

moravian messenger

DECEMBER 2020



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Sometimes I go around the fields behind the Moravian Settlement in Ockbrook. As I walk, thoughts come to my mind, thoughts about the upcoming Advent and Christmas celebrations. I can see the star shining from the cupola of our Moravian Church. It has shone every night from March onwards, bringing light into a difficult time. I walk on, and suddenly I can see angels beside the star. I can see the fields around me, and sheep in the fields. All is filled with the light that comes from the angels who sing, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests.' (Luke 2:14)

**'Glory to God
in the highest
heaven, and peace
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favour rests.'**

(Luke 2:14)

I sometimes walk between Zoom meetings. I can't sit in front of a computer screen all day long. Zoom meetings are the new reality in our every-day life since the virus called Covid-19 has visited so many places around the world. When I listen to the angels, I can hear them singing for those in the village who are furloughed, for those who rely on foodbanks and those who run them, for those who are isolating themselves so that the virus can't get to them, for those who are ill, for those who have little to do and feel bored and those who are overworked. 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests.'

It is indeed a strange time we live in, a time that my generation hasn't seen, but generations before have seen such times. Pandemics happened throughout the centuries, often not recognised as pandemics. But people's lives have been affected over and over again.

I still have the singing of the angels in my ears. It sounded so lovely, soothing, peaceful, life-bringing and healing. I ponder about these words, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests.' Why is it that the first line is, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven'? Do the angels try to point us to a place that is higher than our understanding? To a love and a healing power which we call God?

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Editorial

There is no way to say this kindly - Christmas has become, over the past years, an expensive illusory circus with no way to get off the treadmill or slow it down. I cannot be the only person who gets to the actual day exhausted, bad tempered and broke! It is only the days of calm after Christmas that makes it bearable. And that is a dreadful confession because there is so much pressure for the perfect family, the best presents, the wonderful meal, the best laid table, the best Christmas ever. And, of course for us in Churches, all pressure of special services and pastoral visiting to be done before 'the day'.

I hate the COVID-19 and what it is doing to us as a society and as individuals and families and the cost that it is extracting from us in so many ways, not least the smaller businesses in our economy and independent shops in our towns and cities. Because of COVID-19 this year we have to do Christmas differently. We can't have all our big services in Church, it may not be safe to put up all our decorations, there can't be any community style 'Switching on the Christmas Lights'. Pastoral visits and family gatherings may be severely restricted. And we cannot easily plan for what may or may not be in force over the Christmas break.

It will be a very different feel this Christmas. But will it be a worse Christmas? Of course it will for the shops who simply will not get the trade that they depend on at this time of year; for those who have to work in the health care sector

or in care homes; for those who are isolated and can't be with their families; for those who have lost their jobs and cannot afford the food and presents that they would love to give their families and of course it will be for those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 over the past year.

But for once it is a chance to focus on the heart of Christmas and reprogramme what we should be doing and expecting each year. Christmas is the annual celebration of the birth of God's son, God's gift to us and for us, wrapped up in the most difficult of circumstances. It is a gift of immense and eternal worth that costs us nothing. It is an expression of love from the God who loves us and whom we so often forget. It is the light of the world that can never be put out. Of course, it should be celebrated but that celebration should be a cause of joy and peace, not worry and stress. Wouldn't it be great if one of the unexpected effects of Covid was a rebalancing of the way we approach the holy celebration of this great festival of our faith?

We wish all our readers a blessed and peaceful Christmas and God's guidance in the coming new year.

From Lorraine, Lindsey and Sarah
Editorial Team of the Moravian Messenger

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



© Sr Sarah Groves

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests.' (Luke 2:14)

continued

To what extent does God play a role in our every-day life? As the angels point to God first, questions arise in my mind, 'Is he given the first place and the highest priority in our world?' 'Is everything centred around him?' If I'm honest, I have to say 'no', it's not everything centred around him. So much is centred around commerce, around business, around money and power, and clinging to power as long as possible. Our world would look different if everything was centred around God.

Even the pandemic which we experience in these weeks and months, and maybe even years, may have to do with God not being in the centre. Scientists tell us that it is quite likely that pandemics will become more frequent, because the living space of animals and plants is more and more compromised by the cutting down

of rain forests, building roads into wild areas and littering the oceans with plastic, to name just a few. If we intrude into habitats which are balanced within themselves, and therefore can easily cope with certain types of viruses, nature might fight back. Sir David Attenborough has called for the 're-wilding' of nature, as he calls it, allowing God's creation to stay in this delicate balance which enables life in all its fullness.

The angel's message has another part to it, 'A Saviour has been born to you; Christ, the Lord.' The first step for us is to recognise that we cannot save ourselves. We can do our best, and we can try to promote life to the best of our ability. But in the end, we are always in danger of working against our creator. He has seen that we are in a dire dilemma. He came in Jesus right among us and alongside

us, bringing comfort to everyone: those who are tired and burdened. And - in a second step - he brings new direction into our lives by saying, 'I am the way, work with me and alongside me, group yourselves around me, the living God, and peace will be with you, this Christmas and always.'

And as I come back from my walk around Ockbrook's fields, the star is still shining brightly. I realise that the angels' message has gone around the world, into every corner: A saviour is born, Christ the Lord. Have peace and don't be afraid. Have a blessed Christmas!

Br Joachim Kreusel
Ockbrook



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Provincial Board Reconstitution

The Provincial Board reconstituted on 22nd October 2020 following the resignation of Br Mark Kernohan. The following are elected to serve as Provincial Elders:

Sr Roberta Hoey (By Postal Ballot 2016 - 4 years full time)*; Br Paul Holdsworth (Synod 2018 - 2 years part time)*, Br David Howarth (Synod 2018 - 4 years part time) and Br Livingstone Thompson (Synod 2018 - 4 years part time).

