered a husband and three sons and their passion for sport; and has grown very knowledgeable as a result (and she takes charge of the TV remote during the Wimbledon fortnight).

So whenever I look back over my life it is not surprising that many of my most cherished memories are of family occasions, church events, and great sporting moments.

May - my month.....

The month of May in particular throws up sporting memories. For many years, my birthday and the FA Cup Final would fall in the same week - in those days of certainty when TV didn't dominate the scheduling of fixtures and kick-off times and the final was always on the first Saturday in May. My first recollection of a final (on TV - I've never been to an FA Cup Final) was in 1959. I remember that it was the day of my seventh birthday, I came out in spots that morning with chicken pox, and that Nottingham Forest beat Luton Town 2-1, with Elton John's uncle, Roy Dwight, scoring Forest's first goal, and then having to go off after suffering a broken leg. (And I can reel off the list of every FA Cup winner since - my family often mock me for having a head full of trivia!)

For better, for worse?

Whenever you look back, you can see how things have changed; sometimes for better, sometimes for worse.

In football, for example: some would argue otherwise, but I think the game has got better by being faster, with the crunching tackles outlawed. Players' kit is much better and more comfortable to wear. There are no more leaden-weighted footballs to kick. Facilities at grounds are much better (although still not great in many instances). All-seater stadiums have helped to encourage more families to attend as families; but

some of the old fashioned fun and charm has gone.

When we as a family, with Dad, Mum, sister Jan and me, used to go to watch Swindon Town in the late 50's and early 60's, there was no need for the segregation of fans of opposing teams. Often we travelled to Town's away matches, and sat in the stand with the "home" fans. Nobody threatened us, everyone was allowed to cheer for their team regardless of who you stood or sat next to.

In London, for example, in those days people would go and cheer on Chelsea playing at home one week, and then go to cheer on Fulham playing at home the next - and it didn't cost the earth to get in.

And then, to my mind, there is in all sports too much razzmatazz these days, induced by sponsors, TV and other media coverage. For example, the fancy dress in limited overs cricket! And I look back to the days when a boy could throw on any old white tee-shirt and imagine himself to be Bobby Charlton playing football for England. Today, it has to be a £50+ replica kit, with your favourite player's name and number on the back. It is hard for financially-pressed parents with soccer mad children to keep up, under the pressure of the too-frequent kit changes made by national and club sides.

Move with the times.....

However, it is essential that we move with the times, and that's something that those running sport have tried to do - probably with a greater degree of success than failure.

I'm rambling - but is that a sign of being 60?

I sense that I have moved rapidly from being a young man who has visions to being an old man who dreams dreams. (Joel 2:28)

I also sense that the church - the whole church and our particular little part of it - needs to take on board many of these lessons. Not everything today is necessarily better than it was; but we must move with the times.

We must all have our dreams - but we must allow the younger generation the space to have their visions and take the risks that implementing those visions entails.

Synod 2012 - please take note and make space! (I refer you back to the Grandstand View of January 2012)

Next month.....

We'll be focusing on the London Olympics in "Grandstand View" in June and July. From information sent in, it appears that apart from me and my youngest son, Jonathan, only Stuart Brierley from Salem will be at any Olympic events.

I'm sure that this cannot be the true picture..... so if you've got tickets for any event; or you hope to be out on the streets of London (cue song) to watch the "free to view" marathons, road-race cycling, or triathlon, please let me know.

David Newman

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# The Settlement of the Yorkshire Congregation 1742

On 14th October 1735 Bishop David Nitschmann and a group of Moravian colonists set out for Georgia on the ss Symmonds. On the same ship were John and Charles Wesley, and Benjamin Ingham from Ossett. When Ingham returned to England in 1738 he was received into the Fetter Lane society in London and soon travelled with John Wesley and John Töltzschig over to the Continent, where he met Count Zinzendorf in Marienborn.

He twice requested that John Töltzschig be allowed to return to Yorkshire with him to assist in setting up societies in the West Riding, but this was initially refused. However, the following year his request was granted and John Töltzschig, Charles and William Delamotte, John Brown, Jacob Rogers and Joseph Verding joined Ingham at various times during the year to assist with his evangelical ministry around the area, with the result that many souls were awakened and formed into societies across the West Riding.

