

# moravian messenger

January 2023



Hospital  
visit

Happy  
New Year!

Move  
a  
mountain

Marilyn has had two calendars pinned on the kitchen noticeboard for a while. One for the year just ended, 2022, and the other for the year ahead, 2023. I expect many of you have done similarly.

The 2022 calendar is marked up with the things we did over the past year. This calendar is now of no use to us except to help us to remember what we did last year.

Then there is our new calendar for the year 2023. It's ready for us to plan for the year ahead. There are already hospital and dentist appointments marked in. If we could get GP appointments, they'd be there as well. Whenever we make an appointment or have something important to remember, we will mark it on this calendar. We don't leave anything to our memories these days! It won't be long before the new calendar looks a lot like the old one as we make plans for the days ahead.

There is nothing wrong in planning for the future, but we need to remember that no matter what our plans may be, we can't know for sure what is in the future. Who could have forecast this time last year what the year 2022 had in store for us all? As it is wisely written in Ecclesiastes 10:14, 'No one knows what is to happen, and who can tell anyone what the future holds?'

We can put our appointments on this new 2023 calendar from now to next December, but the only day that we can really be sure of is today!

Nevertheless, we do like to think ahead and make plans. That's

human nature, and with the long dark winter nights giving us plenty of time to think, we look forward to how we might use our time in the coming year.

You may be familiar with the humorous but meaningful Christian paperback, 'The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass, aged 37<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>'. It features the daily thoughts of a new Christian excited about his newfound faith.

The book opens with Adrian's diary entry for 14th December:

'Feel led to keep a diary. A sort of spiritual log for the benefit of others in the future ... Can't think of anything to put in it today. Still, tomorrow's Sunday ...'

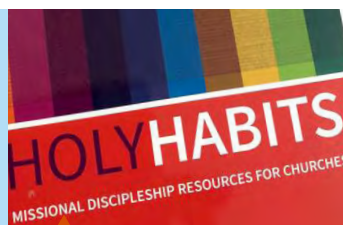
## Then on 6th January:

'Went into the Christian bookshop on my way home from work tonight. All those books! Gerald (teenage son) says Christian paperbacks are like Chinese meals. Very satisfying at the time, but it's' not long before you want another one.

Bought a really great book about faith this time though. It's called 'Goodness gracious - in God's name, what on Earth are we doing for Heaven's sake?'

A very witty title I feel. It's all about how Christians should be able to move mountains by faith if they are really tuned in to God. Very inspiring.

*continued overleaf on page 2*



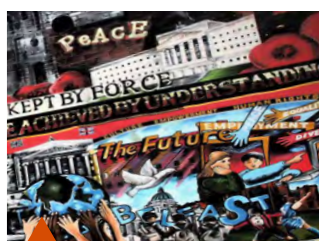
Holy Habits

(page 3)



British Mission Board  
- Visit to Tanzania  
2022

(page 4)



Northern Ireland  
(Troubles and  
Reconciliation) Bill

(page 6-7)



Discoveries from Family  
History Research: Adolf  
von Ekesparre

(page 9)





Waited till there was no-one around, then practised with a paper clip. Put it on my desk and stared at it, willing it to move. Nothing! Tried commanding it in a loud voice.

Gerald came in just then, and said, 'What's all the shouting about, Dad?' Could hardly tell him I was shouting orders at a paper clip. Said I was practising voice projection. He said, 'What for?' I said, 'I don't know.' Felt really stupid.

#### 7th January:

Had another go with the paper clip tonight. I really took authority over it. Couldn't get it to budge. Told God I'd give up anything he wanted, if he would just make it move half an inch. Nothing!

All rather worrying really. If you only need faith the size of a mustard seed to move a mountain, what hope is there for me when I can't even get a paper clip to do what it's told!

#### 8th January

Told Anne (wife) that I'd heard about a man who tried to move a paper clip by faith and couldn't do it. She yawned and said, 'Well, you always get your lunatic fringe.'

#### 11th January

Got up early today to have a last go at that blasted paper clip. Ended up hissing viciously at it, trying not to wake everybody up.

When I gave up and opened the door, I found Anne and Gerald listening outside in their night-clothes and looking quite anxious.

Anne said, 'Darling, why did you tell that paper clip you'd straighten it out if it didn't soon get it's d\*\*\*\* act together?'

Explained with as much dignity as I could muster that I'd been conducting an experiment in faith and had got a bit carried away when it didn't work.

Anne said, 'But, sweetheart, being a Christian isn't like joining the Magic Circle. Why would God want you to make a paper clip move by faith?'

'Why would God want you ...' to do that?'

A serious question to ask when looking at your calendar and your plans for 2023.

It's a question that should always be asked when looking ahead in our personal lives as Christians; in congregation life as part of the wider Church; in provincial life as part of the Moravian Unity.

So often in the Church, we find ourselves trying to move the mountains, or rather the paper clips, that God doesn't want us to move. So ask the question, 'Does God really want me/us to do that?'

Through prayer, seek to discern God's will. Don't strive to achieve what we want, rather strive for what God wants. God is over and above all that we do; God is ever-present with us. Our faith is that God will strengthen and provide.

(To conclude, I suggest you read the words of the hymn, 'Standing at the portal' ...)

Happy New Year!

Br David Newman

'The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass, aged 37½', by Adrian Plass (Zondervan, 2005).



## Editorial

### A Hopeful New Year

I am sat here staring into the future and wondering what this new year will bring. Perhaps you are doing the same in these first weeks of January, making plans, dreaming dreams and hoping that some of the huge issues that face us as a world and as a Church resolve themselves without too much effort.

There have been some very dark moments in 2022, with the beginning and continuing of the war in Ukraine, very disturbing news about climate change, inflation and so on. And like many of you we have had bad personal news thrown into the mix. So, despite the easing of COVID worries, I for one was not sad to see the end of 2022.

For many people the time of COVID was a time of great stress - a cold winter and our economy going into recession only adds to mental health anxieties. There is a real reason to be concerned about the wellbeing for people around us. But we must also beware about talking ourselves into a period of gloom and doom and only seeing the negative things around us. This negativism means that we look at ourselves and others seeing only the pitfalls and what restricts us.