The **Provincial Board (PEC)**, in being elected, are thereby elected as Trustees of The Choir House, Fulneck School, Ockbrook School and the Moravian Union Incorporated which includes the Moravian Church, the Estates Property Portfolio and The British Mission Board in compliance with the Charity Commissioners.

In addition the Provincial Board act as Directors of the Moravian Union Incorporated as regulated by Companies

House and each hold one share in the Company whilst in office.

Br Paul Holdsworth has been appointed as Company Secretary.

The P.E.C. met to decide upon the divisions of responsibility; but it remains a collegiate body, with all decisions being the responsibility of the Board as a whole.

THE PROVINCIAL BOARD

Chair Sr R Hoey
Provincial Treasurer Br L Thompson
Property matters Br D Howarth

Members of PEC will attend the following Provincial Committees as appropriate:-

Finance Committee
Church Service Committee
Faith & Order and Ecumenical Relations Committee
Mission and Society Committee
World Mission Committee
Provincial Youth Committee

The Provincial Board have appointed Br P Cooper as our National Ecumenical Officer.

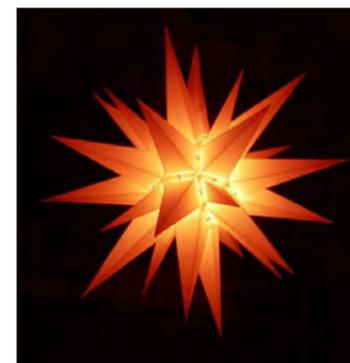
THE BRITISH MISSION BOARD

Chair Sr R Hoey
Treasurer Br L Thompson

The Unity Synod has entrusted oversight of the work of the Moravian Church in the South Asia Mission Province to The Mission Board and has a close relationship with the Western Province of Tanzania as agreed by the Unity Mission Agencies.

In addition the British Province, through the British Mission Board, continues to have close links with and give support to The Elim Home, Star Mountain and Sikonge Hospital. This support is directed through the Unity Mission Agencies who have been entrusted with that responsibility by the Unity Synod.

*Sr Hoey & Br Holdsworth will complete their term at the next Provincial Synod, due 2020 but currently postponed until 2021 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.



The Soldier and the Star - The Guiding Star

An account of Christmas by Rev Bernie Michel first printed in the December 1984 issue of The North American Moravian, reprinted by permission of the Interprovincial Board of Communication of the Moravian Church in America.

It was Christmas, 1945. The first Christmas after the close of World War II. I was still in uniform in the army of occupation in the historic city of Bayreuth, Germany. I had wanted to spend Christmas with the Moravian community at Bad Boll, but duty called.

I did have a few hours on Christmas Day I could call my own. A few Moravian refugees were located in the nearby town of Munchberg. They had come there from Silesia to keep alive the weaving industry of the Abraham Dürninger firm and had temporarily set up shop in a Bavarian factory.

I prevailed upon the chaplain to loan me his jeep, but the trip seemed doomed to failure. A flat tyre delayed my arrival until dark. My contact person was not at his hotel, he had gone to spend the holiday with his family. The lady at the factory understood my ersatz German enough to say that other

Moravian families lived up the hill, but she did not know where.

In the dark coldness of the night I drove up and down the deserted streets, feeling frustrated and alone.

Then suddenly I saw the star. It was a Moravian Advent star hanging in a doorway. The wise men could not have rejoiced more. I eagerly knocked and the door opened to one of the best Christmases I have ever known. The Maasbergs, the Roths, and T/4 Michel gathered in that home that evening to share the love of God and the joys of Christmas. A box from home provided us with Christmas cake and cookies. A year before those of us in the room had been considered enemies. But peace and blessings were in that home in Munchberg that night.

It was the star that guided me to a Christmas of joy.

Bernie Michel

Report from the Moravian Institute in Rajpur



The Moravian Institute in Rajpur has been isolated and under lockdown since 13th March, especially after two Forest Officer trainees in Dehradun returned from a study tour to Europe and were found positive for Covid-19 on their return. As the months have progressed the virus has continued to spread because of insufficient testing, tracing and isolation. Here is a brief history of our lockdown, etc.

4th March - Class 11 final exams were completed, followed by annual break. Most Class 11 boarders left.

7th March - Class 9 final exams were completed, followed by annual break. Most Class 9 boarders left.

14th March - Lessons were cancelled for Class 8 downwards (along with other schools in Uttarakhand) up to 31st March. Boarders remaining were not allowed to leave campus and under strict Hygiene Protocol. Visitors from outside were discouraged except for essential work. All persons were required to wash and disinfect their hands and to cover their mouth and face. Boarders' parents / guardians began to withdraw their children in increasing numbers.

19th March - CISCE postponed remaining external exams for Classes 12 and 10 until further notice. Eleven more boarders left, numbers went down from 36 to 25 - these being children whose homes are too far (and risky) to travel to. All teachers from outside have remained at home. Hostel and Support Staff from outside were sent on leave from 20th to 31st March. Hostel rations inventory showed that we had already stocked rations for over one month, which would now be sufficient for 3+ months due to lower numbers. Changes in duties of Campus Staff were put in place, with new timetables, including games and recreation for pupils, and extra campus security and hygiene.

20th March - 8pm Prime Minister announced national 'people's lockdown' from midnight the same day for 5 days.

Sunday 22nd March - Full day national lockdown.