Early in 1741 Peter Böhler and Charles Kinchin also spent some time in Yorkshire, and then in May Smith House in Lightcliffe was rented for a group of Moravian evangelists, which consisted of John and Judith Töltzschig, Richard and Jane Viney, George and Rosina Piesch, John and Anna Gussenbauer. In November of that year Benjamin Ingham married Lady Margaret Hastings and moved over to Aberford in North Yorkshire.

At the end of April in 1742 Br Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, now General Helper in England, came up to Yorkshire to see Benjamin Ingham, and a document was drawn up for the handing over of his West Riding societies to the Brethren's Church. He was back in London when a resolution was taken in May and approved by lot that a

congregation of the Brethren in England should be regulated at the next prayer day. Br Töltzschig arrived in London from Yorkshire with Richard Utley of Holbeck on the 25th May, and they both attended a conference with 18 other labourers, when it was decided that the first English congregation was to be settled, and various people were selected to be labourers. The settlement of the Yorkshire congregation took place in London on the following day, 26th May 1742, in preparation for the take-over of Ingham's societies. Br Töltzschig as elder and Br Viney as warden were then consecrated to their office. This congregation was initially intended to be exclusively for labourers, and those who were to travel up to Yorkshire were that same day either baptized, confirmed or received into membership, the first such Moravian initiation ceremony in England.

Previously those who wished to join the Brethren's Church had to travel over to Germany.

As this was a time of unrest (just before the Jacobite rebellion) they left in small groups at different times over the next 6 months in order not to excite undue attention. Some travelled by coach, others on horseback and others by boat (with the luggage) via Hull. In all 33 people are mentioned in the London records setting out for Yorkshire during this period. Some only stayed for a short period, as labourers were redeployed quickly at the time as new needs arose.

Br and Sr Töltzschig were the first to leave London on 25th June and soon after Br and Sr Spangenberg travelled via Broad Oak school in Essex and arrived on 3rd July with a group of four others at Smith House in Lightcliffe. This now became not just the centre for Yorkshire, but also the headquarters of the work in England (the Pilgrim House) until Br Spangenberg was recalled to Germany the following

year and appointed to superintend the work in America. He was replaced as General Helper in England by Fredrich Wenzel Neisser, and he and the Pilgrim House were then located in London.

The document for handing over Benjamin Ingham's West Yorkshire societies was signed on 28th July 1742 and, at a large lovefeast at Fieldhead in Gomersal two days later, representatives of these societies gave a unanimous 'Yes' to being supervised by the Brethren. Further documents were then drawn up and signed by the members of the societies. According to a list prepared by Benjamin Ingham and lodged in the Fulneck archive there were a total of 44 societies with 1,117 members. The work was then divided into 6 principal divisions with labourers assigned to each: Smith House, Adwalton, Great Horton, Mirfield, Holbeck and Ossett, and initially the labourers lived in community at Smith House and nearby Newhouse in Halifax.

Small single brethren's and single sisters' houses were set up in various locations, and a cloth manufacturing business was established at Lane End in Pudsey under James Charlesworth of Gomersal. The Church Book in the Fulneck archive shows local people being received into the Yorkshire congregation from 4th September 1742, the first being John Longbottom, a mason from Lightcliffe, Thomas Hunt, a cloth maker from Dewsbury (both single men) and Hannah Westerman, a single woman from Ossett.

The large Yorkshire congregation of over 500 members and 1,000+ society members was split into six just one month after Count Zinzendorf left England following a residence in London of six years. His son-in-law Johannes von Watteville together with Benjamin La Trobe travelled around Yorkshire and over to Cheshire during the latter part of April 1755 settling the congregations:

15th April	Wyke congregation	with 2 societies (Wyke and Halifax)
16th April	Mirfield congregation	with 3 societies (Mirfield, Ossett and Golcar and a preaching place at Huddersfield)
17th April	Gomersal congregation	with 1 very large Gomersal society
18th April	Pudsey congregation	with 5 societies (Pudsey, Dudley Hill, Great Horton, Baildon, Holbeck with Leeds and 8 preaching places)
19th April	Fulneck congregation	as the place congregation with its minister still superintending the work in the north of England
23rd April	Dukinfield congregation	with various societies and preaching places in a wide-ranging area

Hilary Smith

## Sponsored Walk

The Yorkshire District will be holding a Sponsored Walk on 26th May to mark 270 years since the settlement of the Yorkshire Congregation. Starting at Lower Wyke, the 10 mile circular route will go via Smith House in Lightcliffe and Fieldhead in Gomersal, both mentioned above in Sr

Smith's account (a shorter 2 mile walk to Smith House and back is also available). The walk will raise funds for the six Yorkshire congregations and also the Moravian School in Kathmandu.