The Christian faith is very realistic about the human condition, you only have to read the despair expressed in some of the Psalms to see that. However, Christianity is also a very hopeful faith. This hope is not a vague hope that something will somehow turn up without us doing a thing. Rather our hope is seeing not our limitations but God's goodness and God's

action. Our understanding of hope is grounded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the hopelessness of collusion, cruelty and death God raised Jesus from the dead and through that action we have solid grounds for our hope in life and in death.

Christian hope is not a hope that believes no bad thing will ever happen or that no venture of faith will ever fail. It is rather a hope that, despite what appears to be happening around us, the good purposes of God cannot ultimately be thwarted. It is a call to partner with God in the Kingdom of God which daily we pray in the Lord's Prayer, 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'. Hope is a call to action in word, deed and of course in prayer for the Kingdom in all its glory. Hope is an anchor for our souls in turbulent seas. Hope is the reason to keep going because in the end the victory has been won.

'Our Lamb has conquered' - we have a sure hope in him - and we can trust him through all the changes and challenges that this new year will bring us. There will be no easy pat answers to the issues of the future we should keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and be bold and adventuring in our life of faith. May we, in Christian hope embrace the changes and challenges as they come our way this new year.

Sr Sarah Groves  
Editorial Team



# Safeguarding: Slavery in the UK?

For many people in the UK slavery is something that happened in the past, it may even be in their own family history, but it doesn't belong to the 21st century, especially in a developed, affluent country like the UK; BUT that really isn't the case, slavery is very much present in our modern developed country.

I recently attended a conference about safeguarding adults and one of the sessions I attended was focused on modern day slavery in the UK, delivered by someone who works with people who have been enslaved. Recognising those held in slavery isn't easy and seeing them as victims can be hard. Many are trafficked, not just from outside the UK but within the UK too, groomed to think they will be having a better life, or for children that are trafficked their parents/carers think they will be getting a better life. As with all abuse situations there is an imbalance of power with the slavers having control over the lives of the enslaved.

So where do these enslaved people work? And why do they not run away? Firstly, they can be found in many places, the largest number are domestic slaves working within families, some work in factories, the building industry 'employs' them, car washes, nail bars, cannabis cultivation may all have slaves working in them. The enslaved may be immigrants scared to run away because they are in the UK illegally, they have no money, passport or identity documents, they are told that they will be arrested if picked up, and for many the police are not safe but scary. Despite being exploited and having no control over their own lives, slaves may feel safe, being housed (often in terrible, packed, unsuitable accommodation), having work, clothes and food (often inadequate) but many live lives of fear of violence, the worry about discovery and of being sent 'home'.

So how do we recognise when a person is in slavery? What might cause us to think a situation might be one of slavery? A house where more people live than would be expected, unkempt and inadequately clothed workers, a price that seems to be too good to be true - for example a car valet for £2.50, that would only just pay for 1/4 hour minimum wage for one person - someone who seems scared of their boss, the family member recently arrived who you never see could all indicate a situation where modern slavery is in place.

Recognising and then reporting is not easy. The lady giving the talk had several years' experience but there was a raid of a house a few doors down from her home where several slaves were being kept and she had no idea, there is a lesson for us all there. Suggestions for reporting may be to go to the police, or for children social services, or you can telephone the modern slavery helpline 0800 0121 700 or report online at <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report>. It then gets investigated and then reported through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), in 2021 there were 12,665 reported cases estimated to be less than 10% of the number of slaves in the UK.

So in answer to the question - yes there is slavery in the UK and we can do something about it.

Sr Joy Raynor

Provincial Safeguarding Lead  
<http://moravian.org.uk/provincial-life/information/safeguarding>



Modern Slavery helpline 0800 0121 700 or report online <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report>

## Holy Habits

What comes to your mind when you hear the term 'Holy Habits'?

You might be inclined to think about your good and bad habits!

We all need to develop and learn new positive and challenging Christian habits.

Holy Habits is now part of the Project 32 deliverables and will commence in January 2023 in each congregation. We are also working on setting up an online Holy Habits group, for those who are remote from a Moravian congregation. Each congregation will identify and appoint a Holy Habits Champion. The Holy Habits Champion is not expected to do everything, but to co-ordinate, encourage and seek ways of engaging with the materials, so that we grow as individuals and as a congregation, as we build the Kingdom of God.

Do you recall the below Synod resolution?

#### Synod 2021 Resolution 15:

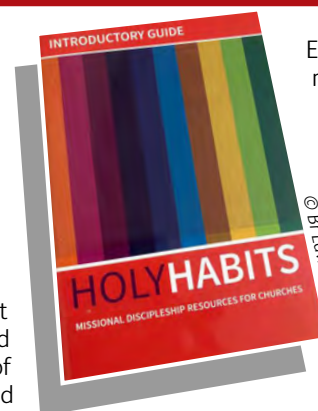
'That the Provincial Board adopt Holy Habits as an integral part of Project 32 (the decade celebrating the tri-centenary of the renewal of the Moravian Church and Moravian missions), authorise a working

group to take forward Holy Habits in the Province and in the congregations, and arrange for each congregation to have a set of Holy Habits books.'

When we look back over the Synod resolution, the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland is committed to use the Holy Habits material and make it a part of our Christian armour and life. I therefore encourage each of you to work with the material and make a difference within your congregational context and the Province.

There are eleven books in the Holy Habits set (not listed in a particular order):

- Introduction
- Serving
- Sharing resources
- Gladness and generosity
- Breaking bread
- Prayer
- Fellowship
- Eating together
- Biblical teaching
- Making more disciples
- Worship



Each congregation will receive the complete set of books, set to facilitate your interaction. If you have already looked at Holy Habits with your congregation, follow the material and ask yourself: how have we embedded the learning? What can we do now?

Additionally, do not forget your congregation work with children and young people. Keep the Sunday School attuned with your plans and discussions as they are an important part of our future.

If you have any ideas for locally launching Holy Habits or visually displaying progress; speak to your minister and or congregation champion.

We also need members to pray for the congregations as they engage with Holy Habits.

Br Edwin Quildan  
Project 32 Team





# British Mission Board - Visit to Tanzania 2022

## Grow where you are planted

In November 2021 I was invited to become an active member of the British Mission Board. The BMB has particular responsibility for the oversight of the South Asia Mission Area and for the Western Province of Tanzania.