Tuesday 24th March - Headcount showed we had 81 persons on campus consisting of school level pupils, college students, Campus staff and family members. 8pm - Prime Minister announced a national mandatory lockdown from midnight for 3 weeks up to Tuesday 14th April. This was the first of 5 lockdowns up to now (October).

Campus staff were able to get groceries, medicines and other essential supplies. Vehicles on Campus were made available to take sick people to the hospital. Hostel Staff and pupils assembled daily to pray for themselves, their families and others in India and around the world. This has continued over the months.

On 13th April, anticipating an extension of the lockdown, we introduced even stricter isolation within Moravian Institute (MI) between buildings and houses on campus. We arranged a greengrocer to come to MI gate twice a week, so that staff or families would not need to go out to shop for vegetables/fruits. However, emergency travel for medical treatment was still available. On 14th April, the Prime Minister announced an

extension to the Lockdown for another 19 days through to Sunday 3rd May, although a few relaxations were given to some parts of Uttarakhand. Now we are under Unlock No.5, and many people have become careless, indifferent or fatalistic.

On 20th April we began Online Lessons for our school pupils. It was a big challenge, but we arranged training of our teachers in the use of video conferencing platforms. Mr Simeon Kamei (our ICT and network administrator) has been our main trainer. Not knowing that a pandemic would cripple our traditional methods of teaching-learning, in March 2019 we had already started discussing ways of changing our methods and using technology and Internet based resources. In December 2019 we already began getting resources ready for the changes we felt were necessary. When the pandemic struck, we were already half-prepared, and we simply had to accelerate our preparation, organisation and delivery. I joined the other academic administrators in teaching online. The Online Lessons have been well received, although quite a few children are in homes without enough funds for a smartphone (let alone a tablet/computer/laptop). A significant number of boarders went back to their homes in the high mountains where there is no mobile/cell phone network (let alone Internet wi-fi). They are lagging behind the others, and we are trying to bring them back to the Institute campus, if their families allow it. In our neighbourhood, it seems that word has spread about the good quality of our Online Lessons and a number of new pupils have joined us. Moravian Institute was able to register free of charge with Google for their G-Suite for Education. This suite has helped us a lot. The teachers have been working very hard indeed and were given a 'summer' break from lessons 1st-15th July. They are in the midst of 2nd Term Assessments in October, using G-Suite for Education for testing pupils and not just teaching.

On 13th May six of our Ladakhi boarding boys in Classes 8, 9 and 11 left for their homes in Ladakh, with escort arranged by the Ladakh Union Territory Administration.

On 22nd May our affiliating and external examination board (CISCE) announced 1st-15th July as dates the remaining external exams for Classes 12 and 10, but after cases in the Bombay High Court, on 25th June in the Supreme Court, the exams were cancelled, only due to the tremendous transmission of the Covid-19 outbreak in many parts of the country.

Since April, some people had been agitating for the cancellation of fees that parents pay to private schools. At the same time, the same people had been demanding that private schools pay full salaries to their staff. The private schools argued that they need to charge tuition fees in order to pay salaries. This matter was decided largely in favour of the schools in eight different High Courts, and in Uttarakhand implemented by the State Government on 22nd June, but some lawyers took the case to the Supreme Court. Moravian Institute was affected by this dispute because part of our revenue income derives from Day Pupils' fees, and our ability to pay full salaries depends on fees. The contribution of our sponsors is very important to our finances, especially to support our boarders (even though most of them

are not on campus right now). However, there is variation in the rates of contribution, and overall, these contributions are not sufficient to cover the full costs. The Supreme Court heard the case on 10th July and ruled in favour of the schools as directed by the high courts. However, it continues to be difficult for us to collect fees from Day Pupils, and right now we are facing a major cash flow problem. We are not sure if the Uttarakhand High Court will not direct schools to reduce fees. In addition, the central government got Parliament to pass amendments to the Foreign Currency Regulation Act on 23rd September. This Act governs how charities in India can get funds from overseas, etc. The laws were made much stricter all of a sudden, and we have had to scramble to get expert legal advice and comply.

On 6th October, Moravian Institute hosted eight candidates from five other schools for a Year 12 External Examination of CISCE (our affiliating/ accrediting body) in Delhi. We were able to conduct the examination successfully and with all safety precautions in place - by disinfecting the building and the exam hall, sanitising all the furniture, entry and exit of candidates at 5-minute intervals, maintaining 5 metres (well over the minimum 2 metres) distance between candidates' tables, handwashing and using hand sanitiser, everyone wearing masks at all times, paper handlers wearing gloves, etc. It was quite a challenge for everyone, especially the exam candidates. We hope they did well.

In May our 16 College Students on campus did a free online course offered by Tata Consultancy Services. In July they did three more courses each offered by various universities in the UK and the US through Coursera. Four students had gone to Chennai and Bangalore for a 5-month Discipleship Training School. They were able to return to Dehradun on 7th June after the lockdown was partially lifted. Another Nursing student from Bangalore was able to return on 9th June. All had to quarantine for at least 2 weeks before being allowed to interact with others.

We also have nine alumni training as nurses: two in Bangalore and seven in Dehradun. Six have just started training as nurses in Dehradun this month [October]: and another five have got admission into other bachelor's degree courses.

Everyone is safe at the Moravian Institute Binnakandi Campus (Cachar, Assam). Most pupils do not have smartphones. Some are out of mobile phone range. A few pupils in the village visit the school campus or teachers' homes for lessons.

