

moravian messenger

JANUARY 2020



New Year, New Challenge



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Before Advent I participated in the St Basils Big Sleepout. St Basils is a Birmingham based charity and housing association that supports young people aged 16-25 who are homeless, vulnerable or at risk. Every year, amongst other fundraising activities, they host a sleepout which attracts hundreds of people.

"People volunteer to 'rough it' for a night so that sponsorship money can be raised to help prevent youth homelessness; in short to prevent young people from having to do this for real. This event is not an exercise in 'what it's like to be homeless', it is a fundraising event that also helps raise the awareness of homeless issues to the wider community." <https://stbasils.org.uk/help-us/sleepout-tsandcs/>

So why did I volunteer to sleep in a cardboard box on a winter's night? The main reason was to raise money for a local charity that does so much good work for young people. Having worked with young people who are 'looked after' I am aware of the number of young

people who leave social care with no support and end up sleeping rough on the streets.

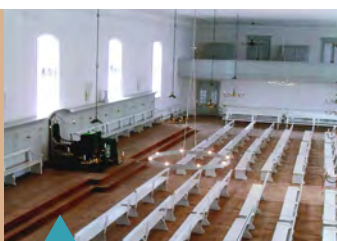
The evening started out very pleasantly, however the temperature dropped to -2C overnight. There was a brass band playing carols, a local Sikh charity provided food and I spent the time chatting to other 'campers'. At 11.30pm we all assembled in the Cathedral for a presentation of prizes for the 'Most decorated box' and a short service of carols led by the Bishop of Birmingham Rt Rev David Urquhart. We then left the Cathedral to bed down for the night. I was very well wrapped up with layers of socks and gloves etc.; my sleeping bag was very warm, but I was not used to sleeping on a hard, cold surface. I was also very surprised at the noise in the city centre so late in the night. The emergency vehicle sirens, car horns and shouting from night clubbers was relentless. The Cathedral square was fenced off for the night and there were security staff employed to keep us safe, but this made me all the more aware of the dangers

for people who have to sleep rough.

After a lot of tossing, turning and readjusting covers I finally dozed off only to be awakened half an hour later by people packing up their 'homes' as the recycling van would be collecting the boxes shortly. I pulled myself back into the cold night air and packed up my few belongings. Before leaving the square, I called back into the Cathedral which had been open all night. I sat in the pews and reflected on the night. I was suddenly overcome with emotion and sat and bawled my eyes out at the injustice of the world. I was able to go home to a nice hot bath and warm bed and NOT have to repeat this the following night, or any other night, how lucky I was!

The second reason for doing the 'Big Brum Sleepout' was to do something out of my comfort zone. This isn't the first time I have done something a little different. In 2008 when I lived in Gomersal, West Yorkshire, I participated in a 50ft abseil with two amazing women, Srs Angela Horsfall and Victoria Wright. We raised money for Gomersal Moravian Church and two other charities. The hardest part for me was

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Editorial

Due to the Christmas holidays and printing deadlines I am writing this January editorial before the General Election on 12th December. It feels like I am looking into a void with no idea of what lies ahead; will the future be red, blue or orange or a hung parliament? Of course, when you read this you will know the political landscape and the news media in all its various forms will be carrying out their running commentary on all of it. I do not expect that the election will solve all our problems or even bind our country together again. There are too many deep divisions that have been forced into the open by the Brexit debate and by our differing world views.

I recently took a friend from Continental Europe on a tour of the peace walls of Belfast. In truth they are anything but peaceful, they separate communities on the basis of their political and religious affiliation, and they are designed to protect each community from the other. My friend was shocked. These walls enforce peace rather than build peace and they are easier to put up than they are to break down. Walls are used or proposed around the world to separate people from people on the basis of threat, real or perceived. They are the symptom of a world in which division and polarisation is becoming more and more marked.

It is too easy to fall into an us and them, or us'uns and them'uns, as they say on this side of the Irish Sea. The other is to blame for everything, their opinion is not worth listening to and they don't care about us and we think that our opinion means nothing to them. Them'uns may be a different denomination, different religion, different ethnic

background or more likely at the moment a different political or social/sexual persuasion to us. A major task for us as individual Christians and for us as a world-wide denomination is how to reach across the barriers and make peace within the Church and be a model to those outside the Church.

Christ comes to us in an act of reconciliation from God and he makes peace for us and with us through the horror and shame of the cross. The divide between heaven and earth is bridged at his birth, the curtain separating the holiest of holies from the worshippers in the temple is torn open at his death¹ and in his resurrection he gives us the possibility of a new life lived in and through him. If God is determined to reconcile the world to himself then as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be part of that reconciliation. We may not agree with others on their perspective, but they cannot be them'uns to us, but only ever those whom God loved so much that he sent his Son to save and restore just like us. The amazing thing is that Jesus calls us to share in this mission to the world and so all of us have a ministry of reconciliation². A great way to start and to continue in this New Year would be to reach out hands of friendship across what ever divide you find most difficult.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

1 Matthew 27:51

2 2 Corinthians 5:18



© Sr Sarah Groves

Letters to the Editorial Team

I read with some surprise the letter on child poverty by Br Alan Holdsworth in the November Messenger. He can be assured that the congregation at Ballinderry have not procrastinated on this issue for nine years and I think that other congregations would be in the same position. We have made a special endeavour to aid our local food bank and other groups dealing with this issue every week for many years. This work is not only with the local population but recently arrived immigrants etc. who find things especially hard as they have no family support. As a small rural congregation, we effectively match and surpass the quantities collected from the much larger congregations in Lisburn City.

We should all recognise that constant action on the ground is necessary and legislation from whatever political source will grind along before anything truly effective may be achieved. All parties have followed a road paved with good intentions. Better to be a tenacious congregation having some immediate effect on people's daily lives.

Br Henry Wilson
Ballinderry

Sustainability Review

Recently, I did my duty as a member of the Congregation and attended the meeting called by Synod under the above heading. There were just above ten percent of our membership there, including two of the six-member Church Committee. The independent chairman dragged us through a SWOT agenda, looking at the Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of our current position as a Congregation.