In October 2022 Sr Roberta Hoey and I visited Tanzania accompanied by Br Justin Rabbach, Executive Director, American Board of World Mission (ABWM) and Bishop Chris Giesler, Director of Mission Engagement ABWM. At this time, I was also elected as Chair of the BMB.

We flew together to Arusha in the Northern Province of Tanzania, which sits just under Mount Kilimanjaro. The purpose of this visit was to try to re-establish the partnership that the ABWM had previously set up and to seek new ways to support the work in this region.

After a brief rest after travelling, we attended Sunday Service at Arusha Congregation which started at 8am and ended at lunchtime. It was a wonderful service with three choirs, four collections and a sermon by Bishop Giesler about Zacchaeus. The most interesting thing about the church on first inspection was that they were building another church around the existing structure as the original church had reached its capacity. We had a tour of the new church building and the administration offices and then shared a lunch with the congregation.

In the afternoon we had a local tour by one of the church members who was previously in a diplomatic role. This included the Arusha International Conference Centre which had been the scene of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1994). We also visited the Head Office of the Moravian Church in Northern Province and a number of properties which were being developed for use by church workers.

On the Monday we held a meeting with Br Isaac Gabriel Siame - Chair of the Province, Br Jeremia Mwnifwila and Br Samsoni Tuyele Nzumda. Also in attendance was the treasurer Sr Ester Beldon Mwakisyala and church member and technical support worker who also works for Compassion International, Br Elias Mwinuka.

The current Provincial Board were keen to re-establish a supportive partnership with ABWM. We discussed their needs and their long-term plan and strategy and after much discussion they came to a mutually satisfactory agreement. This was largely due to the translation skills of Br Elias. It was a moving experience when Bishop Chris prayed for future of the partnership. At the end of our meeting gifts were exchanged and we prepared for the next leg of our journey.

On Tuesday we were collected by Br Richard Lwali and we travelled by car from Arusha in the North to Tabora in the West. The journey of over 400 miles took 12 hours in total with two meal breaks. Most of the journey was long expanses of fairly barren landscape with small townships selling produce like bed frames, maize, bricks, baskets and onions.



Northern Tanzania

On Wednesday we met with the Provincial Board of the Western Province; Bishop Ezekiel Yona, Br Richard Lwali and Br Emmanuel Mwtunda. The BMB has a supportive relationship with the Western Province which faces challenges as it moves towards self-sufficiency. We aim to move towards a partnership in the future with project based financial support. We were shown the plans for a new Church Administration building and the Board

was keen to show us around the existing Tabora church and the new church being built alongside. It was a pattern within all the church sites that we visited that the congregation had outgrown the original building and were in the process of building new larger churches alongside. What a desirable situation to be in!

In Tabora we also visited the pharmacy which has received funding in the past from the MWA and YPMA. We visited four congregations: Isevyu, Milumbani, Moira and Chem Chem and met with the pastors of each church.

On Thursday we visited three education facilities; Bishop Kisanji Girls Secondary School, Lusangi Moravian Junior Seminary and Lusangi Bible College where they train young evangelists. We also visited Sikonge Hospital, another beneficiary of funding from the MWA and YPMA.

On our final evening we shared a meal with the Board and administration staff, and Sr Roberta and I each received two beautiful dresses and Brs Justin and Chris two shirts each, all made from the traditional wax print cotton, that were made from measurements taken on our first night there.

Although the business side of our visit was over we took the opportunity to visit Zanzibar. There we visited the Slavery Museum, a stark reminder of the region's disturbing past. We returned home on Saturday via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on our eighth flight of the trip.

My overall impression of Tanzania was of a country which is growing in faith and opportunities. In Sikonge I saw a flower growing up through the concrete between the dry pavement and the wall. It suggested that despite its conditions it was thriving. It felt like a metaphor for the people we had met. Despite living in conditions that we might not be able to tolerate they were growing in numbers and in spirit and blooming, growing where they were planted. (1 Corinthians 7:20)

**Sr Jane Carter**  
Chair, British Mission Board



# Report from the Autumn Conference of the Western District 2022

- Held at Swindon Moravian Church on 12th November 2022

In an attempt to encourage more people to attend WDC we combined our business meeting with a lunch and the District Rally, and we are pleased to report that a number of additional observers joined us for the day, including two toddlers who were delighted with the play equipment in Swindon's Hall.

We were pleased to welcome Sr Jane Carter to her first WDC as the new minister of Swindon and Tytherton congregations, and as we were meeting at Swindon Church, she led the opening devotions.

Br Michael Newman brought Unity and Provincial news from the Provincial Board with a number of updates to the printed material, including news of ministerial calls.

Sr Patsy and Br Paul Holdsworth will be leaving the Western District in the new year, to answer Calls to the Lancashire District. We wish them well in their new congregations.

A minister will be called to the Bath

Coronation Avenue and Weston congregations but would not be starting for several months. In the meantime, sacramental cover will be provided by Church House and Sr Jane Carter. A meeting will be held between Provincial Board, ministers and Pulpit secretaries to discuss pulpit cover during this time.

The congregation at Kingswood had been considering closure in the new year, however this has been put on hold while approaches from other church organisations are being considered. Brockweir and Kingswood congregations will enter a period of interregnum for the time being.

Bath Weston have nearly completed the improvements to their church and hall and they are widely used by church and other groups. Swindon are also in the throes of redecorating their hall. Blackbird Leys are still raising funds for their new church building. Unfortunately they cannot demolish the existing building until all the funds for the new build have been raised. The proposed Retreat Centre

at Brockweir is shelved for the time being due to planning and financial issues.

It was pleasing to note that most congregations have good ecumenical relations with other churches in their areas and that a number of joint services and enterprises are being held. Youth work is also encouraging, Swindon have started a second session for Rainbows to accommodate those on the waiting list, Girls Brigades in Coronation Avenue are still going strong, and a new Mums & Tots group has started using the Sunday School at Brockweir.

At the conclusion of the Business part of the day we enjoyed taking part in various craft activities and quizzes organised by our ministers while we ate our lunches and spent time catching up with each other. Our Rally service included a presentation from Sr Jane Carter about her trip to Tanzania. The slides were inspiring, and we were very envious of the beautiful dresses that had been made for her.

**Sr Sue Groves**

## Report of the Midlands District Conference

- Held on Saturday 15th October 2022

The meeting was held on Zoom again and there were six sisters and four brothers present. After the opening devotions the Chair, Sr Shorten, welcomed Br Quildan as the PEC representative. Br Quildan brought news from the Provincial Board and answered any questions that members had from the PEC report.