At the Moravian Institute Chiktan Campus (Kargil, Ladakh), everyone is safe. Some Shia Muslims from Ladakh contracted the virus when they went on pilgrimage to Iran. They got treatment in Rajasthan or Ladakh in March-April. Some were from the Chiktan area (where our campus is situated) and the

whole area was in quarantine for a long time. Kargil district had 500 cases by the end of July. Some pupils do not have smartphones and/or are out of mobile phone range. But about 20 out of 89 have been attending Online Lessons. From August some pupils of Classes 6-8 have been visiting the campus on alternate days for in-person lessons with our 2 teachers from Manipur residing in Chiktan.

In-person services have been cancelled since Palm Sunday at Rajpur Moravian Congregation (RMC). Since December 2018, the congregation has been served by Br Bir Bahadur Rana (alumnus and student minister). The congregation committee recorded worship songs and Br Bir Bahadur Rana's sermon and shared these on WhatsApp every Saturday evening for each family to play the next day. Since Sunday 13th September onwards, the congregation has been meeting virtually on Zoom. This has enhanced the sense of fellowship. Only the sermon is pre-recorded and uploaded on to the congregation's Youtube page. 8th-9th July we participated in the Unity Prayer Watch.

Covid-19 is spreading day by day to alarming proportions in India, including in Delhi, Dehradun, Assam and Ladakh, even though the rate of increase has declined somewhat this month. In September, India became No.2 in the world, behind only the USA. By the grace of God, the fatality rate is lower than some other countries. However, hospital (and bed, ICU, and ventilator) capacity is limited. Most patients are being sent home to isolate and recover. At Moravian Institute: Rajpur, even though some people on campus feel confined, we are trying to take the necessary precautions as strictly as possible. Fortunately, we have a large enough campus with plenty of space and fresh air, with facilities for games and sports. Even with 80+ people, the campus feels rather empty sometimes.

A lot of poor people in India, especially migrant labourers and pavement dwellers, are facing severe problems due to loss of employment and lack of shelter and food. Most went home from cities, across state boundaries, even on foot. Some of them were unable to practise physical distancing due to panic and have spread Covid-19 without intending to.

Kindly pass on our greetings to all our sisters and brothers in the British Province (and in the wider Unity). We hope they are all safe and healthy. Please let us know if there are people for whom we can pray. Please pray for us, as we pray for you.

Br Thsespal Kundan
Rajpur



In the past year we have marked the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. However, Germany was left devastated by the war and the United Kingdom was nearly bankrupt. Bishop Clarence Shawe, from the British Province and a fluent French and German speaker, was involved in the work of saving much of the property of the Moravian Church in Europe. This he managed to do by insisting on the international nature of the Moravian Church.

Below is a transcript of a report made by Tranugett Steinmann to J G Fuerstenberger relating to the state of Church property in Europe immediately after the end of the war and distributed by Bishop Shawe.

1945 The Situation of the Moravian Colonies in Germany: Special Report on the Fate of Herrnhut on the Cessation of Hostilities

(We received the news given below from the former secretary of our financial department, Mr Traugott Steinmann, a Swiss who left Herrnhut at the end of July and travelled via Prague to Zurich where he arrived on August 21st)

The Moravian colonies in Western Germany:

Konigsfeld in the Black Forest, the Moravian quarter at Neuwied on the Rhine, Bad Boll in Wurtemberg, as well as Zeist near Utrecht in Holland did not seem to have suffered very severely during the last phase of the war. The two Moravian Churches in Berlin, in the Wilhelmstrasse and in Neukolln were destroyed by air raids even before 1944.

Our school at Kleinwelka was closed at the beginning of the war, and at the end of 1944 we were forced to hand over our other schools to the 'Party' for their Youth Organisations.

The three Moravian colonies in Central Germany:

Gnadau near Magdeburg, Neudietendorf and Ebersdorf in Thuringia, gave shelter to a large number of Moravian refugees from Silesia. The Moravian colonies in Silesia had witnessed much fighting and suffered devastations which could be ascertained from Nieskey, on the other side of the Gorkitz Niesse. All we know of Neusalz, Gnadenberg and Gnadenfeld is that important buildings were destroyed. At Gnadenfrie the machinery in our weaving mills is said to have been carried off to Russia. The deaconesses from the home 'Emmaus' at Nieskey - the former superintendent of which is still Pastor Theodore Schmidt, formerly in Berne - have moved to Ebersdorf where they have taken over the hospital.

The mother colony Herrnhut has suffered least up to the time of capitulation. It gave shelter to large numbers of evacuees from Silesia on their way to the West. The inhabitants themselves were able to remain at Herrnhut until - on the Sunday before Ascension Day, May 6th 1945 - the German force in Southern Lausitz ordered immediate evacuation. In spite of all the very urgent protests of the civilian population, the military authorities



Three photos all showing the Moravian Church on the left looking towards the Herrschaftshaus. The top picture was taken before May 1945. The middle picture was taken after the burning of the Church and Herrschaftshaus in May 1945. One of the first acts of reconstruction in Herrnhut was the building of an arch to hold the old Church bell. The bottom picture shows the arch and the restored Herrschaftshaus. The Church has never been rebuilt and the congregation at Herrnhut use the site of the old Church hall as the Church building.

persisted in their decision to offer resistance once at Herrnhut. The 'Volkssturm' (a people's militia set up by the Nazi Party) alone, realising the position, refused to take part in the fighting. On May 8th, when the bells were ringing everywhere else, the Russians advanced from the North towards Herrnhut, where German soldiers shot at them from the houses. After the fight the victors took the little town, that had only been temporarily barricaded by storm and gave the soldiers leave to pillage. On this occasion fire was set to various parts of Herrnhut. The Church and the houses surrounding were utterly burnt down, the central part of the main street was destroyed and the 'Herrschaftshaus' - the home of the brethren and sisters of the community - were razed to the ground. Only the home for the Widows and the 'Vogtshof', the official headquarters, lying on the outskirts, were saved. To our great joy the record office with all its important documents suffered no harm.