The results of this review and of similar reviews in the other Congregations in the Province will now be considered by a Synod Committee set up for the purpose. I am very much afraid that little will be achieved other than some tinkering round the edges. The last such exercise simply resulted in shuffling up all the Synod Committees, giving them new titles with slight differences in their areas of responsibility and a limit on how many Committees an individual member could serve on.

My solution would be for Synod to rule that, as soon as possible (and I realise that this is a long-term solution) future entrants to the Ministry should be as non-stipendiary, part time, ministers; a 'Tent-making' ministry on the lines of St. Paul.

With brotherly love,
Br Malcolm Healey
Fulneck

A Visit to Christiansfeld



© Sr Claire Summers

The photograph opposite the text for Friday 20th September in the Daily Watchwords, is Christiansfeld. Little did I think I'd see the only Moravian Settlement in Denmark this year.

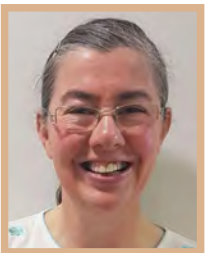
In 1982 I did my elective during my Medical Training in Sikonge, Tanzania and met Danish Missionaries. I have kept in touch with two each Christmas. Last Christmas one of them invited me to her summerhouse on the west coast of Denmark. As Denmark is flat, I thought I would see some of the country by bike. So, I flew from Manchester and hired a bike. In easy stages I went across the country. A stretch needed to be done by train, as there is only a most impressive motorway bridge and a railway tunnel and bridge linking Copenhagen's large island to the rest of the country. I got off the train and headed for Christiansfeld on a more country road. I stayed in the hotel where kings had stayed in the past and seemed to arrive when there was a wedding reception. I then made for the museum that was in the former sisters' house. This was most interesting and included a display about Jørgen Bøytler whom I have met in Tanzania who is now the Unity Board Administrator. I also saw a collection of artefacts from around the world and the church room in the sisters' house. I walked round the Settlement that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and onto God's Acre. This is having a lot of work done at the moment, but all the stones are the same and just slightly raised at one end to allow the Danish rain to run off. They are much like those at Gracehill in Northern Ireland! The next day I attended the morning service - all in Danish of course with two 16 year old boys taking turns on the organ. Then I had a catch up with Jørgen and his wife Ellen over coffee. The afternoon was spent on a little cycle tour, before going to meet another person I had met in 1982; Kirsten Thomsen who worked at the Bible School for many years and now lives in the widows' house that is a series of apartments for all, not just widows. We reminisced and then continued over

supper with two missionaries who had just returned from Sikonge. I really enjoyed my visit and also the honey cakes made in the Bakery in the Settlement!

I then cycled on further west, stopping at a couple of places and having time to look around various churches. I even paddled in the North Sea! I then cycled north behind the large sea wall and near the Rinkøbing Fjord to meet Ellen Delgard Jensen, the nurse I first met in 1982. She made me most welcome and again we reminisced a lot. We took a walk along the sandy beach and stopped at bunkers used to defend the coast in the war. We then visited some sand sculptures, a feature each year, and the theme this year was robots, giving much food for thought. I met her two sisters who have an adjacent holiday cottage and each like Ellen had been married to a minister. The next day we attended church in a nearby town, where the collection, by coincidence, was for the Danish Mission Board that supported the missionaries in Sikonge. After an excellent fish lunch, we looked around a museum about the local fishing industry. I did a little cycle ride that evening to get close to the local light house.

The next day it was back to Copenhagen on the train. I had a full day in the city before returning to Manchester and managed to pack in three bus tours and a boat trip. I can thoroughly recommend a trip to Christiansfeld and why not see some more of the country, from the slow lane - the Danes make cycle lanes separate from the cars and you get priority at lights and roundabouts and nearly everyone can speak to you in English!!

Sr Claire Summers
Diaspora



New Year, New Challenge continued

stepping off the roof, leaning out and putting my trust in the ropes holding me.

When I offered myself for ministry in the church, I was out of my comfort zone. I questioned myself continually 'Who was I to presume I was suitable for a call to ministry?'. The process and subsequent training at Northern College alongside students from other denominations showed us that we all have gifts for ministry, though not all the same. Our mantra was 'God doesn't call the equipped; God equips those He calls'. Throughout my training I experienced so many powerful moments of being in the right place that I knew that I was doing exactly what God wanted me to do. I was stepping out and putting my trust in God.

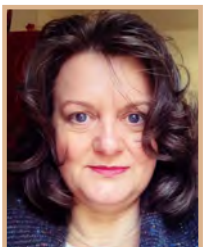
Many times, our faith is tested but may be not as much as Hagar, Abraham's second wife. At the request of Sarah, Hagar conceived a child with Abraham but ran away after being treated cruelly by Sarah. Hagar's faith kept her strong in the face of starvation and homelessness. An angel of God spoke to Hagar and told her to return to her mistress, despite the consequences. Hagar remained strong and faithful to God and gave birth to a son called Ishmael.

New Year is a time for making resolutions. How many of you make yourself promises on the 1st January only to have broken them by the 2nd? Every year when I was younger, I made a promise to stop biting my nails, I think I lasted an hour! So, what is the point of making promises that are

usually broken so easily?

Why not just rip up those empty promises and instead challenge yourself to do something out of your comfort zone? Go on that holiday by yourself, start a new hobby, enquire about ministry, the possibilities are endless. Go with faith, be tested, be challenged and know that God goes with you.

Sr Lorraine Shorten
Minister at Hall Green
United Community
Church and Leominster
Moravian Church



What is Ordained Ministry in the British Moravian Church?

Extracts from the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum and the Book of Order of the British Province, compiled by the Faith and Order Committee.

The Moravian Church recognises the priesthood of all believers. That means that all members share in the life and work of the congregation and have equal standing. But in practice in each congregation certain members are given specific tasks because of their aptitude and skills, and these roles include Church Committee and Eldership, Treasurer, musicians and Youth and Children's Workers.

The Moravian Church also has specifically appointed ministers who are called and ordained to serve the Church. The ministry of those who are ordained is an expression of the ministry of the whole people of God. It is seen as a response to the call and gifts of Christ, who Moravians understand as the Chief Elder of the church.