Each congregation deputy then brought greetings and a verbal report from their own congregation:

**Ockbrook** - had held: an Easter Day service on Zoom from the Burial Ground; a Jubilee scarecrow event in the village; and a garden party in the new land acquired at the back of the Lecture Hall. Five members had enjoyed the trip to Herrnhut.

**Leicester** - a committee was set up to encourage new members, supported by Br Kreusel. This was prompted by visits

to the church of the local Asian community and a dementia family member, and the Asian community joined in a fellowship day with Leicester. Different styles of worship have also been used e.g. a circle format. There was a steady attendance on Zoom services but some people had not returned to church in person because of mobility issues.

**Hall Green** - the hybrid service had continued with Leominster joining in. 50-60 people attend in church and 20+ at home. There will be an investment in new cameras to improve the Zoom facilities.

We have been blessed with new members in the congregation due to Sparkhill Methodist Church closing their church permanently. The congregation are opening their doors again in December with a Christmas Community Open Day with free food and face painting.

Some members joined a four-week course called 'Everybody Welcome' and an Advent course will be run.

**Leominster** - hosted a Lent lunch in conjunction with Churches Together in Leominster. They were very pleased to finally host the Provincial Men's Fellowship Day which had been postponed and enjoyed listening to Sr Lorraine Parsons give a talk about Captain Jackson, the last captain of the Harmony mission ship, who is buried in Leominster burial ground. A successful jumble sale was held in July and another one is planned for October.

Another joint District service is planned for 2023 following the successful one held this year. Everyone agreed to keep future District meetings on Zoom as it reduces travel time and expenses and allows those who can't travel to access the meetings.

**Sr Lorraine Shorten**



# Northern Ireland (Troubles and Reconciliation) Bill



## Context

The UK Government has, over the past 18 months, tried to bring in legislation to stop prosecutions for 'Troubles' related crimes. A cynical person might say that this is to protect soldiers from being prosecuted for offences that happened here during that time. The Government have certainly been under considerable pressure from English MPs like Johnny Mercer to protect the soldiers from what they consider historic matters that happened in the height of violence here. Many of these soldiers are now quite elderly and prosecutions are very difficult. But the enquiries and inquests on events like Bloody Sunday and Ballymurphy make for difficult listening or reading!

However, it must always be recognised that the Provisional IRA and other Republican groups and various Loyalist groups killed many more people in horrific incidents and very few of these murders and maimings have come to court (see the Sutton Index in the appendix). The Republican movement glorifies its killers and will never apologise for what they did, the people that they killed, maimed and bereaved. Likewise, the Loyalist groups have not apologised and very few in either camp have come forward to acknowledge their part in murder and maiming.

It is further very difficult to find sufficient evidence to take prosecutions to court and even more difficult, as time goes by, to get a successful outcome. In addition, the legal process here is very slow at the best of times. So, it is very unlikely that the majority of people who were bereaved or injured (the victims) will ever find any justice this side of the grave. So only a few people will ever have their day in court and find out who killed their father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandfather or grandmother, son or daughter.

The common perception is that it has been easier to bring prosecutions against the Army, the RUC and Ulster Defence Regiment because they have records that can be checked. Further there have been differences between the way that the two communities have reacted to their losses. There has been more community work on the Nationalist side to band together in a campaign to highlight their losses. This has not been so evident on the Unionist side and some feel that the narrative of Nationalist losses has obscured the Unionist losses.

What cannot be denied is that the grief of a family losing a loved one, or the pain of a victim suffering through the years is the same regardless of background, and religious and political identity. In addition, the impact of this violence and suffering passes through the generations.

## Legislation proposals

In March 2020 the then Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis introduced a proposal in the House of Commons that would

provide for an effective cessation of all prosecutions for troubles related crimes. This met with universal opposition from all the groups representing victims and from churches in Northern Ireland. The feeling was that it was totally unfair to remove all hope of victims gaining their day in court for their loved ones and it would let those who had been involved in killing, from whatever side, totally off the hook.

This proposal never went any further and was withdrawn when a Bill for a new proposal was introduced in May 2022, again by the Secretary of State. This is the Northern Ireland (Troubles and Reconciliation) Bill which has the following main clauses:

- The creation of an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery.
- All existing criminal processes on Troubles related crimes would cease immediately and there would be no further enquiries or inquests by the police.
- This Commission would investigate all troubles related deaths if immediate family members requested it. It could give families more information about what had happened to their loved ones and it could conduct criminal investigations where it judges that to be appropriate.
- Combatants would be able to approach the Commission and give information to the Commission about their participation in troubles related crimes. If this information was judged to be in good faith then they would not face any prosecution. However, the combatants could give a selective version of what they had been involved in and it would not be easy to check if the full story had been told. If individuals knowingly or recklessly provided false information to the Commission they could be prosecuted and have their immunity revoked.
- Disapply the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998 for individuals who choose not to tell the Commission what they know and are then convicted of an offence so that they face a full, rather than reduced, sentence.
- There would be provision for oral histories to be collected and for academic research into the troubles to be facilitated. It was said to me that this was to enable the often unheard voices to be heard. The stories in the book commissioned by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 'Considering Grace' would come into this category.

This bill has passed through the House of Commons with one amendment succeeding, i.e. that there is no immunity of prosecution for those who committed 'troubles era' sex offences (this is judged to be a war crime). The Bill is now going through the House of Lords and is facing vocal opposition there.

This proposals in this bill has again met with universal condemnation from all victims' groups, on both sides of the community and cross community groups, and Churches as it appears to set to naught the need so many people have for justice. A murder in the rest of the United Kingdom, that was not troubles related or indeed in the Republic of Ireland would never be closed, but a different law will apply here in Northern Ireland.

Many groups are taking the opportunity to make representations that can be taken on board during the revising stage of the Bill in the House of Lords. As part of this I, as Vice President of the Irish Council of Churches, with a few others, met with Lord Caine who is steering the Bill through the Lords. We expressed our view that victims' groups had not been consulted and in fact the word victim only appeared twice in the text of the document. I also noted that the word reconciliation only appears in the title of the Commission and there is no understanding of what reconciliation might mean in Northern Ireland.