## Summer Camp 2012 THE RETURN

It is time once again for me to ask for your cash. Summer Camp needs additional funds to help pay for the outing, crafts and activities. The fees paid by parents only cover the cost of accommodation and meals, so we need your support. We will once again be visiting a Theme Park (I'm not saying which to keep it a surprise for the young people). Entry is £15 a head and the bus to get there costs over £500. We have also booked some activities for during the week and these also have an additional cost of about £300 each. The budget for craft materials was exceeded last year so this year the estimate is £400. All together we need to raise at least £4000. It would be fantastic to raise more than we need because then we can have some more treats while away, or get the young people a souvenir of the week (in 2009 they all got water bottles).



If you pay income tax please complete your Gift Aid details and send them with your cheque payable to Moravian Union INC. to Joy Raynor, Provincial Youth and Children's Officer, 25 Lynwood Avenue, Slough, SL3 7BJ.

## Hornsey welcome community group

On Sunday 13 March at 11am Hornsey welcomed some young people from Tanzania in the morning worship service. They are connected to KORI Arts who have some of their meetings in the church hall.

After the service there was a puppet show in Church Hall. The show lasted about 50 minutes and was suitable for everyone from 5 years old and over. It's was a free event offered by One Moment in Time Theatre.



[www.OneMomentInTimeTheatre.com](http://www.OneMomentInTimeTheatre.com)



## Over 18's Weekend in Bradford

It was once again time for the ever aging over 18's youth to gather together. This time we were off to Bradford, but this was a weekend with a twist. We were not only going to take part and meet our Moravian family at Horton, but we were also going to meet some members of the other faiths that make up the multi-cultural region that Bradford is. First thing, we needed to get to Bradford to meet at the Culture Fusion Centre. There was a new guy, tall, slim, clean shaven with a fresh, stylish, haircut. I thought I knew everyone who was coming this weekend? It took awhile for me to realise that this was no stranger, it was Andrew Kitson! I didn't think I could handle any further surprises for the weekend. After Cassie's arrival in the depths of the night, we spent the rest of the evening catching up and relieving old summer camp memories of years gone by in the delightful Culture Fusion. I should say more about this place. Run by the YMCA, this is a great find and has great facilities including a kitchen, meeting/conference room, a recording studio, a gym, a café and most definitely the weekend favourite Peace Pod, which has the largest and most comfortable bean bags you'll ever lay witness to, laid out in front of a huge television. All at a price that was next to nothing.

The following morning we began our tour by visiting a Hindu temple. We had a very good impromptu chat about how the temple runs before we were able to observe a Hindu morning service in action and observe the way in which their gods are worshipped, with a good running commentary of all that was happening. We left with gifts of fruit or chocolate that are brought as offerings to the gods and normally distributed among the followers after the service. We left with a warm feeling and moved on to our next venue.

Next on the agenda was the Sikh Gurdwara. We were greeted at the door by a sizeable gentleman who introduced himself as 'Biggie' (this really needs no further explanation). We were taken around the Gurdwara and then we sat in the main room of worship and listened to an excellent talk about Sikhism, its origins and the role the Gurdwara has in its local community. 'Biggie' was actually a trainee teacher and in the short time we had met him I had no doubt in my mind he was a person Bradford's youth would gain much value from. We heard some of the teachings from the high priest and heard him sing some of the Guru Granth Sahib, their holy book. It's a Sikh custom to feed anyone who walks through the doors of the Gurdwara and boy were we no exception. Put it this way, by the time we left, both brain and stomach had been 'enlightened'.