The Moravian Church has a three-fold order of ministry, that of Deacons, Presbyters and Bishops. The orders of ministry are expressions of service rather than rank. Only one is recognised as having authority in himself: Jesus Christ who also served.

Those who are ordained are authorised to administer the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. Following ordination, one becomes a Deacon and this is a period of supervised ministry. Following satisfactory evaluation and further study Synod approves a proposal that the Deacon be consecrated a Presbyter. In the service of consecration, the Church spiritually encourages the Deacon, recognises their professional and spiritual maturity and affirms their ministry since ordination, and the Deacon gives witness to the Christian faith and rededicates him/herself to the ordained ministry.

Service and Mission

The ordained minister, whether Deacon, Presbyter or Bishop is never considered the head of the congregation, but often serves as the congregation's mouth, hands, and feet as the church bears witness to the love of Christ. The ordained minister is solely a servant to the Lord, ministering to Christ by serving the congregation and its neighbours. In this role of servant, he or she is called together with the Congregation Committee to lead the congregation with Godly conduct essential to effective ministry. Ordained ministers are also called to maintain within the congregation the structure and order provided by Provincial and Unity Synods.

The ordained minister, with the congregation, is called to fulfil the mission of the Church which is proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom; teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers; responding to human need by loving service; seeking to transform unjust structures of society; and safeguarding the integrity of creation, sustaining and renewing the life of the earth.

Call System

The ordained minister remains a servant of Christ and the church as a whole, not merely of the congregation to which he or she is called. Even as Jesus Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister, so his servants should be willing to minister wherever the church calls them under the leading of the Holy Spirit. In calling a minister, the Provincial Board take into account not only the needs of the particular office, and the suitability

of the individual, but also the needs of the Province as a whole.

Those in the non-stipendiary ministry exercise their ministry through service in a particular congregation or district to which they have been called by the Provincial Board. They will not be called to move away from home in order to exercise this ministry, unless they offer so to move.

Conduct

To be ordained as a minister means to be under the order and authority of the church. Every person in church service must observe the regulations enacted by the Provincial Synod and obey the direction of the church boards authorised by it.

The ordained minister must be knowledgeable about the Moravian understanding of the role of ministry and live and act accordingly. The personal character of ministers must be such as to support the word they teach, and such as shall in truth and love win the support of their brothers and sisters, so that they can firmly and kindly help individual souls and wisely lead in common worship and church life.

From the personal nature of the minister's work, it is most important that his or her spouse be in full sympathy with that work.

Selection and Training

The requirements for any form of church service are: a love of Christ and wholehearted devotion to his kingdom; a readiness to carry out the duties of ministerial office as set out in the Book of Order; the ability to follow an approved course of study.

Applications to enter church service are made to the Provincial Board stating the applicant's qualifications and reasons for applying. Applications are examined by the Church Service Committee, who report to the Provincial Board. The final decision to accept an applicant for training for the ministry rests with the Provincial Board.

For those who are accepted for training for the ministry, courses of preparation and training are prescribed according to the needs of the applicant at an approved college or university, under the direction of the Provincial Board and with the advice of the Church Service Committee. In addition, instruction is given in Moravian Church history, doctrine, tradition and practices, and polity. Candidates are allowed to continue their course of training only so long as they make satisfactory progress and prove themselves in all respects fitted for their calling.

Ordination

The Provincial Board has the authority to commission ordination. In extending such a commission they are guided by careful consideration of the spiritual, mental and physical qualifications of the candidate for ordination. The Provincial Board also designates the Bishop who is to officiate in this act.

Ministers may also be received from other denominations and in that case the Provincial Board is free to receive them as a Deacon or Presbyter as it deems appropriate.

For further reading please see the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (COUF) sections 682-693, and the Book of Order of the British Province sections 22-25.

One Plus One

(A United Reformed Church Publication)

First in a new series on Understanding Marriage in the 21st Century

Now that British law has made it possible for people to enter into same-sex marriages and the civil partnerships of heterosexual couples, many churches are looking afresh at their understanding of relationships, human sexuality and marriage. The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church have been through a process of examining these things in detail and the Church of England has been doing the same thing.

We have been asked by the Provincial Faith & Order & Ecumenical Relations Committee to write a series of articles based largely on the United Reformed Church (URC) booklet, 'One Plus One: Thinking Together About Marriage (Second Edition)', produced by the URC in 2014.

One reason for writing this series of articles is in response to a proposal that was passed by Provincial Synod 2018, which recommended that we, as a church, continue to reflect theologically and try to discern the will of God on these issues. It was suggested that the Provincial Faith & Order & Ecumenical Relations Committee might reflect on the theology and ethics underpinning the institution of marriage. As we do so we must remember that we are a Province within the worldwide Moravian Church (the Unity), and that human sexuality is an issue of disagreement. Some members and Provinces take a more liberal stance on it and others a more traditional/conservative view.

A second reason for writing this series is motivated by pastoral concerns. Some ministers within the British Province have been approached about officiating at same sex marriages and blessings, including using our church buildings to hold these services. There are gay and lesbian people and same sex couples who are members of our congregations, and others who are attending our worship services and other activities. It is likely that, both as individuals and as a church, we will be asked what our church's position is on same sex marriage and other matters concerning human

sexuality. It is therefore important that we continue to reflect on these issues, so that we can offer guidance and support to all our members and respond to these situations in a confident, reasoned, pastoral and loving way.

A third reason for writing this series is motivated by ecumenical considerations. The Moravian Church is a member of Churches Together in England (CTE). Recently a person was nominated to be a President of CTE (one of six Presidents) who subsequently entered into a same sex marriage. Some member churches could not agree with the appointment of this person due to their beliefs about same sex relationships and marriage. This led to a process of prayerful discernment, during which all member churches were consulted. Following this process of discernment, it was decided that this position should be left vacant, i.e. there should be an empty chair among the Presidents, for the current term of office. A press release from CTE on matter says:

"This empty chair represents the lack of agreement within the churches in England regarding human sexuality, and the reality that this dimension of the churches' pilgrimage together is not yet complete."