The report goes on to give a vivid picture of further developments after the Russian field soldiers were relieved by smaller detachments of guards.

It was a good thing that the inhabitants of Herrnhut were able to return immediately, so that a body of experienced men, among whom were Dr Marx and Mr Vogt, the director of Missions, were in a position to take energetic measures for clearing up and restoring order, taking care that every single individual took up his or her share of the work. Excellent relations were soon established with the officer in command. In July the supply of food stuffs was still fairly good, but it soon became inadequate on account of the influx of Germans who had been evacuated from Silesia and Czechoslovakia. The population of the district of Herrnhut, which numbered 11,000 in normal times, now amounts to 23,000. In order to facilitate the laying in of supplies for the coming winter the officer in command restored the three Zinzendorf estates near Herrnhut, which the Moravians had been forced to sell 10 years ago in order to avoid confiscation, to their rightful owners for careful management. This important work is superintended by a native of Switzerland,

Mr Wilfred Merian, who had done similar work in Silesia. He was able to supply a certain amount of agricultural implements - Swiss property - but he still requires 250 cows, 60 horses, 400 pigs, 600 sheep and 1,200 hens in order to do normal work. This is but one example of the existing difficulties. The railway lines in the surrounding country having all been destroyed, outside help cannot be counted on for a very long time.

One of our greatest anxieties is the future existence of the whole of the Moravian Church in Germany. This Church numbering barely 10,000 members, including the large educational staff for her schools, was hitherto a Free Church in the best sense of the work and was financially independent. The agricultural establishments in the different colonies were able to cover any deficits that might occur in the schools, above all the retiring-pensions and the pensions of the numerous missionaries returning from the foreign field. (For) Very many of these agricultural establishments lying in Silesia, the outlook for the future is very dark.

In order to be able to manage for the present, it has been arranged not to pay any salaries to the workers in the community, but to give them a mere minimum as a means of existence. This amounts to

Unmarried people per month	RM 50 and rent
Married couples per month	RM 90 and rent
Additional sum for children	10 to 15

The circular letter that makes this statement closes with the words 'Now that so much has been taken away from us that gave us sense of safety and security, we will learn to depend all the more on Him concerning whom we are told 'Casting all your care upon Him for he careth for you''.

We are glad to hear that services can be held without fear of being molested. They all take place in the one hall that is left - the dormitory in the girls school. It is there that the congregation meets daily for Morning Prayer as in the first days of Herrnhut.

It is good news too that a deputation of Czech brethren from Prague came to Herrnhut in order to help keeping up friendly spirit of the Russian officer in command by pointing out the international character of Herrnhut.

And yet there is one more difficulty that must be mentioned. The Herrnhut chemist shop was burnt down. Should contagious diseases be introduced by the refugees, we have not even got the most necessary remedies. The question here arises as to whether the Red Cross could not find means via Prague of sending us medical aid. Mr Steinmann has brought us the list of the remedies most urgently required.

Zurich, August 30th 1945

J G Fuerstenberger

(The above report was drawn up for the information of the Swiss friends and of the Committee for Christian Reconstruction in Geneva. C.H.S.)



Inside what was the Moravian Church building looking out

© Sr Sarah Groves



Hurricane Eta Update - Board of World Mission

On Tuesday, November 3, 2020, Hurricane Eta made landfall near Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, as a category 4 storm with top winds at 140 mph. The storm then moved slowly across Nicaragua and then into Honduras, continuing to drop heavy rain, causing streams and rivers to flood. Since leaving Honduras, the storm has also caused damage in Guatemala, Belize, the Cayman Islands, Cuba, and Florida.

Most heavily damaged is the area around Puerto Cabezas at the point of landfall. But the heavy rains and accompanying mudslides did horrific damage all along its trek inland.

There has been significant damage to homes, businesses, schools, and church buildings from the coast up into the mountainous mining towns of Bonanza and Rosita. There has also been significant crop and livestock loss, which will affect access to food for many months to come.

In La Mosquitia, Honduras, while the winds were not as destructive, the flooding has been. Throughout the region, upwards of 30 inches of rain fell in the span of fewer than two days. All of the rain that fell inland is now making its way to the coastal low-lands where there are many Moravian congregations. While damage to the Moravian Clinic in Ahuas was not severe, of concern there is that Dr. Kenneth Serapio's home in Puerto Cabezas received heavy damage, so he will be going home as soon as the roads are safe.

Many of these areas are still without electrical power, making recovery and communication difficult. There is now concern about the spread of waterborne diseases from raw sewage being washed into rivers and wells in all of these areas. Complicating this even further is the fact that Covid-19 spread will become an issue as folks who have lost their homes crowd into shelters.

In addition to working with our Moravian Church leaders in Nicaragua and Honduras, we are exploring partnerships with organizations such as Mission Aviation Fellowship and Feed the Hungry who are well established organizations in the area. Working with them will help us to reach people more effectively.

The immediate needs are for food, clean water, and sheltering materials for damaged homes. We need your help to bring these needed resources to the people that need it right now.

If you would like to donate please send cheques to Church House payable to Moravian Union Inc, or telephone us on 020 8883 3409 to make a card or bank payment. Thank you.



Thoughts during lockdown

The Prime Minister asked those over 70 to self-isolate on 16 March, which I did. Up to then, I had been regularly active every day of the week except Saturday when I often had social engagements. All this came to an abrupt halt, even Mothering Sunday on 22nd March, which was just as well because by that time I wasn't feeling well. I had what appeared to be an ordinary cold and only felt ill one evening when my temperature was 37.5 C.

