



Sikonge 100



As part of the 100th Anniversary celebration of the Sikonge Hospital we share memories of Sikonge (1968-1985), this time from Sr Ellen Dalgaard Jensen.

I have been asked to write about my time in Sikonge when I was employed by BDM from 1968 to 1975. BDM (Brødremenighedens Danske Mission), the Danish branch of the Moravian Church, has been working in Western Tanzania since 1922 when a group of eight Danish missionaries, mostly nurses, was sent to Sikonge. In 1923 they welcomed the first doctor, Arthur Keevill and his wife Addie, who was a midwife.

The purpose of the work was always to spread the gospel by preaching, teaching, and doing diakonia. When I arrived in Sikonge in 1968 the hospital and maternity unit had already been there since 1930 and 1931, respectively. In 1968 there were about twenty-five Danish missionaries; when visiting Sikonge in 2010 there were just two missionaries left. Today in 2023 the number has once again increased.

I am a nurse and midwife, qualifying as a nurse in Denmark and doing my midwifery training in Scotland. Having the British midwifery certification and registration meant that there was no problem when entering and beginning to work in Tanzania.

It was a big challenge to work in the maternity unit in Sikonge without running water or electric light during the first years. We only had two beds but often four or five deliveries at the same time. I remember many nights where we used kerosine lamps while the deliveries took place on mats on the floor: I crawled around on my knees between mothers and babies. We had 600-700 deliveries each year rising to 1,000 in 1972. One year we had seventy deliveries in a fortnight. I have worked with doctors from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Africa. Sometimes I had to do doctor's work as he/she could be on safari. For normal deliveries we never called the doctor. I had six nursing assistants and two of those could manage normal deliveries: otherwise, I attended. Sometimes we also had an African midwife.

continues inside on page 64



**A Time for Friendship:
Moravian Women's
Association
Away Day** (page 65)



One in Christ (page 66)



**Spring Gardens Moravian
Church, St John's, Antigua** (page 68)

Editorial

Living many miles from our nearest Moravian congregation, Marilyn and I worship regularly with our local parish church in Fawley Village. We do try to get to a 'free church' service at least once a month, and we enjoy going to the United Reformed Church in nearby Lymington. There is a little enclave of URC Brummies worshipping there, aware of the Moravian work in Birmingham, and they all seem to know Blair Kessler!

Wherever we go, we get a warm welcome, although we can almost see the elders rubbing their hands at the prospect of two potential regular worshippers. There is an all-too-common picture: small numbers, aging worshippers – we're both now in our 70s, but we are still lower than the average age of those present – and a shortage of ministers. Moravian congregations are not alone in this experience.

When a church is small in numbers, the responsibilities of service grow burdensome on the few. Christian service should never be seen as a burden or a chore, but unless the load is shared by the 'whole', then a burden it will become. It's a plea in every church. 'We need more people to share the load.' We also need to allow more people to share the load – but that's another issue.

We need a greater commitment to attendance at worship in order to keep it going, coming together in the praise, prayer and partnership that is essential to healthy church life. Accepting that we all have needs to get away on holiday occasionally; to see family who may be spread far and wide; and we all suffer illness from time to time that keeps us 'indoors'.

Reducing the number of services has been suggested. The more I think about that suggestion, the more I see it as the first step on a slippery slope. As a church, our doors need to be open every Sunday, offering a regular time of Christian worship for the local community. You never know who might be passing by, searching for something. The point is this: keep the doors open.

We always have to remember that, as a church, we are here for the benefit of those who do not yet attend, not for the convenience of those who do.

Then look at what we do in worship. Ring the changes; on occasion make the time together more informal; make more practical use of the premises; and meet occasionally in the cosier surroundings of a smaller worship space, perhaps with comfy chairs, rather than in the empty barn of a building we call the church. Be imaginative, let everyone share their point of view. Take some risks.

Above all, pray for God's guidance so that we might make decisions and changes for the best, and for the furtherance of God's kingdom through our worship and witness in the community in which our premises are located.