The Society of Friends (Quakers) conducts same sex marriages. The URC has authorised local congregations to decide for themselves whether they wish to register their building for same sex marriages. 'One Plus One' was published before this decision was made by the URC and was part of the process that led to this decision. The Methodist Church has recently embarked upon a national year of discussion and discernment. The Church of England has been discussing the matter of human sexuality for many years and in 2020 hopes to publish study material, which will look at marriage, relationships and sexuality. It should also be remembered that our church is a member of a number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships (joint congregations) with the churches mentioned above.

The aim of 'One Plus One' is to outline the personal, pastoral and theological issues surrounding marriage, in order to enable reflection and discussion on same sex marriage. The introduction begins by simply asking what marriage is, pointing out that definitions do not have to be exclusive and vary across time and cultures. The booklet points out that changes in the understanding of marriage in our own culture has prompted discussion of this matter within the churches.

The booklet states some of the legalities around same sex marriage. In our case, no congregation can register its building for same sex marriages without our Provincial Synod first passing a resolution giving permission for individual congregations to do so. Therefore, at this time, same sex marriages cannot take place in any Moravian Church building or any building which we share with another denomination, even if the building is owned by the other denomination. This is especially important to note in the case of Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

'One Plus One' is made up of a series of papers written by members of a URC task group, split into two sections. The first section consists of papers on the topics of commitment, the Bible and an historical perspective on marriage. The papers in the second section take on a more personal tone.

We hope you find the series of articles we produce both stimulating and helpful.

Brn Martin Smith & Philip Cooper
Ministers at Royton, Salem and Fairfield Congregations



Speaking the Truth in Love

#LINKSLEGACY 400



Br Thompson with the Dean Rev Stephen Forde and his Assistant, Rev Mark Niblock and others attending the service

Br Livingstone Thompson was asked to preach at the Links and Legacy 400th Commemoration Service on 17th November at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. This service was organised by the African and Caribbean Support Organisation in Northern Ireland to commemorate 400 years since the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade. We are grateful to Br Thompson for allowing us to reprint it in the Moravian Messenger.

Ephesians 4:15 - Speaking the Truth in Love ...

Dean Forde, Lord Lieutenant, Pastors and leaders of the African and Caribbean Communities, brothers and sisters, we appreciate the partnership of the Cathedral in the ACONI-led series of activities related to the Links and Legacy project. This service is a moment for pause and reflection after the first round of what we expect to be several rounds designed to raise awareness about the connections between Northern Ireland, African and the transatlantic slave trade.

Over the coming years, leading up to 2024, the end of the UN International Decade of people of African Descent, there are issues of recognition, justice and development that we in Northern Ireland in particular, and Britain and Ireland in general, must face.

Our beloved Britain today loves to boast of its place in the world and its strength, even though it is only a shadow of its relative strength when there was the reliance on African free labour. It is for this reason, Lord Lieutenant, why we are gobsmacked and at a loss to understand why the UK parliament and government say that there's no need for the government to play a leading role in marking the UN International Decade of People of African Descent.

And yet, in another sense we can see through this attitude: it is the same attitude that gave state support to the enslavement of Africans; it is the same attitude that compensated plantation owners at the time of abolition and said to the former enslaved, 'go fend for yourself'; it is the same attitude that created a hostile environment in the UK for people of African Descent.

Why are we here?

We're here today to speak the truth and the message is based on Ephesians 4:15 - 'But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ'. The writer of the epistle is focussed on unity in the body of Christ and sees speaking the truth in love as helpful to secure and nurture that unity in the body of Christ. The same is true for unity in the human community since there can be no unity in the body of Christ when there is disunity in the human community; for there is one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

I recognise that speaking the truth can be difficult and uncomfortable but there are several levels at which we need to speak truth today:

(1) The Personal Level: When we speak of the truth, each of us must consider it personally. As the conviction dawned on me that speaking the truth would be the focus, I was immediately faced with the challenge of admitting that I had at times concealed the truth. This might not be so for you, but I admit that my concealment of truth has hurt people and has ruined relationships. Therefore, I dare not, in this message, and in fact at any time, give the impression that I am standing on some high truth platform from which to speak down to you. I'm at ground level with you, under the challenge of this message to speak the truth in love. If we embrace this challenge, then, we will be thinking of where individually we are now, at this very moment, found wanting. Is there a truth that you and I need now to speak in love, for healing and hope, and for building up one another in Christ?

(2) The Troubles: It would be remiss of me speaking in Northern Ireland (NI) not to recognise the Troubles for what it was and its legacy. The truth is that I do not know a lot about the Troubles and certainly not at the personal level. Those who know better need to judge if we have missed the opportunity for a Truth Commission.

This address recognises the reality of disunity in the human community, expressing itself not only in war between states but in states like NI and Britain where we find inequalities or all sorts within and between communities and the reality of racism and discrimination. The fear and hatred of migrants is something about which we are particularly concerned, as it finds its way into migration policies, institutional practices and public attitudes that reinforce division and make life unnecessarily difficult for some. It is the fear and hatred of migrants and ignorance about why people of African descent are in the UK that led to the Windrush Scandal and the forcible removal of nationals from the UK or the close door policy that prevented their return. It is an epic irony of forced removal in both directions: the forced removal of the fathers and mothers into British territory, albeit captured territory, to take advantage of their free labour and the forced removal of their descendants out of Britain. We must face the truth that the history of Britain has also been a history of rupture of other communities for the benefit of its white majority.

(3) Transatlantic Trade of Enslaved Africans: Speaking of truth and rupture, we need to admit the truth about the transatlantic trading of enslaved Africans. Though 2019 is 400 years after the Dutch began the forced relocation of our forebears to the Americas, the truth is that 57 years before the Dutch venture,

in 1562, British traders had been already similarly involved. The truth is that the British perfected the art of rupture and destruction of African communities for a period of about 250 years. The forced relocation and enslavement were formally outlawed 1833 and came into force in 1834.

We're here today because we must face the truth and speak it in love for memory, healing and hope. It would be reprehensible not to remember the African forebears, whom over that period of time were captured, chained, robbed of their freedom and dignity, treated as cargo and shipped in squalor and dehumanising conditions and forced to work in plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas, without remuneration

There's another truth that we need to speak on this issue of the trading of enslaved Africans. There was strong opposition to it here in NI and that truth must not be forgotten. That opposition prevented Wadell Cunningham from having his way in making Belfast a trading port for enslaved Africans. That opposition enabled organisations here to welcome Equiano and Frederick Douglass, themselves freed from enslavement when it was still being supported by the British Government.