As the Bill is going through the House of Lords the Government has indicated that it will accept amendments and I have included some of these in the description of the clauses of the Bill.

So, it is an unsatisfactory piece of legislation that is slightly better than the previous attempt in 2020. Everyone recognises that there is no perfect answer to the terrible legacy of death, maiming and hurt that will pass through generations here. The investigative and legal process so far has failed so many. But I believe that what is needed is a process that honours and supports those who have lost so much through what is euphemistically called the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland.

These words from Isaiah 53 (adapted) come to mind: 'they were wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon them was the punishment that made us whole ...'

**Sr Sarah Groves**  
Gracehill



### Appendix

*The Sutton index says that 3,532 people were killed during The Troubles (1969-2001).*

*Republican Paramilitary groups killed 2,057 people.*

*Loyalist Paramilitary groups killed 1,027 people.*

*British forces killed 363 people of which 297 were killed by the British Army\*.*

*Irish forces killed 5 people.*

*Others impossible to identify were responsible for killing 80 people.*

*\*Investigation of Former Armed Forces personnel who served in Northern Ireland' - research paper in the House of Commons library says that approx. half of these were civilians.*

## The Daily Watchwords

A new year brings a new textbook. On our pilgrimage to Herrnhut in September 2022 we saw and heard how this was compiled.

When Herrnhut was founded in 1722 a biblical text was shared daily by word of mouth and I believe people in the settlement greeted each other not with 'hello' or 'good morning', but with the watchword. On 3rd May 1728 at an evening meeting Zinzendorf gave the community a brief word for the coming day. With the verse of a hymn 'Love drove Him hither, love tore Him from the throne, and should I not love Him?' began an unprecedented story. Each subsequent evening at the singing meeting Zinzendorf delivered the watchword for the following day.

The next year together with a group of elders Zinzendorf chose suitable texts for a whole year completing the work in June. Thereafter an elder drew out a text for the following day. It was not until 1731 that a series of texts was printed for the whole year.

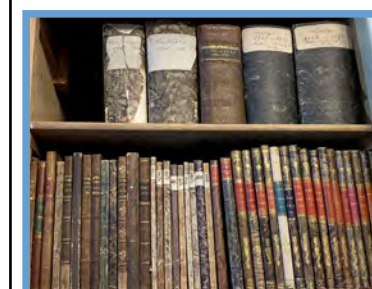
Above the church in Herrnhut there is a small display that contains a large oval-shaped glass bowl set in a silver stand. Once a year this is taken to the meeting room in the church headquarters and texts placed in it. There are 1,824 numbered cards representing the texts, but the choices

from the previous two years are removed so that 1,100 cards are placed in the bowl to allow the texts to be selected. Over three sessions in one day all the texts are drawn for a year - three years in advance. There is a



© Br Joachim Kreusel

careful checking process to ensure that the text for each day is recorded accurately. It is therefore a form of 'lot' as it is a random choice from 1,100 chances as to which text is allocated to which day. There are no special texts for days such as Easter or Christmas. However, if the text is totally unsuitable another is selected. An appropriate New Testament text is chosen to compliment the one for each day and this may help get over these issues.



The German version of our daily watchwords - 'Losungen' - is compiled and printed. It is then translated into English and sent around the world for translation into local languages - eventually being read in at least sixty different tongues. Each province complements the text slightly differently. I can recall when

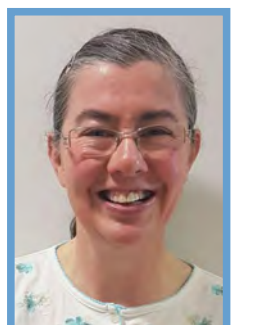
the British Province had a hymn verse after each text rather than usually having one hymn verse and a reflection as we read today.

We were shown a beautiful large cupboard and when opened it contained a copy of each Losungen from 1731. There's plenty of room for more.

The idea of the hymn verse to compliment the text is a little like the Singing Hour service introduced by Zinzendorf. This was a sung service with hymn verses chosen to explain a biblical text.

As you use your textbook this year remember the many other countries that will be using it - almost like a prayer watch - as I'm sure somewhere in the world there will be always someone using their Daily Watchwords.

**Sr Claire Summers**





# 'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Maureen Colbert

*Sr Maureen Colbert is a retired teacher and a member of the Horton Congregation in Bradford. She was for many years the Musical Director of the Moravian Singers in Yorkshire; she taught for a year, as a volunteer, in the Rajpur Institute in India and the Shristi Kindergarten in Kathmandu and is now the World Day of Prayer coordinator for the north of England and Northern Ireland.*

## **Introduction to your background, early years, education, and family**

I come from a family long associated with the Moravian Church in Little Horton, Bradford. My great grandparents, grandfather and parents worshipped there. I was born in the family home in Wibsey in the 1950s and attended local schools. I trained as a music teacher at Trent Park College in Cockfosters, London.

## **How and when did you come to faith?**

I have a simple, child-like faith which has been part of my DNA since birth. Mum and Dad took me to Church and Sunday School, and I was encouraged to lead a full life in the church. Mum was Captain of the Girls' Brigade (9th Bradford), and I joined the company when I was five or six and went through to become a young officer. In my teenage years I joined the Bradford GB band and played the trumpet, and later the side drum, in National competitions at the Albert Hall in London, Blackpool Tower and at local galas.

## **What led you into teaching?**

At the start of the 1970s, choices in employment for women were somewhat limited: you could become a nurse, a teacher, a secretary, a factory/shop worker or a hairdresser and that was about it unless you had a particular gift. At the time I had a great love of music but no outstanding gift so, as the saying goes 'Those who can, do; those who can't, teach'.

## **What has been your greatest joy in your Church life?**

I suppose it is the fellowship found amongst Moravians initially and Christians in general. Although the Moravian Church is small, in comparison with other denominations, that means it is easy to forge links with Moravians across the world. Before I went to India I had met Br Thespall Kundan several times (he taught the young ladies of Horton the Ladakhi dance performed at the 1982 Pageant).

## **How important is music to you?**

If you had asked me this 30 years ago I would have said that life would have had no meaning without it. Now it is a pleasant pastime.

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

I remember a minister friend telling me once that she was so angry with God and I was shocked. It had never occurred to me that God was someone you could be angry with. I have

questioned God's decisions, but I don't think I have been angry.