Have a good summer,
God bless,

Br David Newman



What's on in your area for your families and young people?

Here are the events in June:

Yorkshire District

2nd June - Adventurers Youth Group (9 years-13 years) Lower Wyke Sunday School 7pm. £1.50 for Tuck.

9th June - Adventurers Youth Group (9 years-13 years) Lower Wyke Sunday School 7pm. £1.50 for Tuck.

16th June - Adventurers Youth Group (9 years-13 years) Lower Wyke Sunday School 7pm. £1.50 for Tuck.

17th June - Scarecrow Festival 10am onwards around Lower Wyke.

18th June - Café Church in Lower Wyke Sunday School, 10.30am followed at 1pm by the Scarecrow Festival.

23rd June - Adventurers Youth Group (9 years-13 years) Lower Wyke Sunday School 7pm. £1.50 for Tuck.

25th June - Senior Youth Group (14+)

Lower Wyke Sunday School 7pm-9pm.

25th June - Horton Moravian Church are having a family focused service 10.30am - suitable for families containing children and/or grandchildren followed by some light refreshments.

Lancashire District

Every Monday at Dukinfield Moravian Church there are Rainbows and Brownies that gather at 6.30pm (term-time only).

Every Tuesday Dukinfield Moravian Church runs a Mums and Tots, starting at 9.00am.

Every Wednesday Dukinfield Moravian Church hosts the Beavers (6.00pm), Cubs (7.00pm) and Scouts (7.15pm) (term-time only).

Every Sunday at Dukinfield Moravian Church there is a Junior Church at 11am.

Northern Ireland District

10th June - Gracehill's Youth Fellowship 'The Lounge' (Gracehill's Youth

Fellowship) are having a day trip to Bangor on Saturday 10th of June. Please contact Rachel on moravianyouthni@gmail.com.

Western District

Sunday 4th June - Toddler Soft Play Group meet in the Sunday School Room 2.30-4.30pm. We are reading some Cecil the sheep books and there will be some songs.

Eastern District

Every Sunday after their 10.30am service Bedford Moravian Church has the opportunity for young people to gather together and play football and table tennis.

25th June - Harlesden Moravian Church hosts an all-age service at 11am to which all are welcome.

Sr Claire Maxwell
PYCC



Safeguarding: Keeping Children Safe

This is something that is a major consideration when we want to work in the church with children and young people, and in my working life! The government decided a few years ago that they would provide guidance to 'Out of School Settings' (now renamed the snappy 'Keeping Children Safe during community activities, after school clubs and tuition') which when issued initially was not very useful and a little out of date. They reissued the guidance in October 2020 which I used to check against when updating the Moravian Church procedures. I am now revisiting and checking again. You will be happy to know that very little will need modifying.

The Government issued 'sector specific' guidance which provides a short reminder of the things we should all be doing, most usefully the check list duplicated below.

7 steps towards running a safe faith setting for children:

- **Assess health and safety risks and take steps to reduce the risks**
- **Have a fire safety and evacuation plan**
- **Have more than one emergency contact number for each child**

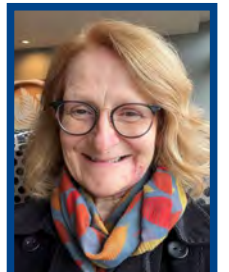
- **Be aware of specific safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and undertake appropriate training**
- **Know referral routes for when you have a concern**
- **Do appropriate pre- and post-employment checks on staff and volunteers**
- **Have a clear complaints policy.**

The full documents for the guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>.

This check list could also be adapted if your work is with vulnerable adults, or for that matter any work done by the church.

Sr Joy Raynor

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



Summer Camp Grants

The Carol Holdsworth Memorial Trust (C.H.M.T.) is willing to offer £100 towards the cost for each child wishing to go to Summer Camp 2023, depending on the number of applicants.

Applications can be made to the C.H.M.T. by contacting Br Alan Holdsworth at: 5 Sandside Close Bradford West Yorkshire BD5 8QA.