The only pity is that the opposition to the enslavement of Africans didn't extend to arguing for their compensation for at the time of abolition, people on this Island alone held over 16,000 Africans in enslavement. The truth that the British government compensated those plantation owners and gave nothing to the 16,000 from whom so much was taken. That's a shame but that's the truth.

Conclusion

There are those for whom this act of recall is uncomfortable either because of shame or guilt. However, to imagine that we can simply move on, forgetting the injustice, which laid the foundation for the racism that is alive and well in our time, that laid the foundation for the human trafficking that we see today; to avoid a recall of those centuries of injustice would be to reinvent, revise and re-do the injustice to those forebears.

Given the role of enslaved Africans in helping Britain to amass its wealth in 18th and 19th centuries, a wealth that allows modern Britain to boast about its strength in the world, the least we can do is to pause and remember them.

And I say to those who want us to move on, we will move on when the racism of our time ends, for that African tragedy is the foundation of British racism today. I say to them, when modern day slavery ends, we will move on for that enslavement of Africans that is the model for slavery today.

Each generation of people who feel it is ok to be racist must be reminded that this country enslaved black people to build its wealth. That is a shame but that is the truth; and I say it for our awareness with no rancour or bitterness. I say it with love.

Br Livingstone Thompson

Minister at University Road and Kilwarlin Moravian Churches and member of the Provincial Board



Notice of Synod

The Provincial Board hereby give notice that Synod in 2020 will be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick between Thursday 9th July and Monday 13th July 2020 inclusive. Please note that we meet on the Thursday not the Friday as at previous Synods.

The timetable for submission of Credentials, Memorials, Nominations, Proposals and Reports is as follows: -

- 1. Congregation Deputies' Credential Form to be at Church House by 31st March 2020 (2.3.a.3). Deputies will not be expected to bring a copy with them to Synod.**
- 2. Class A Proposals * must be notified to the Provincial Board by 8th April 2020 (2.3.b.1).**
- 3. Class B Proposals * must be notified to the Provincial Board by 20th May 2020 (2.3.b.2).**
- 4. Reports and Memorials must be sent to Church House by 20th May 2020.**
- 5. Nomination Forms for Provincial Board and Provincial Committees to be at Church House by 27th May 2020 (2.4.i.5.1).**

Synod Papers will be distributed and sent out all those attending by 15th June 2020.

Note*:

1. Class A - Proposals that affect and become part of the Book of Order of the Moravian Church in the British Province.
2. Class B - Proposals which are not to be incorporated in the Book of Order of the Moravian Church in the British Province.
3. Proposals which have not been duly notified under the Book of Order 2.3.b.2 above will only be given a place on the Agenda paper if:
 - a. They are regarding matters which have arisen since the last date for the submission of proposals, or
 - b. They are in response to issues current at the time of Synod, or
 - c. They arise at Synod, and
 - d. Synod agrees by show of hands that they be included on the Agenda paper.

The New Creation

The One who sat upon the throne said 'Behold, I make all things new',
Revelation 21.5

Restoring, renewing and preserving the Creation is fundamental to establishing the Kingdom on earth.

The final scenes of St John's great vision in the Book of Revelation show the creation renewed and restored. His vision has moved from the horrors of the sixth seal when the world was collapsing, and everyone was trying to escape from the signs of the broken covenant (Revelation 6.12-17). Then he saw the birth of the Messiah and the battle against the great deceiver of the whole world, who was thrown down with his angels but knew that his time was short (Revelation 12.1-12). Then he saw the Word of God coming from heaven with a sharp sword in his mouth, which is his teaching (Revelation 19.11-16), and finally he saw Him enthroned and proclaiming: 'Behold I make all things new'.

In Hebrew, 'new' and 'renew' are the same word, and so we have a promise that in the Kingdom, all will be restored as it was in the beginning. Or perhaps it means that the Kingdom is the state when all is restored, when God will again see everything he has made, and behold, it will be very good (Genesis 1.31). St John's vision shows us the Garden of Eden restored, just as Jesus had promised: 'To him who conquers, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God' (Revelation 2.7).

*Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play.
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day.*

In the Garden of Eden there was the tree of life whose fruit gave wisdom, as we saw in number 7 of this series. Wisdom joins all things together in harmony, and the great deceiver made the foolish Adam and Eve think that his tree of knowledge was just the same - or even better. The result was pain, toil and death; and the soil was cursed (Genesis 3.17). Wisdom and harmony were lost when human beings turned away from their Creator.

*Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship him in humbleness
O praise him, Hallelujah.*

A river flowed from the Garden of Eden and watered all the known world. Genesis does not say that this was the river of water of life, but it was, and the Old Testament prophets knew that one day it would flow again from the temple and from Jerusalem. Ezekiel saw a great river coming from the temple to irrigate the whole land, and he saw trees of life growing on its banks, with leaves that would heal the nations (Ezekiel 47.1-14). Zechariah saw living waters flowing from Jerusalem on the day that the Lord became King (Zechariah 14.8-9).

The water of life represented teaching. St John described the Word of God coming from heaven with a sword in his mouth, but he also recorded Jesus' teaching when he stood in the temple: 'Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart [which means mind] shall flow rivers of living water"' (John 7.38). Jesus' teaching was the water of life restored to the temple and flowing again.

Jesus also said, 'If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink' (John 7.37), because those who drink the waters of life are able themselves to become channels of the water that is wisdom. The One on the throne in John's vision made the same offer: 'To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment' (Revelation 21.6).

*In wisdom let us grow,
As years and strength are given
That we may serve thy Church below
And join thy saints in heaven*

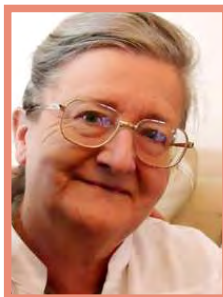
St John saw the new creation as a holy city which was a golden cube set with jewels. What he saw was the holy of holies in the temple, enlarged to a huge size. In Solomon's temple, the holy of holies was a golden cube-shaped room in which was the golden throne of the Lord. It represented the place where He ruled and it was the place of His Presence. St John saw the holy city as the Kingdom coming to earth, to replace the wicked city that had ruled for so long.