After a quick visit to Horton to set up shop for the following day, we moved on to our final stop at the mosque. Again, we received a warm welcome and listened to another great talk that gave insight into the foundations of the Islamic faith, how they

pray and an explanation of Hajj, the pilgrimage they aim to make at least once in a lifetime. We then observed a demonstration of how they pray and were particularly impressed by a young man who had learnt the Qur'an off by heart. When I challenged him to it, he even said he could start it at any point you gave him and begin reciting. I didn't challenge him on anything else. We were then taken around the mosque and were able to see the things they had done to help the community including a library and computer room that would soon be open for all to use. After yet another delicious meal of giant succulent samosas (of which Cooper and Kitson ate a least 3) we left and ended what had been an excellent day.



After a brief siesta, we headed out for the famous Bradford curry, which didn't disappoint and the evening ended with a Back to the Future bonanza, of which I understand nobody managed to stay awake till the end of! The following morning, a little weary and still exceedingly full from the heavy eating the day before, we headed to Horton to join and help with morning worship. As with every over 18's weekend we do we received an extremely warm welcome and we sat down to a very special lunch that we shared with the whole congregation. I sat next to two lovely elderly ladies who were like walking talking Sky Sports News, as their hobby was watching any sport. They could tell me exactly where and when Andy Murray's next tournament was and

probably the pros and cons about Alex Ferguson's squad rotation system. I've now got both their phone numbers.

This was an amazing weekend for two reasons. Firstly it was a privilege to be invited into others peoples place of worship and come out with a better understanding of them. Religion takes a lot of bad press these days and it was nice for us to go a learn about the Hindu, Sikh or Muslim person that you sit next to on the bus or stand next to on the train, because for sure a better understanding of each other can only help us to live together in the right way. A massive thank you must go to Eleanor and Elisabeth Hollindrake for organising the visits, the accommodation (and all the food and home comforts in it!!!) and the members of the Temple, Gurdwara, Mosque and Horton Moravian Church for welcoming us (and feeding us!) over the weekend. Secondly, despite us having left Summer Camp many years ago, the youth of our church still keep strong bonds and ties regardless of the distance between us. Kid you not, owing to various commitments there could well have been a least double the number of people in attendance this weekend and this is a great thing. If you don't believe me, ask a certain lady in her early hundreds at Horton Church, who was brought to tears on seeing so many of the Moravian youth together and enjoying experiences such as the wonderful one we had this weekend.

*Phil Ferdinand*



# Open Book

## 1 PETER

The first epistle of Peter is probably the oldest letter in the New Testament, written before the church had organised itself into different orders of ministry. There were only Apostles and elders. Apostles were originally witnesses to the resurrection although others were included in the title later on. Elders were people who were respected in the community as authorities because of their character, their knowledge and their ability and included women as well as men. Although deacons are mentioned in the early church in Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, 1 - 6, their job was a practical one, looking after the needy and freeing up the apostles to deal with matters of a more spiritual nature. The First letter of Peter is listed among the 'General Epistles', probably because it was among those accepted as genuine by the church generally at a time when other epistles and gospels, claiming to be the writings of the apostles, were vying for acceptance as Scripture. Examples can be found in the New Testament Apocrypha. But there were still those who doubted whether Peter was the author because the letter is written in some of the best Greek in the New Testament whereas Peter was an Aramaic speaking fisherman. The answer to that particular problem is found in chapter 5, verse 12, where it is stated that the letter was actually written by Sylvanus, a faithful brother. Sylvanus was a Roman citizen and as such would have been well educated in both Latin and Greek. He is also known by the name of Silas and is probably the same person who went with Paul on his missionary journeys. (See the closing verses of Acts chapter 15). Paul also used a writer for his letters because of his poor eyesight. (Galatians 6, 11.) This epistle was written originally for a group of churches in Asia Minor, all of whom

THE GENUINENESS OF THE BELIEVERS' FAITH IS 'MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD WHICH PERISHES'

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 7

could have been visited in a round trip, but it soon became common property. It is addressed to the strangers or exiles who lived in the various places mentioned in chapter 1 verse 1. This really means that as Christians, we are all strangers on the earth, just passing through on the way to our ultimate destination. There is emphasis placed on the coming again of Christ, which is one of the characteristics of early preaching, and the letter was obviously written at a time when the followers of Christ were undergoing persecution for their faith.