Soon after the Keevill's arrived in Sikonge in 1923, Dr Keevill did his first operation. Instead of an operating table he used an old door placed on boxes. The man survived and recovered and gave the new doctor a good reputation. As Addie was a midwife it was most interesting for me to make contact and hear about her time in Sikonge. We began corresponding and twice I visited them in Clevedon, England. Dr Keevill told me about their own big trauma in Sikonge when they lost their only son at birth. It is a great privilege for me to have known them both. Dr Keevill died in 1982 and his wife a few years later.

In 1972 several thousand refugees from Burundi came to the old refugee camp, Pangale. There were already political refugees from different countries in Africa and at Pangale they found a good hiding place. With many more refugees suddenly arriving to settle for a while the water supply failed. Many children died from lack of water. I was one of two nurses from Sikonge who went out to help in the camp. I remember days where a long row of refugees was standing for hours in the burning sun waiting to get a little attention and some medicine. On and off a tin of water went from one to another so each could drink just one mouthful. We stayed in an old building and the floor was covered by children too weak to stand. After one cup of water, they could sit and after two cups they could play with oranges. Two Mother Theresa Sisters came to the camp to give food to the refugees. Pregnant women were helped while lying on newspaper on the floor.

We had Sunday services where a pastor from Sikonge came to preach, and a wonderful choir sang. Sometimes I took my piano accordion to the camp and when playing their tunes, they smiled. This was the only entertainment in the camp.

In 1975 when I returned to Sikonge after leave in Denmark I moved from the maternity unit to work in the leprosarium

at Kidugalo. For the rest of my time in Sikonge I remained there. I came to know many children who lived there, as if in a boarding school, getting food and treatment for leprosy. Some were rather depressed because they knew that their parents did not want them back. To encourage them we started various projects. We bought several animals, and the children could help care for them. They also planted trees. Then we began a teaching project where some of the



© Sr Claire Summers

more advanced children also helped in an adult class with those who could not read and write. This work gave school children self-respect, and the adults enjoyed these classes.

In 1976 one of our leprosy patients started Kidugalo Kindergarten among the very poor children. The children or their parents had leprosy. Five kilometres from our leprosarium a little village lost 30 children in 30 days because of general childhood illnesses. After the children had been about three weeks in the Kidugalo kindergarten only a few children were sick and there were no deaths. After some years it turned out that the children from Kidugalo Kindergarten did very well. The authorities in Dar es Salaam became most interested. The secretary from the cultural centre under the Ministry of Education came to visit the kindergarten and he wanted us to write books. The first children's book in Tanzania was made in Sikonge by a child and his father, who had leprosy. The leader of the kindergarten and myself were asked to

talk on Tanzania radio to spread the idea of starting kindergartens.

An article was sent to Herrnhut, then in DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik), and after a short time we began to receive parcels for the kindergarten from DDR. They sent paper, pencils, dolls, vitamins, milk powder, recorders, and many other things. We had about 200 addresses for people in DDR. I repeatedly went to DDR to thank them. Twice I stayed in Berlin with a pastor and his wife. As soon as the Berlin wall fell, they went to Tanzania as missionaries to start a kindergarten. They had great support from Germany and installed a water pump and had money to give about a hundred children food every day. Their work grew and grew. A few weeks ago, I was informed that the pastor had died and, in the death notice they wrote that instead of flowers he wanted money for his 'Herzenproject', the kindergarten in Tanzania. Kidugalo Kindergarten in Sikonge has been an inspiration to many within and outside Tanzania.

In 1980 a school for nursing assistants was opened in Sikonge. For about twenty years it helped hundreds of young people to have a chance in life. This school was closed and a new school for nurses was opened. When I visited Sikonge in 2010 - twenty-five years after I had left - I was very touched hearing about children we cared for in the kindergarten and the schools who went on to have a good life.

Now there are only a few patients with leprosy left, so their treatment takes place at the General Hospital.