St John heard the voice of a mighty angel proclaiming the destruction of Babylon, the wicked city: 'a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit ... and the merchants of the earth have grown rich on the wealth of her wantonness' (Revelation 18.2,3). It was the merchants and money men who mourned the destruction: 'Alas, alas, for the great city ... In one hour all this wealth has been laid waste' (Revelation 18.16, 17). The city had killed the prophets and the saints (Revelation 18.24).

In its place was the holy city, where the waters of life flowed from the throne of God and the Lamb, where the tree of life had leaves for healing the nations, and where the servants of the Lord stood in the light of His Presence, saw His face, and worshipped (Revelation 22.1-5).

*For Thee, my God, the living God,
My thirsty soul doth pine;
Oh when shall I behold thy face
Thou Majesty Divine.*

Dr Margaret Barker
Methodist Preacher and Theologian



Autumn Western District Conference United Church Kingswood on 2nd November 2019

Opening Devotions were led by Br Paul Holdsworth representing the PEC, Sr Patsy Holdsworth was present, Br Philip Ashton was Chair, Sr Judith Ashton took minutes. Deputies were present except for Bath Weston and Blackbird Lees, and Br David Smart and Sr Jackie Pennington were observers.

We discussed the need to elect a Representative for the Provincial Youth Committee as we still have a vacancy for this position.

The Western District Rally at Bath Western this year raised the sum of £72.50 and was donated to Bath City Farm.

The Fellowship Day at Bath Western this year brought into focus the need to assist Refugees and Asylum Seekers - we hope to repeat this next year. We welcomed two asylum seekers into our Kingswood Congregation this year, one of whom has moved on and found accommodation in London.

Br Paul has started a Fellowship in Midsomer Norton with four services so far.

Congregation Reports

Brockweir: there are 17 members. Soup lunches have raised over £1,400 for charities in the last year. Sr Sue Groves started Bingo evenings once a month. The Soap Box Derby raised £200. Sr Patsy has started a monthly coffee and chat day.

Kingswood: there are 20 members and two adherents. Vandalism has damaged our stained-glass windows - now repaired at much expense. We are seeking funds to pollard our trees. A café church initiative has been started which is more informal, and a monthly Coffee and Chat is held on a Wednesday morning.

Bath Coronation Avenue: there are eight members and one

adherent. The Girls Brigade held a camp in Tytherton and joined in the service. Br Holdsworth is still Chaplain and with that in mind it was good to explore the Moravian context in Tytherton. The Congregations of Ascension and Coronation Avenue hold joint services twice a year.

Tytherton: there are seven members. Work on the grounds continues and rental properties are in need of refurbishment. A visit by metal detectors led to over 200 finds including coins and thimbles from the lace making at the girls' school.

Swindon: there are eight members and one adherent. The Rainbows are continuing well but the Beavers have closed. Over 100 backpacks have been sent to Mary's meals and the congregation are just beginning on Trussell Trust shoeboxes which are sent to Eastern Europe. Lenten Lunches were held with The Society of Friends this year and this will be continued. There will be a Brean Barbecue on 5th September 2020.

Bath Weston: there are 20 members and one adherent. Love Weston Café continues to be popular and an Open Mic concert in March raised £700 for Dorothy House, a local Charity. Phase 2 of the refurbishment of the church commenced.

The Spring Western District Conference will be on 21st March 2020 at Kingswood at 10am.

Western District Rally will be at Swindon on September 13th at 3pm.

The Cup of Covenant was shared and led by Sr Patsy.

Br David Smart
Kingswood

Report from the Autumn Yorkshire Western District Conference

The autumn Yorkshire District Conference took place at Lower Wyke on Saturday 5th October.

Opening devotions were led by Sr Jane Dixon. 18 people attended the retreat day held at the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield. A working party has been set up with representatives of each of the congregations to look into opportunities for working together on an outreach project.

The Provincial Board report was given by Br Mark Kernohan who was attending his first District Conference as a Provincial Board member.

Baildon congregation stands at 28 members, with three adherents. Like many other congregations, the membership is getting older, but their faith and enthusiasm are not diminished. Membership at Horton stands at 36. Average attendance had increased slightly, with a few people having simply wandered in, liked the welcome and stayed.

Fulneck had 76 members, down six on last year due to the deaths of three members and also the departure of the Dunn family. Gomersal had 30 members and six adherents, with an average Sunday attendance of 24 adults and two children, the same as last year.

Lower Wyke has an average attendance of 27 and it is a very sociable church. Cafe Church is still the best-attended service, with 37 adults and six children. Wellhouse has 13 members, no change on last year. Both Lower Wyke and Wellhouse have bought defibrillators which have been installed outside the church.

Concern was raised again at information given by the Children's Society about the Christingle. Sr Katherine Woolford said that, as well as not giving the correct history, the idea behind the Christingle had been altered and she, and many others, objected to what they have done. The Provincial Board confirmed that discussions with the Children's Society were continuing.

Since the departure of Br Simon Dunn, the Moravian Singers are now jointly led by Br Glyn Jones from Fairfield and Sr Diane Thornton of Lower Wyke. Br Jones is leading the choir for the Advent Choral Festival on 1st December at Wellhouse. Sr Thornton will take over after Christmas, leading the choir towards the District Lovefeast at Gomersal on 22nd February and the Palm Sunday Service on 5th April at Wellhouse.

Br Kernohan said that, following a resolution at the 2018 Synod, the Provincial Board and bishops had met Hornsey and Wood Green MP Catherine West to talk about child poverty in the UK and it was hoped to have an e-petition in place before Christmas. He also said the board was continually grateful for the work put in by the editors of The Watchword, Br and Sr Robert Hopcroft.

Br Evans reported on the work of West Yorkshire Churches Together and said updates had been made to its constitution, with the Yorkshire District ministers having had some input.

The conference ended with the singing of the hymn 'For I'm building a people of power', and the sharing of the grace.

Br Michael Newman
Fulneck

Based on a report given to the Fulneck congregation by Br Dick Porter.