At this time it was a crime to be a Christian in the Roman Empire and the punishment was death by being torn to pieces by wild animals or rolled in pitch and set alight to illuminate the emperor's garden. A great deal had to be done in secret but Christians were suspect because of their communion service, which was interpreted as cannibalism and their lovefeasts which were said to be sex orgies. It was in order to encourage the believers to keep the faith in circumstances like this that the letter was originally written and it may well have been taken to its destinations by Sylvanus himself.

The word 'precious' occurs frequently throughout the letter. In

chapter 1, verse 7, the genuineness of the believers' faith is 'more precious than gold which perishes,' and in verse 19, believers are ransomed,' not with gold or silver that perishes but with the precious blood of Christ'. In chapter 2 verse 4, Jesus is described as 'a living stone, rejected by people but in the sight of God, chosen and precious.' This statement is backed up in verse 6 by a quotation from the Old Testament describing a 'corner stone chosen and precious.' The word is used again in verse 7 in the same context but it is not translated that way in some modern versions. An often recurring word in chapter 1 is 'glory' and the underlying message is that where there is no suffering, there is no glory. Just as Jesus obtained glory through his suffering, so also will those who follow his example.

In chapter 2 verse 11, Peter reminds his hearers once again that they are strangers and exiles on the earth and urges them to behave in such a way that their accusers will have no true charge to lay against them. They are to be good citizens, even in an empire ruled by Nero and they are to honour him! Slaves are encouraged to be good servants even if they are unjustly treated, for in so doing they will be following in the footsteps of Jesus who 'suffered even though he committed no sin neither was there any deceit found in his mouth.'

Chapter three begins with some advice to wives and husbands. Wives are encouraged to set an example to their husbands, so that if they are unbelievers, they may be won over to Christianity. The wearing of jewellery, hair styles and fashionable clothes is discouraged in favour of a gentle and quiet spirit. Husbands are encouraged to be understanding and to honour their wives as the weaker vessel. Finally everyone is called upon to live

in unity and brotherly love with a tender heart and a loving spirit, being ready to suffer for doing good because in God's sight that is better than being punished for doing wrong.

Chapter 3, verses 18 to 21 are described as being among the most difficult in the Bible to understand and are thought by some to be a misprint. They gave rise to the words, 'He descended into hell' in the Apostles' Creed. Hell is more accurately described as Hades, the place of departed spirits in Hebrew thought. The passage is linked with verse 6 in chapter 4 which pursues the same theme. Some commentaries don't make any attempt to deal with these verses.

Chapter 4 continues with further encouragement in the face of suffering. Chapter 5 begins in an interesting way because Peter describes himself as an elder here instead of an Apostle, bringing himself to the same level as those to whom he is writing. (Compare with chapter 1 verse 1.) The greetings at the end of the chapter mention 'She who is at Babylon'. This may refer to the church in Rome, Babylon being the code name for Rome. It may refer to Peter's wife who, according to tradition, was with him in Rome at this time. Mark may refer to John Mark, the gospel writer and missionary with Paul and Barnabas or it may actually be Peter's son. The kiss of love in the last verse turned out to be something of a mixed blessing and was eventually phased out and replaced with hugs and handshakes as in the church today. The words from Chapter 5, verse 6 onwards, survive in the service of Compline to the present time.

Peter Gubi

# The Faith and Order and Inter-Church Relations Committee

I can imagine some would find the work of the Faith and Order Committee a bit boring and somewhat dull as much of that work is routine and rather mundane. My Book of Order says the function of the Committee "is to advise the Province on questions of faith and order and inter-church relations" - so that is it in a nutshell!

Perhaps I need to remind you that the Faith and Order Committee is also the Inter-Church Relations Committee and so we keep a watch on what is happening among our Christian brothers and sisters in the other denominations through inter-denominational committees which adds to the importance of our work and widens our horizons and interest levels.

There is quite a number of inter-denominational committees on which we are represented but from some we just receive minutes and are kept informed of any developments and changes. These committees include Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Churches Together in England (CTE), the CTE Free Church Group (FCG),

The CTE Theology and Unity Group (TUG), The CTE Group for Local Unity (GLU), Church of England/Moravian Church relations, Church of Ireland/Moravian Church Contact Group, and the Irish Council of Churches (ICC).