The first president of Tanzania was Julius Nyerere (1964-1985). He said 'we the people of Tanzania like to light a candle and place it on top of Kilimanjaro so that it can shine out over our borders to bring hope where there is despair, and dignity where there is humiliation. We cannot as others send rockets to the moon, but we can send rockets of love and hope to people in need'.

Sr Ellen Dalgaard Jensen
Denmark

A Time for Friendship:

Moravian Women's Association Away Day

On 22 April minibuses and cars from around England descended on Hall Green, Birmingham. As the MWA Away Day, it was truly a time for friendship. For many, it was the first Away Day since before the pandemic: an opportunity to rekindle longstanding friendships and meet new friends.

The day opened with the glorious sounds of a rousing 'singspiration', led by Sr Diane Thornton. The first hymn was 'As we are gathered, Jesus is here' and we sang many joyous hymns before concluding with 'I'll go in the strength of the Lord.'

The formal start was marked by a warm welcome to Hall Green by Sr Lorraine Shorten and the MWA President, Sr Gillian Taylor.

The roll call of Circles showed how many people from so many places were meeting together. We also heard of two examples of the MWA growing by meeting in different ways: the Saplings and Peartree are groups making use of technology to share and come together.

The President's Report provided details of donations to charities in the last year, plus how the Disaster Fund had been used to support people in Pakistan following the floods and in response to the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. The total of the project money was £2,445.

Based on suggestions from the Circles, the Executive have chosen next years theme as 'Fruits of the Spirit'. Finally, Sr Gillian offered warm thanks to current, retiring and new members of the Executive team. A warm thanks was also offered to Sr Gillian for all her hard work.

Two Bible readings, from Esther and Ecclesiastes, set the context for the address delivered by Sr Susan Quildan-Foreman. A time for friendship was

¹ Norma suggested a book titled 'Stillness in the Storm'. By Jan Alcoe and Dr Sarah Eagger

emphasised, and we were encouraged to be beacons of hope.

The morning came to a close with the singing of 'Lord, for the years, Your love has kept and guided'. Time for lunch gave more space for chatting and laughter rang around the hall. A special thanks here to those who set up the hall and served refreshments.

We then went to workshops: Tai Chi, Bible Study, Card-making, Singing and Meditation'. I truly valued the Meditation workshop: I suggest others did by the relaxed expressions as we left the room. I am confident each of the workshops was a positive experience allowing time for learning and sharing.

The Away Day Communion Service was led by Sr Kathryn Woolford. It was then time for refreshments and to head home, having put the Away Day date of Saturday 13th April 2024 in our diaries; looking forward to meeting up once more and sharing friendship.

On a personal note, this was only my second Away Day so let me share my thoughts of the day. I admit I arrived with some trepidation of 'do I know anyone?' This was quickly replaced by my amazement at the level of laughter, communal fellowship and warmth of folks I had never met before. I left with a smile on my face and a genuine sense of having attended a lovely event.

Before closing I would like to offer a warm thanks to the Executive Committee and all who made the day such a fulfilling and joyous occasion.

Sr Mary Holmes
Fulneck



© Sr Mary Holmes



One in Christ

Duncan Wood,
originally a
Moravian,
reflects on life in
an Anglican
parish in Norfolk



© Br Duncan Wood

I was baptised and confirmed as a Moravian at Westwood, but over the course of my life I've attended an Anglican college chapel in Cambridge and three different Anglican parish churches. I've been chair of governors of a Church of England primary school, and now I'm a churchwarden in rural North Norfolk. My fellow churchwarden lives in a stately home, and the rector is directly descended from a prime minister. The patron of the church living is the King, in his capacity as Duke of Lancaster. Every now and then we have genial visits of inspection from the chaplain of the Savoy Palace, which was the London base of Henry VII and still exists notionally as a royal residence.