Fulneck

This year's Brethren's Festival began with breakfast at the cafe at No. 54. At the morning service at 10.30am there were five hymns, each introduced by one of the brethren, who explained why he had chosen his particular hymn. It was interesting to hear the reasons for their choices and the singing that morning was consequently enhanced by a shade more zest and high endeavour, as the congregation responded to the brothers' enthusiasm.

This autumn has seen a renewal of the Men's Fellowship activities. By now there have been three afternoon sessions of games playing in the Boys' Brigade building on Wednesdays. Refreshed by tea and biscuits, the men played dominoes, snooker and/or carpet bowls. During the second session, in November, the gentlemen could hear the sweet sound of the M.W.A. ladies downstairs singing a hymn as they held their own autumn meeting.

This year's Christmas Fair was held on 16th November. The stalls were very attractive and there seemed to be more of them this year. Over £725 was raised during a busy Saturday morning.



'Fingers and Thumbs' get-together

© Sr Maureen Ingham

A new venture, held in the home of one of the sisters, has been a meeting called 'Fingers and Thumbs', where ladies met to talk, take refreshment and make and mend things, using needle and thread. Men were invited but none attended.

This autumn's play performed by the Fulneck Amateur Dramatic Society in the Comenius Centre was a very funny and clever production, which was also a world premiere. 'Sherlock Holmes and the Chihuahua of Doom' was written by Peter Oxtoby, a member of the cast. Peter was very ill last year, and it was gratifying to see him back in action so successfully. The play was well received by capacity audiences for six nights.

Sr Maureen Ingham



© Sr Roberta Gray

Gracehill

Gracehill Church is very blessed to have a wonderful organ which dates back to 1829 and a very gifted and dedicated young organist to lead our services 'Sunday by Sunday'. This year

it was decided it was time to have this treasured and very special musical instrument restored in Scotland, so it was a special time for Sr Alison McCullough when she played the organ for the first time at a special service of rededication, not only for the organ, but also for the beautiful new piano that was gifted to the church by Br Anderson and family in memory of his late wife Sr Sally Weir.

The organ refurbishment was made possible by a most generous gift from Miss Margaret Cameron MBE who grew up in the area along with donations and gifts from members and friends and trust funds.

Alongside this Sr Jackie McNeil has produced an interesting little booklet about the history of the organ and the work done

to it over the years from 1829 along with some really interesting and wonderful anecdotes.

It was appropriate then to celebrate this historic event with an organ recital, when Dr Simon Lindley, one of the finest organists in the UK, and a member of the Moravian Church in Fulneck, spoke to an enthusiastic audience before delivering an evening of classical, moving, jaunty and rousing pieces. Afterwards, during tea in the hall, he enjoyed chatting to everyone.

In September Br (Rev Dr) Bob Cotter presented the church with a beautifully bound copy of his thesis on John Cennick, where he makes use of material in German which has not been used before and throws more light on his relationship with Count Zinzendorf.

In November over 85 members and friends enjoyed a wonderful meal provided by Montgomery's Outside Caterers. The speaker at this 'Table Talk Social Evening' was Rev Harold Good OBE, a retired Methodist Minister who showed slides and spoke movingly about his role in the Decommissioning Talks in Northern Ireland and how we can find ways to move on from the legacy of the troubles here. This was a relaxed enjoyable evening for all, and a surprise for the speaker when he met with someone whom he hadn't seen since his schooldays at Methodist College!

Sr Roberta Gray

Ockbrook

This Autumn we have had some interesting events at Ockbrook.

Together with the local Methodist Church, we held three talks throughout September and October on the theme of the Climate Crisis, how we got into this situation and what we can do about it. We heard the views of very varied speakers: the chairman of Derby Climate Coalition, a Quaker, a Muslim scholar and a Franciscan friar.

We thank Br Michael Newman for conducting our Harvest Festival service on 15th September.

Our Harvest Supper went very well, with over 60 people enjoying a two-course hot supper.

The Autumn Fair on 12th October proved very popular with local people and profitable for the church.

At Café Church on 20th October we heard the story of Noah and had an apple juice making session. It turns out that



© Br Joachim Kreusel

Ockbrook apples make delicious juice!

At a special heritage-themed service on 27th October we handed out the booklets 'Settlements of the Moravian Church in Europe' to the congregation which included our local MP, Pauline Latham. Copies will also be given to local libraries and councillors.

Sr Julie Hague

Ballinderry

The table-top sale in May was a great success in spite of the fact that it was rather damp. A BBQ, bouncy castle, teas and coffees and of course the stalls were enjoyed by all.

We also enjoyed a visit to the Church from our Dutch brothers and sisters who were exploring Northern Ireland in July. Br Henry Wilson gave an amusing talk on the history of the Church and the area. He said the present visitors to the Church were much better behaved than the previous unruly and drunken ones! He was referring to the Dutch troops of William of Orange who had been stationed in the area before going south to fight at the Battle of the Boyne! Afternoon tea was provided by the ladies of the church and large quantities of Sister Violet Best's

marmalade were sold as were the history books on Ballinderry Church. The visitors kindly donated £150 to our funds.

Two Movie Nights have been held so far. 'Casablanca' proved to be a very popular choice for the first movie. Tea, coffee, fizzy drinks and popcorn were some of the refreshments enjoyed whilst watching. The second film chosen was 'Mr Blanding Builds His Dreamhouse' with Cary Grant. We hope to continue with more movies this autumn as well as the book club which met for the first time in October. Everyone enjoyed reading 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society' by Mary Ann Shaffer. It was a rich source of discussion about World War Two and human nature.

Sr Marilyn Marshall

Swindon

October and November have been busy months, serving the local community and the wider world. We met early on world porridge day and enjoyed a breakfast of porridge with various toppings and raised £150 for Mary's meals. In addition, we sent 75 more backpacks to the charity, to enable more children to attend school.

After a break last year, from filling shoeboxes for OCC for 18 years, we decided to restart filling boxes this year, for the charity Foundation for Social Change. On 9th November, we had an open day for anyone to come and fill a shoebox. Once the boxes were wrapped and full, a group of us headed over to Bath Weston to support their Open Mic, in aid of Great Ormond St Hospital.