Faith and Order matters with which we have been concerned in the three meetings so far during the inter-synodal period have included reminding the Province through the Ministers' Conference of the 1994 Synod resolution about children and

Holy Communion. Also we have tried to encourage a better understanding of the meaning of Communion.

A part of our work through two sub-committees has been the production of the new worship book which was published in April 2011. The Liturgy book has been widely accepted and it is hoped that once the Tune Book is available the new Hymn book will also.

A certificate of Adult Baptism has been approved and also a format for the registration of Confirmations. The Committee is seeking to have a fresh and up-to-date article on the church written for Wikipedia. We have also been fully involved in the on-going discussions about Acolytes and their possible use in the British Province.

From time to time the Committee receives enquiries - one recent one being to do with confirmation and church membership and the payment of the provincial assessment. We know we will have to look at changes in the marriage laws with regard to "same sex" marriages and the registration of church buildings.

Then also we plan to look at additional liturgies which might become known as the "Loose leaf Liturgies". That is those used not regularly but only occasionally.

Please pray for the work of the Faith and Order and Inter-Church Relations Committee which is being served by Br David Newman and Srs Jan Mullin and Gloria David (elected by Synod - one vacancy) and Sr Sarah Groves (PEC ex officio), Br Phil Cooper (PEC ecumenical adviser) and me....

John McOwat Ep. Fra.  
(ex officio & Chairman)

# Congregation News

## Brockweir

The congregation has been saddened recently by the death of Bryan Kenneth Harris who died on the 18th March after a short illness. Hundreds of people attended his funeral with most having to stand outside the church and this more than anything else demonstrated how loved and respected he was. Bryan has probably done more than anyone over the years to maintain the fabric of the church, Sunday school and manse. He recently renewed the joists and floorboards in the church porch, as we were in danger of disappearing into a large void and possibly the river! He was a wonderful support to Mary and our thoughts and prayers are with her, Joshua and the immediate family.

Sharing our minister Thom Stapleton with Kingswood necessitates the use of occasional lay preachers and retired ministers and it is something we usually enjoy as it helps to make us ecumenical in outlook. Occasionally the best laid plans of mice and men go astray and a preacher forgets to turn up and the church committee begins to look worried. This happened on March 24th and a few minutes before 6:00 p.m. members went into a huddle! Most members will take part in a service when they are called upon to do so and a few have actually completed the lay preachers course under the careful guidance of Br. Peter Gubi. You can therefore imagine our relief when Sr. Carol Ostler pulled out of her handbag a pre-prepared service. Sr. Sue Groves agreed to read the seventh order of worship whilst Carol concentrated on the sermon and announcing the hymns.

Another member read additional prayers of intercession. The service evolved as it went along and though the regular congregation are used to such events happening and take it in their stride, we were concerned whether the visitors amongst us would appreciate the impromptu nature of things. We needn't have worried because a few days later we heard that they had felt quite 'humbled' that members of a small congregation had been prepared to step in and replace the organised preacher. It all goes to show that if you share a minister, be prepared, for you never know when you'll need to pull a service out of a hat or handbag!

Holy Week is always a poignant time in the church calendar but this year has been especially sorrowful, as we've wanted to support Mary in her bereavement. Each evening we've gathered for the readings, all taking part and singing the traditional hymns as we journeyed to Christ's crucifixion and joyful resurrection. Maundy Thursday provided a welcome return for Br. Dennis Monger who is celebrating 50 years association with Brockweir and he was minister here for a number of years. The affection with which we hold him needs no explanation and his ministry with us has been remarkable. On Good Friday and Easter Day Br Stapleton took both services and as always they were well planned and extremely thoughtful. It was a delight to have Holy Communion on Easter Sunday and the Easter bunny made an appearance after the service.

*Judith Ashton*

## Gracehill, Ballymena

We welcomed Sr. Sarah Groves, Christopher and her family on Sunday, 4th September 2011 and we wish them all a happy time of fellowship and friendship with us all at Gracehill and in the Irish District.

Br. Roy Douglas retired as Treasurer and we thank him for his many years of hardwork in this post. We welcome Br. Lawrence Greer as our new financial controller.

Br. Billy Kitson organised a very successful auction in August for Church Building Funds and we thank him for all his hardwork.