Neither of the stated symptoms appeared but soon afterwards my coffee substitute tasted odd to me. We were not given this symptom as diagnostic until very recently, so I didn't report it or ask for help. I was not in one of the categories being tested at the time. There seems little point in asking for an antibody test which doesn't seem to be definitive in giving immunity and so not able to pass on the virus.

Thinking back, I think I was depressed for about six weeks, rather like the way I was for six months when my husband died. There was the same sense of loss of missing loved ones, particularly physical contact. I went through the motions, keeping myself clean and fed with shopping help from my daughter, but not much more. Added to my problems was the diagnosis of sleep apnoea and the need to adapt to sleeping in a special mask. I am still tired, achy and tearful.

I was also asked on 1st May to go through a basal cell carcinoma operation diagnosed before lockdown. Funnily enough this was more of a positive experience, apart from the discomfort, because it meant I had a trip out through the countryside entertained by the ambulance driver and the plastic surgeon who was a bass-baritone Greek! I trusted them all to keep me safe from the virus.

Looking back, I think the main problems were lack of my usual exercise and routine. I have never been good at exercising alone at home, nor at routine. I made a neighbour laugh when I said that I had a routine, but it was different every day. A friend once said I was the most organised disorganised person she knew. I fell into my usual fault of procrastination which I know is a form of laziness or sloth. I am also having some short-term memory problems.

Notes to myself and lists helped but didn't solve the problem, which is ongoing. My experiences in Zimbabwe helped especially in the early days because empty supermarket shelves were familiar and combating the natural reaction to hoard which was against the law in Zimbabwe. I gradually stocked up for two weeks supply and then relied on my systematic lists. I also attended many magical outdoor musical and theatre experiences there and in South Africa, which we are only just coming to now.

There was plenty of time to think, fed by reading and documentaries, even the social media, although I was wary of the latter. A positive for me has been an increased skill in technology to maintain communication even at a distance. I came of age in the 1960s so was influenced by Rachel Carson's 'The Silent Spring', Vance Packard's 'The Hidden Persuaders' and Ayn Rand's 'Capitalism, the Unknown Ideal'.

There was much rejoicing and amusement amongst the general populace as animals moved into the hiatus left by humans as the streets emptied e.g. capybara, kangaroos, puma, goats (in Llandudno!), wild boar, alligators, penguins, seals, ostrich, ducks, bears and elephant (not that the latter and also baboons have ever been shy about moving into human territory for food until chased away).

The ecologists were not hopeful that this had begun a new age for wildlife. They pointed out that the virus was probably caused by the abuse of wildlife,

possibly the pangolin. Changes would have to be more permanent. An example here is the Knepp Castle estate in West Sussex where the owners have moved from farming to creating a wildlife haven (Isabella Tree: 'Wilding'). Bureaucracy has been a big barrier for them, which is also a main theme in Barbara Kingsolver's 'Unsheltered'.

Bureaucracy has a lot to answer for. To me it is the only good reason for Brexit but it has also been a factor here e.g. in track and tracing and in the Windrush scandal (The Guardian, 13 June) It can be used as a weapon to delay political action. I don't accept immigration as a reason for Brexit which seemed to be part of the political engineering before the referendum. If so, the bluff that 'they' are taking our jobs has been called, as the fruit-picking hiatus has not been filled by the British. In

the rush of goodwill which followed the news of the pandemic, some bureaucracy was swept away but was still part of the problem for PPE, for instance.

Politics has inevitably been an issue worldwide. Conservative governments have reduced the ability of health and social services to respond to the pandemic, namely austerity here and the reversal by Trump of Obama's health reforms (Becoming by Michelle Obama). There is conflict between capitalism and socialism, a theme in Downton Abbey. Put simply, self-interest and the accumulation of wealth conflicts with looking after the needy. Unfortunately, there are still greedy corrupt leaders under socialism.

There are also wealthy benefactors under capitalism. Cadbury built a village for his workers as did Lever brothers and others. A sometime CEO of two parastatals in Zimbabwe claimed that it was not necessary to choose between the two systems, but that if management looked after the workers, efficiency, productivity and therefore profits would follow. Richard Branson hands his companies over to his employees and moves on. Before he died, Steve Jobs wrote that wealth means nothing in life but love and good values do. Privatisation also doesn't always lead to efficiency.

Have we come to expect that life will just become better and better, especially with regards to lifestyle and wealth? Consumerism is a relatively new concept and seems to be behind the choices behind the opening up of society at present as though it is our duty to spend money even if it is to get 'smashed' as one young lad boasted. There are enough resources on this planet to give everyone a reasonable standard of living. So what do we do about the wealthy? We need a worldwide ban on tax avoidance as well as evasion because there is an unwillingness to tax the wealthy for fear they will take their business elsewhere. I detect an undertow of resentment against big bosses who take large salaries, bonuses and golden handshakes even when proved inefficient as in the 2009 financial crash. However, let's not forget that it was begun by people borrowing too much for their homes in the USA.

It disturbs me when I see advertisements for lending when so many are in financial trouble. I also taught Advertising so understand all the tricks of the trade. We no longer advertise cigarettes and admittedly nicotine is a strong addiction, but why are we still advertising gambling, drink and even junk food? Not everyone will become addicted to these, but some do. No one who has watched 'My 600lb Life' on TV can doubt that food can be an addiction and we have an obesity epidemic. Advertising is big business, so we are back to how we survive economically as we come out of lockdown and how we distribute wealth equally.