## **Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death? Do you believe in a resurrection, and if so, what will it be like?**

Death itself doesn't frighten me but the manner of my dying does. I certainly believe in a life after death and hope that, at the Judgement, I shall have done enough good in my life to merit eternal life in heaven. That is as far as I can get at the moment.

## **What can we learn from other Churches and other faiths?**

I was an RE Coordinator at one point in my school career and studying other faiths made me confirm that Christianity was the right path for me. In Delhi I visited the Baha'i Lotus Temple and found that such a serene place to linger. Whilst climbing up to the Monkey Temple in Shimla I came upon a group of Jain ladies who wanted to take my photograph because I was exotic! I love the ecumenism of World Day of Prayer and look forward to discussing points of faith with women from other denominations.

## **Why are so many people turning their backs on organised religion?**

It is said that people are more spiritual these days and it may be so, but we don't necessarily see it in churches. Organised religion has been responsible for so much harm that it is no wonder people do not wish to be a part of it. Those outside a church family expect those within to be perfect and that is just not possible; we are human with human faults.

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

The thought of life inhabiting this universe with us fascinates me, so I adore science fiction films. My favourite film, therefore, is the sci-fi movie: 'Event Horizon'. I resisted reading 'Lord of the Rings' for years but, when I eventually succumbed, it absorbed me. Music is difficult because it has so many other associations. My favourite classical music is Tosca (Puccini) and Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis (Vaughan Williams). I love rock music by Led Zeppelin, Free and Cream.

## **The place where you feel closest to God?**

Amongst nature, in the car or lighting a candle in an empty church.

## **What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?**

I intend to be cremated with my ashes scattered so won't need a gravestone. I hope to leave the world having done no harm.

## **Finally, any major regrets and any major joys in your life?**

When I left Kuwait, where I had been teaching for two years, my relationship with my flat mate had broken down and I didn't mend it. I have regretted that ever since. Major joys are usually associated with family, friendships and seeing ex-pupils achieve their potential.



## Discoveries from Family History Research:

# Adolf von Ekesparre

*In this article Alistair McKerrrell, a retired engineer from Glasgow, after researching his family history in Moravian archives, relates the discoveries he found about his four times great grandfather, Nikolaus Adolf von Ekesparre and his wife and daughter who served the Moravian Church in Europe, Britain and America during the 18th and early 19th centuries. He was generally known in England and America as Adolph Ekesparre.*

Adolph belonged to the Ecke family, Baltic Germans who lived in Swedish Livonia (now part of Estonia) where their traditional home was the island of Saaremaa. Adolph's father, Karl Johann Ecke, was ennobled by Queen Ulrika Eleonora of Sweden in 1719 on account of his distinguished military service which gave him rights to the noble name 'von Ekesparre'. Interestingly, today there is an 'Ekesparre Boutique Hotel' in Kuressaare, the largest town on Saaremaa in Sestonia, originally the home of a descendant of Karl Johann.

Born in 1729, Adolph was Karl Johann's youngest son. He did not follow the family tradition into military or public service but from the age of sixteen, devoted his life to the Moravian Church with which the family were closely connected.

In September 1756 Adolph sailed from London to New York on the twelfth voyage of the Moravian mission ship, the 'Irene', with a party of brethren bound for the Moravian community at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The brethren's diary at Bethlehem records the following for 16th December 1756:

*Nathaneal, who had left by horseback yesterday to meet Brethren, brought Single Brethren Petrus and Ekesparre here. The latter is to be Vice-trustee of Single Brethren and Trustee of young men and older boys sent from Europe.*

Adolph arrived at Bethlehem during a difficult time for the community which was profoundly affected by what is known as the French and Indian War. The Moravian



© Moravian Church

settlements around Bethlehem provided a safe refuge for hundreds of frontier colonists forced to flee hostilities.

The recently built 'manor house', known as Nazareth Hall and intended as a community centre for worship and church administration, was quickly adapted to accommodate refugees. The brethren had expected that Count Zinzendorf, who had visited Bethlehem in 1742, would eventually occupy Nazareth Hall as the base for leading the Church's mission in America but circumstances compelled him to remain in Europe until his death in 1760.

And so, in 1759 Nazareth Hall was opened as a boarding school for Moravian boys with Adolph Ekesparre as the first Principal in charge of 92 pupils. In later years, the school admitted boys whose parents were not of the Moravian faith but were sympathetic to the ethos of the Church. Known as the Moravian Academy the school enjoyed a high reputation until closing in 1929. Nazareth Hall also housed the Moravian College and Seminary in its early years before moving to Bethlehem to become what is now the Moravian University. Nazareth Hall, converted to apartments, still stands solid and elegant in downtown Nazareth, a testament to the skill and vision of the original builders.

In 1767 Adolph returned to England to be single brethren's labourer at the Ockbrook settlement near Derby. Ockbrook, founded in 1750, was at that time the administrative centre for the Moravian Church in Britain. During six weeks towards the end of 1772 Adolph is recorded as resident in the brethren's house at the Fulneck settlement in Yorkshire. The reason was probably to fulfil the residential qualification in the local parish for his forthcoming marriage to Margaret Cox, a resident in the sister's house at Fulneck. They married at St Wilfrid's Church, Calverley on 30th December 1772. At this time marriages in England had to be conducted in an Anglican Church, the one exception being Jewish marriages. No doubt Margaret and

Adolph became acquainted with each other through church activities.

After their marriage both were appointed assistant labourers at Leominster Church in Herefordshire. Here in 1774 their daughter, Charlotte was born. Another daughter, Joanna sadly died in infancy. Adolph himself died in 1778, aged 48 at Leominster where he and little Joanna lie in the church burial ground.

Margaret with her daughter Charlotte returned to the widow's house at Fulneck where she lived for the remaining 24 years of her life. Charlotte was educated at Fulneck and received into the congregation at the age of 12. From her independent means Margaret Ekesparre provided a mortgage of £1,000 to the Church on the security of the Ockbrook estate which the Church repaid in her lifetime.

The Ockbrook connection with my antecedents continued in 1799 when Charlotte Ekesparre married John Gay Brett, at that time a labourer at Fulneck and who had studied at the Moravian Seminary at Niesky in Saxony. In 1803 John Gay Brett was appointed warden of Ockbrook, supported by Charlotte until his death in 1811. Charlotte returned to the widow's house at Fulneck with her children, one of whom was John Lowdham Brett, my twice great grandfather.