Special events included the Harvest Service conducted by Canon Stuart Lloyd, Rector of St. Patricks Church of Ireland, Ballymena. We in Gracehill know how to eat and we all had a super harvest lunch provided by Br. and Sr. Gillen and helpers.

Seven Towers Male Voice Choir held a concert in our Hall on 14th October and again this was a huge success.

Our annual Congregation Council Meeting was held in October and was well attended.

Christmas celebrations started with the switch-on of Christmas lights by Sr. Sarah on 7th December. Carols by Candlelight, led by the Methodist Church Choir and our own Sr. Rachel Hamilton on the clarinet was held on 9th December. Our Church was full to capacity for the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve and Br. and Sr. Clarke's

pet lamb, Charlie, helped to entertain the children. Christmas Day and Watchnight Services were also well attended.

During 2011 Sr. Maud Reid, Br. John Montgomery and Br. Leslie Bell passed away. Br. Leslie was remembered as a boy helping to 'pump' the church organ for Sunday services. They will all be sadly missed.

In November we welcomed Bobby McCormick into Church membership through infant baptism.

January, 8th 2012 was our Family Lovefeast which included a review of events during 2011 with a slide show with some very familiar faces.

Sr. Roberta Gray and her husband Charlie, organised a very successful meal at Monty's restaurant and raised nearly £1300 in January.

We have welcomed 3 new members into Church membership - Br. John Clarke and Br. Billy and Sr. Betty Greer. Congratulations to Mark McAuley and Catherine Martin who announced their engagement recently.

On a sad note, we were all saddened to learn of the death of a very dear friend of the congregation, Sr. Mary-Ann Edwards who was a regular attender of the congregation over many years. Her smile and laughter will be missed by all her many friends here in Gracehill.

*Sally Weir*

## Fairfield, Droylsden

In 2010 Tameside was awarded Best City in the UK by Britain in Bloom, the RHS then nominated Tameside to represent the UK in the Entente Florale Europe competition. Whilst this is an international horticultural competition, it looks for projects that can be seen to be improving the quality of life for its residents. On 1st August the 10 inspectors from all over Europe arrived in Tameside and one of the areas visited was Fairfield. The awards took place in Slovenia on 16th September and Tameside was awarded a silver plaque. Fairfield's residents deserve a pat on the back for their efforts in making Fairfield look so beautiful for the judges' visit.

Still on the subject of "Flora" I would like to offer the congregations thanks to the children of the Sunday School who last year planted some 200 daffodil and narcissus bulbs in the Burial Ground, hard work of course; but thanks to their kindness a few of the more mature in years members avoided back ache and stiff knees!

On the subject of our children and young people I would like to single them out for some praise; as well as the bulb planting exercise they are very active in all our events and worship. They hold their own fund raising events organise trips out, lead Café Church provide us with a Nativity play and on a personal note they turn up to serve food and clear up crockery at such events as the Heritage Weekend and Christmas Fair. Oh the blessed relief of having a few young legs to run up and down stairs and hallways! Having said that it's only fair to mention that my most reliable "kitchen

hand" is amongst the older end of the congregation- he even brings his own apron and marigolds.

On Saturday 28th January 2012 we gathered in the college building to say goodbye to Richard and Gillian Ingham. The evening approached and as is always the case at times like this the event was upon us before we knew it and we could no longer ignore the very real fact that the time had come for Richard and Gillian to leave Fairfield.

Approximately 100 members and friends congregated in the College where they enjoyed a Hot Pot supper and were entertained by songs from the choir and amusing readings from Sr Kelshaw, Sr Openshaw and Br Ellwood.

Richard and Gillian were presented with a cheque and flowers and then Richard addressed the gathering. In his speech Richard mentioned that during his 8 years at Fairfield he had conducted 96 Christenings, 85 weddings and 55 funerals. So we can certainly say that he has left a lot of people in the area with many poignant memories. The evening was a great success and left everyone with the opportunity to have a happy time in what is for Fairfield a sad occasion.

We will of course be kept up to date with Richard and Gillian's future well being as they have left us with a wonderful legacy of a good helping of their lovely family here at Fairfield.

They are in our prayers.

*Margery Sutcliffe*

## Swindon, Wiltshire

Youth work continues here in Swindon with weekly meetings of Beavers, Toddler group and Sunday school.