St Peter's church is small and ancient, in a tiny village. Saxon in origin, the church has had several medieval makeovers, and has a pretty round tower with a single bell from the reign of Henry VIII. The bell is big and heavy and used to dangle me mercilessly before I learned how to ring it properly. We have two altars but no chancel. The high altar sits inside a tiny sanctuary in the nave. The chancel fell down during divine service in 1727, nearly killing the rector and churchwarden. In one of the church registers there is a very excited note by the then rector, thanking God for saving him, the parish clerk and two gentlemen (one a high sheriff of the county) from death. The walls fell outwards, presumably taking the roof with them.

The culture at St Peter's is High but not Anglo-Catholic. There is no incense, but attention is paid to Mary and the saints - and rightly so, as Mary played a key part in God's work of salvation. For the eucharist (holy communion; the word simply means thanksgiving), the rector wears a white alb (a long close-fitting garment) with a stole or scarf the colour of the current church season or day. In Moravian terms - i.e., whether things are essential, ministerial or incidental - I regard these as ministerial. They are part of the message about Christian life. Messages do not have to be in words. Oh, and we sing Wesley's hymns just as vigorously and joyfully as anyone else.

The church is liberal in the sense that it tolerates diverse views and tries to serve various communities. And that service is practical. Wasn't it St Francis who said preach the Gospel, and use words if you have to? As a 'benefice' (i.e., several parishes

joined together with one rector), we support Ukrainian refugees, local food banks, people who need a helping hand in our own communities, and Palestinian Christians. And we are deeply committed to green stewardship of our churches and churchyards. There is genuine fellowship, but sometimes vigorous debate about how to move forward in faith, hope and love.

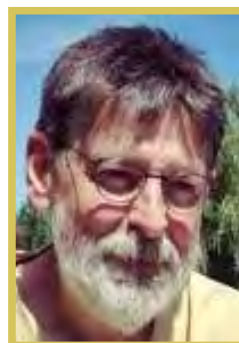
I think I could honestly say that this Anglican community demonstrates all five aspects of the Spirit of the Moravian Church as defined by Bishop C H Shawe in his famous lecture series: simplicity, happiness, unintrusiveness, fellowship, and the ideal of service. Well, perhaps the fellowship does not involve quite so much vigorous handshaking! Of course, more widely, the Anglican-Moravian Conversations and the Fetter Lane Statement of 1996 have created a much closer relationship between the two churches.

I have in front of me John Amos Comenius's Exhortation from 1661, written when the Unitas Fratrum was in great danger of dying:

An Exhortation of the Churches of Bohemia to the Church of England : A description premised of the Order and Discipline used in the Churches of the Brethren of Bohemia : Dedicated to his most Excellent Majesty Charles the Second, in Holland, at his returning into England; If possible it may be for an Accommodation amongst the Churches of Christ. By J. Amos Comenius, the only surviving Bishop of the Remains of those Churches.

What is it that I, as a Moravian, do to help that Accommodation at St Peter's? Well, perhaps I show a taste for simplicity. I rather shocked the rector recently by describing vestments as 'fancy togs'. Perhaps another thing about being a Moravian is a fondness for praying to Christ. I certainly do that whenever I lead prayer here in church. Like Zinzendorf, I believe that the joint presence in Jesus of divinity and humanity, of suffering and glory, is at the heart of our faith.

Duncan Woods



Where is God when things go wrong?

Continuation of a series of reflections.

When I was first asked to write this article centred around 'Where is God when things go wrong?' I struggled at first to remember when I felt that God had abandoned me as over these past 40 years I feel that my life has been truly blessed by God and the church.

Then, on reflection, two instances came to mind and the following is one of them: it was in 1976, whilst living and working in Labrador, that I felt called by God to offer myself for Church Service. I applied to the Provincial Board and was accepted as a candidate for training and invited to attend the Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA. What an opportunity!

I tendered my resignation to the Labrador East Integrated School Board, packed up the house and all our belongings, then made plans for myself, Wendy and two young children to move from Canada to the USA. It was an even bigger step than Wendy and I, as a newly married couple, had made when we left the UK for Labrador. I now had bigger responsibilities!