I feel fortunate to have discovered these antecedents and am proud of their contribution to the life and work of the Moravian Church.

My grateful thanks to those who assisted my enquiries, in particular Lorraine Parsons, archivist at Church House in London.

**Alistair McKerrrell**





## Cliftonville, Belfast

The guest preacher at the Harvest service was the Rev Kiran Steel Wimberly, the wife of the Rev Dr Alex Wimberly who is the present leader of the Corrymeela Community. MWA members who attended Irish Retreats may remember occasions when it was held at the Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle. The Harvest display was of items requested by the Trussell Trust to help those in need and there were Harvest gift envelopes for the church.

14 Cliftonville members attended the Irish District Service at Gracehill to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the founding of Herrnhut in 1722. Congregation representatives took part in the service and the preacher was Br Livingstone Thompson.

Afterwards we enjoyed soup and rolls and had a happy time of fellowship in the church hall. Our thanks to Gracehill for their hospitality and particularly to Vera Montgomery, who organised the meal, and her efficient team of helpers.



© Sr Elaine Stephens

lives near the church, with three friends paid a visit and asked if they could see inside the church.

**Sr Edna Cooper**

## Pioneer Ministry - Storytelling at Fetter Lane, London

Our latest six-week Pioneer project ended just before the first Sunday in Advent. Storytelling was the feature, exploring relationships with family, with nature, with each other, with ourselves and with God. Led by our minister Sr Claire Maxwell, we used a technique for storytelling developed by the training organisation OutoftheBox ([www.outoftheboxtraining.org](http://www.outoftheboxtraining.org)).

Following a training session, the Pioneer group members each took a turn on one of the six Saturdays to tell a story using the resources - felt shapes, wooden blocks and figures, bits and pieces of natural materials - to tell a short and simple story to a group of mostly under-fives (and their parents). Because of the season (end of October to the end of November), we tied the stories to changes in nature, feeling frightened, loss, community and expectations.

The stories were short and simple, leaving time for the children to do craft activities or use their nature packs to explore the

exciting Moravian burial ground, finding 'treasure', spotting insects, collecting leaves climbing on logs, spotting fox holes or just running in this safe and open space while parents enjoyed a cup of tea. Each session began and ended with a song, followed by a children's prayer.

With Sr Claire about to take on a new challenge, ours will be to maintain the community links she has forged and to create a welcoming environment for children and adults to meet and to explore faith.

**Sr Cynthia Dize**



© Sr Claire Maxwell

## A Fond Farewell from Fetter Lane

The Fetter Lane congregation in Chelsea, West London is due to bid a fond farewell to their Minister Sr Claire Maxwell and her family in the New Year of 2023 - she has undoubtedly made a great difference to our small community. Beginning her tenure in 2018, Sr Claire and her husband Steve moved all the way to London for her first full time posting in the ministry. Though our congregation is small in number this was no small task! Our location, historic status and our disparate make up would present challenges to any minister, not least to one so early in their career. Claire however energetically embraced each challenge as it presented itself. She brought with her many new ideas and practices in worship for us to explore, and built bridges with our local community including the council and local businesses.



Claire seated at Jubilee event

© Sr Norah Procter

Claire set up a Heritage and Ecology Committee as a way to focus issues of our historic God's Acre and bring in expertise from beyond the congregation to support its refurbishment and long term management. She also founded the pioneering Lambs Way Ministry, sharing the Christian message through specially commissioned events, exploring faith through art, craft and movement. This was notable for engaging families and artists in the surrounding areas. During their time with us Claire and Steve started a family of their own welcoming Phoebe in 2018 and Zachary (Zach) in 2021. She also supported the community through the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping coordinate the continuation of worship during that extraordinary period with the help of the congregation and other local leaders. It has been wonderful to have a young family at the heart of our church for the first time in many years and their progress has brought pleasure and delight to us all.

Sr Claire will be remembered fondly by the Fetter Lane Congregation and very much missed, but we understand why her energy and enthusiasm might be needed elsewhere in the Province too. We wish Sr Claire and her family every success into the future and trust that they will stay closely in touch.

**Br Herbert Daly**

on behalf of the Fetter Lane Congregation

## Ballinderry, County Antrim

The last few months at Ballinderry have been action packed. From movie nights to coffee mornings, Bible studies to a fellowship lunch, not forgetting our Christmas Fair. Each occasion has been a wonderful opportunity to be together and to welcome in members of the community.

Ballinderry also had a Blessing of the Animals Service - we were delighted to see that even Scooby-Doo made an appearance!



© Sr Elaine Stephens

We also enjoyed our trip to Gracehill to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Herrnhut. It was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and to make new. We thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality.

The whole congregation has worked very hard over the last few months to make all these events possible. We are grateful for the opportunities we have been given this year and are excited for the year ahead.

**Sr Elaine Stephens**

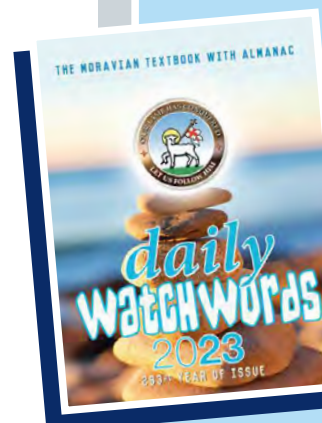
### Notices

#### Daily Watchwords

The Daily Watchwords for 2023 have now arrived at Church House and are available to order. The cost per Watchword remains at £6.50, but please be aware that postage costs could be higher than in previous years. This is out of our control.

We will endeavour to deliver as many as possible via what many of us know as 'Moravian Mail', i.e., when someone visits Church House or when a member of the Provincial Board is in a particular part of the Province.