Two of our teenagers joined (and very much enjoyed) the youth weekend in Ockbrook and are looking forward to Summer Camp later in the year.

During March we held our Spring Fayre, selling cakes, plants, gifts, and providing children's crafts and games. This brought many people into the church and raised over £300.

Members also helped with lent lunches, serving a lunch of soup, cheese and bread, with donations going to Christian Aid and Cafod.

*Sandy Mundy*

## CONGREGATION REGISTERS

### DEATH

26th Feb ☐ **Kathleen Mary Truelove** ☐☐☐  
aged 93 ☐

*Baildon*

9th Feb ☐ **William (Bill) Shelton** ☐

*Lower Wyke*

6th Mar ☐ **Emma Wood** ☐

*Lower Wyke*



# Provincial Diary for May

## May

9/10	PEC, BMB, Unitas Estates Meetings	The PEC
11/12	Irish District MWA Retreat	
16	Renewal Committee, Hall Green	Sr Groves
16	Trustees meeting with Fulneck Governors	The PEC
18	Mailing of Synod documents from Church House	
20	Eastern District Conference and Fellowship afternoon	Br Hopcroft
23	Synod briefing meeting, Fulneck	The PEC
28	Ockbrook School Governors	Br Hopcroft
30	Western District Conference, Kingswood, 6.00pm	Sr Taylor

## June

2/9	European Continental Provincial Synod	
8/11	Provincial Synod, Swanwick	
19	PEC, BMB, Unitas Estates Meetings	The PEC
23	Provincial Men's Fellowship Day, Blackbird Leys	

## PRAYER NOTES

6th May - Visakha Puja/Buddha Day (Buddhist)

10th May - Lag B'Omer (Jewish)

17th May - Ascension Day (Christian)

23rd May - Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)

24th May - All Ascension Day (Orthodox Christian)

27th May - Pentecost (Christian)

27th - 28th May - Shavuot (Jewish)

### A Prayer for Ascension

*O Lord, Your Ascension into heaven marks the culmination of the Paschal Mystery, and it contains an important teaching for us. May we live life as an earthly reality and develop our human potential to the fullest. May we make use of the results of science to achieve a better life on this planet. But in our best moments we know that there must be more than all of this, a transcending Reality. As Christians, we know that this Reality is Your loving Father Who awaits us with You and the Holy Spirit. Where You have gone, we ultimately will come - if we are faithful.*

*New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book*

### A Collect for Ascension

O God, whose blessed Son, our great high priest, has entered once for all into the Holy Place and ever liveth to intercede on our behalf: grant that we, sanctified by the offering of his body may draw near with full assurance of faith by the way which he has dedicated for us and evermore serve thee, the living God; through the same thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen. Church of South India

### A Meditation for Pentecost

When was the last time that we heard the wind of your Spirit roar through this place? When was the last time your fire lit up this room? When was the last time we took you at your word and met together in expectation of your Spirit filling this place and these lives with your Glory and Power? Lord, you challenge us with Pentecost. Do we believe that this was a once in eternity experience never to be repeated? That the Holy Spirit was poured out on your followers for a single purpose and ended His work at that instant? If so, then maybe that is why the Church seems so powerless in this age helpless when faced with the needs both spiritual and physical that we see in the world. Lord, as we meet together and celebrate once again the memory of that first Pentecost may it be for us as it was then a moment of empowerment an awareness of your Glory in this dark world a life changing experience.

### A Prayer for Pentecost

*Come, thou Holy Spirit, come: And from thy celestial home send thy light and brilliancy. Come, thou father of the poor, come who givest all our store, come the soul's true radiancy. Come, of comforters the best, of the soul the sweetest guest, sweetly and refreshingly. Come, in labour rest most sweet, shade and coolness in the heat, comfort in adversity. Thou who art the Light most blest, come fulfill their inmost breast, who believe most faithfully. For without thy Godhead's dower, man hath nothing in his power, save to work iniquity. What is filthy make thou pure, what is wounded work its cure, water what is parched and dry. Gently bend the stubborn will, warm to life the heart that's chill, guide who goeth erringly. Fill thy faithful who adore, and confess thee evermore, with thy sevenfold mystery. Here thy grace and virtue send, grant salvation in the end, and in heaven felicity. Amen. (Latin Hymn, 13th century)*

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