As a congregation, we have sponsored another child through the charity Empower the Gambia. Isatou, who attends Daru deaf unit, will now be able to have a 1:1 helper and learn sign language.



Our midweek activities - Wednesday worship, MWA, Rainbows and Mary's meals group - continue to meet, and Sunday Sparks for the children, meet every Sunday during morning worship. Last month, the Rainbow unit held a Children in Need fundraising evening, worked on their police badge and thoroughly enjoyed a cinema trip to watch Frozen II.

We have been out and about fundraising at various church and school fetes, raising money for charities, including Raleigh International. We are supporting this charity as next year the son of one of our members will be spending three months in Nepal as a volunteer. We have continued to support

Alternative Angels and the Filling Station: two charities helping people who are living on the streets in Swindon.

Last month, we joined with Churches Together in Swindon centre for an evening of skittles. The Moravians were proud to bring home prizes for both first and last place!

Sr Sandy Mundy

From Church House

Provincial Diary for January

16-17 PEC, Hall Green
18 PYCC, Hall Green (Sr R Hoey & Sr Z Taylor)

Congregational Register

Confirmations

17th November 2019 Chrissie Grantham Dukinfield
17th November 2019 Lynne Walker Dukinfield

Deaths

21st November 2019 Eileen Smith Ockbrook

1	New Year's Day
6	Epiphany
7	Christmas Day - Orthodox
14	New Year - Orthodox
18-25	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)
25	Burns Night
	Chinese New Year
26	World Leprosy Day (www.leprosymission.org.uk)
27	Holocaust Memorial Day (http://hmd.org.uk/)

Dates to remember!

Apology: Br Dave Newman has sent a profuse apology about his article on the Retired Ministers Retreat which was published in December's Moravian Messenger.

There were actually 12 retired ministers in attendance at the Retired Ministers' Retreat in October, not 11 as listed in the article. Br John McOwat was also present, as the group photo clearly shows. Apologies to Br John.



From the Sanctuary

Last week, I went to meet a colleague at Chester train station. After parking my car in a side-road, I had to walk past a young lady who was aged in her late teens or early twenties. She was sitting on the pavement. She was shivering; she had a tear-stained face; she was clearly homeless; and she was begging for money. Not knowing what to do, I walked past her, inappropriately bidding her 'good morning'. At least in doing so, I had acknowledged her humanity (I kidded myself).

As I waited for my colleague's train to arrive, I was flooded with guilt for 'walking by on the other side'. In amongst the guilt, I recognised that I was feeling enormous care, compassion and concern for her - even though I had never met her before. I wondered what had brought her to that lowest point in her life. I wanted to rescue her - to take her home, to give her the opportunity for warmth, a shower, some food and a bed - and to try and help her sort her life out (as if I could!). I wanted to look after her, but I knew that in today's safeguarding society, acting from that place of compassion was inappropriate. The irony was not lost on me that in needing to protect myself, she remained at risk. I felt paralysed by not knowing how to help her - so like most of us, I did nothing.

I was distracted from this inner turmoil of thoughts and feelings by the arrival of my colleague. I said nothing to him about it, but I silently assuaged my guilt, on the way back to the car, by slipping her a

£10 note. Her face lit up, full of appreciation. I hoped that that might go towards paying for a bed for the night - but I knew that it might probably go towards her next 'fix'. She could have been my daughter, my niece, or my goddaughter. Aargh ...! What to do?!

And, as Christians, we have Jesus' words in Matthew 25, 40-45, that 'whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers and sisters, you do for him'. These words seem tough to live out at times - particularly at this time of year, which for most of us is a time of blessedness, plenty and privilege. I can do what almost everyone else does, and that is to blame the politicians for the issue of homelessness - that way it isn't my problem; or I can turn away from the enormity of the problem in our cities and towns by simply doing nothing other than to hope that someone else will deal with the problem; or I can remind myself of words from James 2: 14-26, that 'faith without action is dead', and do what I can do to help. So, my New Year's resolution is just that - to do what I can do to help - which I think is what Christ would do. How that will manifest itself practically is still being worked out.

What might you do in such circumstances (?) - because the homeless are only just down the road in the doorways of our nearest city or town. It's tough being a Christian sometimes, especially when faced with the more shadowed realities of life. Happy New Year!

Br Peter Gubi,
Dukinfield



Interested in being involved in some form of Church Service?

The next **Church Service Exploration Day** is planned to be held on **Saturday 25th January 2020** (venue to be arranged depending on the geography of explorers). This will be led and facilitated by **Br Peter Gubi** and one of our Bishops. Expressions of interest to **Br Peter Gubi** by 9am, Monday 20th January 2020.

Contact **Br Peter Gubi** at: peter.gubi@moravian.org.uk

Moravian Church in Great Britain & Ireland

GREENBELT WILD AT HEART 28-31 AUGUST 2020

GREENBELT is a festival that has multiple ways of exploring **ARTS, FAITH AND JUSTICE** including through music, drama, comedy and community.

Last year a group of **Moravians** who were **18-39** attended **Greenbelt** and we are looking to go again with some more **18-39** years olds to share together in this years theme:

WILD AT HEART.

WEEKEND TICKETS	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55
ADULT	£150	£165	£180	£195
65+	£120	£130	£140	£150
CONCESSION	£80	£90	£100	£110
18-25	£80	£90	£100	£110
YOUTH	£50	£50	£50	£50
CHILD	£50	£50	£50	£50
INFANT	£0	£0	£0	£0
1ST TIME LEADER	£50	£50	£50	£50

Tickets are cheapest before **October 31st** - **18-25** only £80, as an Adult (26+) £150

Then cheapest until end of April - **18-25** £90, as an Adult (26+) £165

See above for more information or to book go to: <https://www.greenbelt.org.uk/buy-tickets/>

MORAVIANS AT GREENBELT 2020 - ARE YOU COMING?



Fancy Joining us or learning more?

Contact

Rev James Woolford on: james.woolford@moravian.org.uk

Claire Maxwell on: claire.maxwell@moravian.org.uk

Or Speak to **Alishba Khan** who came last year, who some of you may know as your **Summer Camp Leader**



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