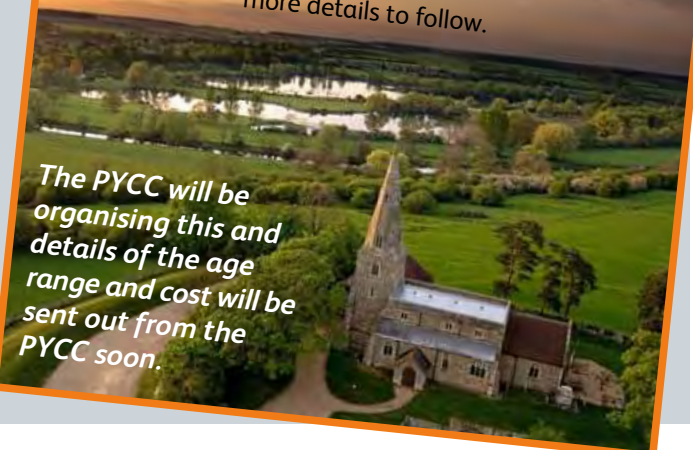
Please submit your order to Sr Gladys Korsah in the Bookroom at: [gladys.korsah@moravian.org.uk](mailto:gladys.korsah@moravian.org.uk).



## Summer Camp 2023

...will be held at  
The Chellington Centre, Bedford  
(<https://www.chellington.org/>)  
31st July - 4th August  
- more details to follow.

The PYCC will be organising this and details of the age range and cost will be sent out from the PYCC soon.



### From Church House

#### Calls

We are delighted to be able to inform you that Sr Lorraine Shorten has received and accepted a new Call of the Church. Sr Shorten has accepted a call to serve the Bath Coronation Avenue and Bath Weston congregations, from 24th April 2023. Her last service at Hall Green and Leominster will be on Easter Sunday, 9th April 2023.

We are also delighted to be able to inform you that Sr Sue Groves has received and accepted a Call to serve the Brockweir congregation as a Lay Pastor from 6th February 2023. The Call will initially be for a period of six months whilst initial training takes place.

Sr Groves will be supported by the ordained ministers in the Western District, Sr Jane Carter and Sr Lorraine Shorten, who will provide sacramental cover for the Brockweir congregation.

Please keep Sr Shorten, Sr Groves and their families, along with the congregations in your prayers at this time.

#### Provincial Diary for January

26-27	PEC Meeting	Church House
28	PYCC	Ockbrook

### Congregational Register

#### Baptisms

26th Sept 2021	Maria Rose Craig	Kilwarlin
9th Oct 2022	Amber Elizabeth Thom	Kilwarlin
9th Oct 2022	Ella Grace Thom	Kilwarlin
9th Oct 2022	John Robert Law	Kilwarlin

#### Receptions

9th Jan 2022	David Keenan	Kilwarlin
--------------	--------------	-----------

#### Deaths

5th Feb 2022	Ronnie Walker	Kilwarlin
25th July 2022	Robert Walker	Kilwarlin
25th Oct 2022	Molly Lythe	Fulneck

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

Dates to remember!



# East Tytherton Moravian Church



© Sr Jane Carter

Nestled between Chippenham and Calne in Wiltshire the hamlet of East Tytherton is a pretty, peaceful oasis. At the heart of it stands the Moravian Church with its rich history and charm. The Church owes its existence to John Cennick, an eighteenth-century evangelical preacher who worked for a while alongside John Wesley and George Whitefield in Bristol. Eventually he concentrated on the Wiltshire area, preaching in nearby Brinkworth, Foxham, Lyneham, and Malmesbury, forming societies in several villages.

In November 1742, John Cennick purchased a house in 'Tetherton' as it then was. 'As soon as I saw the house I resolved to buy it in faith that hereafter it might be a Fold for the Flock to assemble in, though at this it was far out of the way' he wrote. The house soon proved to be too small and for a while Cennick preached under a pear tree in his orchard while the building was enlarged.

Cennick, born in Reading on 4th December 1718, was baptised in the Parish Church three days later. He became a Christian at the age of nineteen and his newfound faith brought him into contact with the Methodist movement. Cennick became John Wesley's first lay preacher after standing in for a speaker who failed to turn up at a meeting in Kingswood. Eventually Wesley and Cennick disagreed over certain doctrines and went their separate ways.

Cennick's heart was always in open air preaching and within a couple of years he was preaching mainly in Wiltshire. With the establishment of the congregation in Tytherton (1743), societies from the surrounding villages had a centre to gather at every Sunday and the sacraments were presided over by George Whitefield.

Cennick was not focused on organising congregations and in 1745, with the agreement of the members, the Tytherton congregation was handed over to the Moravian Church. Cennick was ordained as a Moravian Minister in 1749 but still continued as a wandering preacher. He died in London on 5th July 1755 at the age of thirty-six.

The house at the west end of the chapel is where John Cennick lived. This is known as The Manse and has been converted into two flats (I live in the Upper Flat) and some of the original furniture (table and chairs) is in the church. The house at the east end was used as a school and residence for the teacher

and has been converted into a house and a flat. All these properties are rented, providing an income for the Church. The large building behind the church, Kellaways House, was at one time a boarding school (closed in 1939) for the children of Moravian missionaries but later on was attended by children from the surrounding area, regardless of their denomination. The present Girl Guide Headquarters was at one time a Moravian primary school but was handed over to the Local Education Authority and subsequently to the Guides.

The lawn in front of the church is the original cemetery, and in the nineteenth century, a new burial ground was opened and can be reached by the lane which continues past the old school. The names of those buried in the old cemetery are recorded on a stone built into the south wall of the church. This is now illegible but a written record survives. God's Acre is a quiet haven with a number of significant graves of historic interest.

When Cennick's pear tree, his original preaching place, was blown down in a storm some years ago, the wood was used to make a chair for the use of the minister and two collection plates which are in use in the church. Another pear tree was planted shortly afterwards, it was eaten by the minister's donkey and no further attempt was made to perpetuate it.

All services are open to the public and are conducted in the church on the first and third Sunday at 10.30am. Holy Communion is included on the first Sunday each month and is open to all believers and seekers. We hold a monthly Soup Lunch which attracts around 14 people to our small hall and is very enjoyable.

It is a joy to live in this peaceful and picturesque spot in God's Kingdom. A friend recently said, 'You are living in history!' From my study window I see walkers passing and often encourage them to look around the church. The congregation is very small but faithful 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' (Matt 18:20), and we continue to witness in this small hamlet. In the new year we are planning a number of new ventures to encourage the local residents to explore what is currently their only community building. We have hopes for an Easter Egg Hunt, An Austerity Christian Aid Lunch, Summer afternoon teas, craft days, retreat days and much more.

*Sr Jane Carter*

## 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.**

**Editorial Team**, Church House,  
5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ  
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  
**Printing & Distribution**  
**G. R. Walkden**  
Tel 01253 681338