There has been a backlash against the goodwill which began lockdown. The police had a lull in criminal activity, allowing them to chase drug crime etc. but it is back in the news. They are also having to cope with the worldwide reaction to police brutality in the USA. Racism is a complicated issue which I have lived under all my life under three oppressive governments, the apartheid regime in South Africa, Smith in Rhodesia and Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

I was in a privileged white minority. The Afrikaners expressed prejudice, told to speak Afrikaans in the playground for instance, but that was mild compared to what happened to the Welsh children in times past. I witnessed protests in childhood, at university, near Soweto, and in the Midlands of Zimbabwe. My daughter and our dogs and 10 puppies were tear gassed in our home by accident, I think. My husband was a victim of political oppression, but nothing like some of my parishioners and friends. My life was never threatened although I witnessed and heard of plenty of violence, interracial and black on black.

Being privileged carries with it responsibilities. I feel a collective guilt and wonder if I have made amends enough by my friendships and acquaintance with people of colour. I taught Communication to young blacks for 15 years and served two multiracial churches for over 10 years. Racism seems to be rooted in an instinctive fear of those who are different. In the countries I have seen it there have been wars between the countries or tribes in the past which may contribute.

We need to rejoice in the differences and recognise how much other races have contributed to our cultures and, also feel their pain as is happening in the movement Black Lives Matter. Imperialism and even missionaries are criticised in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Only one of the 11 ministers in my background was actually a missionary and he is honoured by the racial group he served. My only criticism of old-style missionaries is paternalism. Modern missionaries are more inclined to take part in the life of those they serve and listen to what they need.

When we look at the age of exploration and empire building (Geography by Dorling and Lee and On the map by Simon Garfield) we see men and women who were products of their own time and did what was expected of them and were admired for. As explorers mapped the world, they annexed land for their countries with little regard for the indigenous populations already there. The acquisition of wealth, personally and patriotically was admired at the time e.g. Cecil Rhodes and Captain Cook and the British Raj.

The question is how to rewrite history. In my lifetime I have studied South African, Rhodesian, Zimbabwean prehistory, European and British history (including slavery). It was fairly basic and not particularly slanted except that I refused to study

Thoughts during lockdown continued

the Great Trek of the Afrikaners yet again when upgrading my university qualifications. Perhaps that was my prejudice!

I am familiar with the taking down of statues which was done at independence in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. Streets were also renamed which was quite challenging because surnames were replaced with both names e.g. North Avenue became Josiah Tongogara. Spelling were changed to reflect African pronunciation, or just for the sake of it. Que Que became Kwekwe.

Names in general are sensitive. I had to address political correctness as part of communication and found that my students didn't like being called black, preferring African, because they were not black but shades of brown. When I pointed out that I was also an African and not actually white, they simply looked disbelieving and said black was associated with night and evil. So we need a change of self-image. I have noticed that every time a new name was found for people of colour it soon became politically incorrect. However, we seem to be stuck with 'black' although it was the term used by the apartheid regime. I like the old slogan 'Black is beautiful'.

While in Zimbabwe, I worked as a volunteer for a charity called Island Hospice, which took its name from the title of John Donne's Meditation What this pandemic has taught us is that we are all at threat from this virus, so 'never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee'. As we return to a new normal, let us hope that it includes more tolerance of others, understanding of the past, a

willingness to acquire what we need and not just what we want, and also to do tasks which we may have thought beneath us.



Sr Dilys Howard
Leominster

Cliftonville

Though at the time services were still allowed in churches in N. Ireland, Cliftonville agreed to the request of PEC that Moravian buildings should not be used during the increase in the Coronavirus pandemic and returned to church activities on Zoom. Members from Cliftonville and Ballinderry continue to be joined by our Presbyterian American friends, a valued fellowship.

On 1st November we welcomed a guest speaker, Irene Jovaras from the Focolare Movement in Belfast to which she belongs. It is an international organisation that promotes the ideas

of unity and universal brotherhood and was founded in Trent, N. Italy in 1943 by a young schoolteacher who saw God's love as the only antidote when life was crumbling around them. Though it remains largely Roman Catholic, it has strong links to major Christian denominations and other religions.

Br Jared and Br Henry Wilson (Ballinderry) planned and led the service on Remembrance Sunday. Bible study is being led by Pastor David McMillan who retired to Ballinderry with his wife after 22 years as a Baptist pastor and in theological education

Gracehill

The past eight months, while a horrible and confusing time for everyone, have provided us all with TIME, something the American business magnate Steve Jobs describes as our most precious resource. Time to appreciate this wonderful world, time to take stock of our own lives, time to enjoy chats with family and friends, time to talk with God, and time to do all the things we have been putting off around our homes and gardens. CS Lewis once said, 'The present is the point at which time touches Eternity' and in Gracehill there has been a real sense of the importance of that quote.

Everywhere you look evidence of things being done is all around, both inside the church, in the Burial Ground, and all over the village, creating a real 'together' feeling. Our church grounds have 'come alive' and Br Anderson Weir and his band of dedicated helpers have transformed God's Acre over the summer months. They have cleared much of the overgrown hedgerows and created a simple boulder wall along Brothers side.

A jolly group of helpers have, over several Saturdays, spent time removing weeds, willow and gorse from the Square, while Br David Johnston donned a wet suit, and got into the water to remove some of the weeds in the pond!

Being able to meet again in Church was such a blessing, thanks to Br Raymond Kitson who spent long hours working his way through a Risk Assessment, and, with trained



© Sr Sarah Groves



stewards, enabled everyone to feel safe returning to Worship on 30th August. Appreciating that some members would prefer to be at home, Br Roy Douglas has been faithfully recording

services and Sr Sarah has been editing and posting them on our YouTube channel, and these are very much appreciated by all.

This special time has also given Sr Roberta Thompson, our beloved Archivist and her assistant Sr Jackie Neil, the opportunity to catalogue the myriad of precious papers and books. These were able to be stored in the old filing cabinet which had been in the gallery, and was replaced with a beautiful new cupboard, to hold sheet music etc. and was designed and made by Br Jonathan Mc Donald.

Our fortnightly Bible Study led by Sr Sarah has continued on Zoom, and everyone looks forward to learning more about God's Word. It has proven to be a really open and enjoyable time.

Sr Roberta Gray



© Sr Edna Cooper

in central Europe. We are studying the book of Revelation and much appreciate David's very knowledgeable and lively presentations and his onscreen illustrations, pictures and facts that bring the study to life. He also provides homework!

A 'Coffee morning' is available on Tuesdays when we can join Br Jared on Zoom with our mugs of coffee for a friendly chat. I was able to join a most enjoyable Zoom Zinzendorf lecture and Exhibition in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pa. See the archives website for future events.

Our good wishes to Sr Joyce Goldthorpe who celebrated her 96th birthday on 5th November. She was once Girls' Brigade captain, a member and regular worshipper at Cliftonville and is now in a Care Home.

Sr Edna Cooper

Notices

Fulneck Choir House

Applications are invited for the tenancy of:-

Flat 2, No 26 Fulneck, Pudsey LS28 8NT.

The accommodation, suitable for 2 persons, is on the level Ground Floor, South facing and comprises of:-

- Small entrance lobby
- Bedroom
- Bathroom comprising toilet, wash basin and shower
- Large dining \ living room
- Kitchen

The accommodation has Gas central heating throughout and an electric light effect fire.

There are Shared Communal Gardens.

Rent is £850.00 per quarter plus Service charge £100.00 per quarter and Water Charges.

Tenants own arrangements with Gas & Electric providers

Council Tax is Band A - 2019/2020 £1140.76

Single Person Discount is available at 25% (£285.19)

Application forms and any further information can be obtained from:-

The Administrator as per the above details.

'Residential Lettings - Immigration Scheme' - Documents are required for the tenant - right - to - rent check. (Photographic - Passport Driving Licence)

Closing date for applications is 5pm on Thursday 31st December 2020

? Thinking about Church service? Might God be calling you?

We are holding an enquirers' morning, via Zoom, where you will be able to spend time with Br Joachim Kreuzel and Br Peter Gubi, exploring your sense of vocation or chatting about Church service in general. This will take place on Saturday 16th January at 10am.

If you are interested in joining in, please acknowledge your interest, by email, to Br Peter Gubi (peter.gubi@moravian.org.uk) before Monday 11th January 2021, and you will be sent a Zoom link to the meeting.

From Church House

Church House will be closed from 1pm on 18th December and will reopen on Monday 4th January 2020. The Provincial Board and Church House Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and ministry over the last 12 months, which have been unexpected and challenging in so many different ways. It has been wonderful to witness the Province adapting and strengthening their work in new ways. We hope you have a hope filled Christmas period and a blessed New Year.

Provincial Diary for December

Meetings are continuing to be held online wherever possible:
8 PEC
16 BMB

Congregational Register

Deaths

4 October 2020 Olwen Clarke Salem

1	World Aids Day (www.worldaidsday.org)
10	Human Rights Day (www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/)
10-18	Hanukkah - Jewish
18	International Migrants Day (www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday/)
21	Winter Solstice
25	Christmas Day
31	New Year's Eve / Watchnight

Dates to remember!



From the Sanctuary

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour ...” These are the words of what has come to be known as the 'Magnificat' - spoken or sung by Mary in response to the wondrous events that she had experienced which led to the birth of her son, Jesus. “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour ...”

It is a response to a moment of utter spiritual awe and wonder. How often do we have those moments of utter awe and wonder in response to our faith, I wonder? How often does our soul magnify the Lord, and rejoice in God our Saviour? So often, we come to Church, sit through a service, and leave with what we brought with us - our criticisms, our gloominess, our anxieties and our concerns. Our soul fails to be 'touched' and our concerns fail to be transcended by our encounter with God, as Mary's was, and we blame the service, or the minister, rather than look within ourselves at what is getting in the way for us.

Similarly, so often we enter the Christmas period carrying the anxieties of the season - our concerns about debt, about buying appropriate presents and getting in the right food - that we fail to be moved by the enormity of what we are about to celebrate - God becoming human, like us, and living among us, being revealed through the person of Jesus Christ. Instead, we turn the season of Advent - and even Christmas itself - into a children's festival, devoid of its enormous theological and incarnational significance.

So, what needs to shift within us so that we can enter Advent and Christmas, more able to experience and encounter God within our celebrations and within our encounters with each other, so that we can echo, with sincerity, the words of Mary: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour ...” For only then, will we truly be ready to embrace Christmas, for - Emmanuel - God is with us.

Br Peter Gubi Dukinfield

Drive-in Christingle Service

The Irish District of the Moravian Church are planning a Drive-In Christingle Service at Ballymena Showgrounds on Sunday 20th December at 4pm. More details will be released shortly.



Advent Stars

We have a good selection of Moravian advent stars for indoor and outdoor use, starting at £20. Please call Church House on 020 8883 3409 to order and for more information.



The Moravian Messenger

Official Journal of the Moravian Church in the British Province. Published monthly by the authority of the Provincial Synod.

Advertisements and all communications concerning distribution and supply should be sent to the Editorial Team.

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editorialteam@moravian.org.uk
Contributions for the Messenger should reach the editorial team by the 7th day of the preceding month.

Design & Artwork
David Bull
dave@redragdesign.co.uk

Printed & Distribution
G. R. Walkden
Tel 01253 681338