I began my studies; New Testament, Old Testament, Hebrew, Greek, Theology and Pastoral Care and Counselling in a class of 12 other students and was the second oldest in the group.

It took me a while to settle in to being behind a desk in a classroom, but initially all seemed to be going well. However, as the term continued it felt as if everything I believed about the Bible and biblical teaching was being torn down brick by

brick. I began to question whether I had made the right decision. Had God actually called me to ministry? It is difficult to sum up how devastated I was feeling. Wendy and I prayed together. What would we do if I left Seminary with a young family and no job, but God seemed silent. Had I misinterpreted the Call of God?

Eventually, towards the end of that first term, I plucked up courage and met with Rev Dr Earl Shay, my Pastoral Counsellor and opened my heart out to him. He smiled ruefully and said that my feelings were not uncommon in first year students, and he tried to reassure me and encouraged me to stick it out until after Christmas and into the New Year. I agreed to do so as I didn't feel I had much choice, but still not feeling completely reassured that all my self-doubts were in God's hands.

The new year commenced, and I was assigned to Midway Manor Moravian Church in Allentown, as a student pastor under the wing of Rev Aden Ward, who had previously been in the police force in Wisconsin. He was a down to earth character and he and his wife, now Bishop Kay Ward, have remained friends throughout the past 50 years. Yet there still didn't seem to be any word from God. I felt a fraud as I continued to put my heart into my studies.

I was called upon to preach regularly and it was then that, according to those around me, I 'came alive'. I found that although my knees shook, and my

stomach tied itself in knots (I can never manage breakfast on Sunday mornings even now) my voice seemed to grow stronger. In the theology module Karl Barth's recommendation to 'preach with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other' has kept me in good stead over the years.

I remember Aden preached on a text from 2 Chronicles 15:7, 'But as for you, take courage, be strong and do not be discouraged. The work that you do will be rewarded.' He was speaking directly to me, surely! Then the verse appeared as a text in the daily Watchword along with words from my favourite Psalm 139 'O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up ... Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.'

At last, I felt reassured and, slowly but surely, the foundations of my faith were being re-built brick by brick. My fellow students were supportive, and many have remained friends over the years and my time at the Seminary was a wonderful foundation for my ministry.

Ultimately, I have realised that whatever I have gone through or am going through God has and is always with me.

Br Robert Hopcroft



Enquirer's Day 2022

Serving Jesus Christ is a joy and makes this world a place worth living. Following Jesus is a blessing that we Christians have been given. Each path that God leads us on gives us new life, insight, and wisdom. God calls all of us in different ways at different stages in our lives. If you have reached a point in your life when you are wondering, 'what is the next step?' or 'Where is God leading me now?' If you find your heart being stirred as you attend worship, finding yourself restless sitting in the pews, or at home at your computer, and you feel something stirring you to go deeper in the work of the church, then it is probably time to start thinking through these thoughts with someone.

Exploring your call is an important task and should be done with others as part of a faithful conversation.

You are welcome, no matter at what stage in your discernment process you find yourself at, to join us in our enquirer's day. Members of the Church Service Committee are hosting an online event on the 3rd of June from 10.00-11.30am. Please pop in for a chat about where you are at, and we will be happy to be one stop along your discernment process. If you are interested please contact joachim.kreusel@moravian.org.uk to get the link for the event.

We look forward to speaking with you and pray that you are willing and able to listen to God's voice calling you on in your Christian walk as you seek to follow more and more deeply Jesus.

Spring Gardens Moravian Church, St John's, Antigua



© Br Paul Snowden

On our recent cruise in the Caribbean we docked at St John's, the capital of Antigua and Barbuda. We already knew there was a Moravian Church there, as we called in three years ago when on another trip, but everything was locked up on that occasion. This time we found the Church office open and said we were Moravians from England. In true Moravian fashion, we were immediately made very welcome and the lady in the office was happy to show us around.

The congregation has just celebrated its 167th anniversary. The Church has a capacity of 900, with an average Sunday congregation of 200. Their pastor wasn't

around, being on holiday in Florida. Like us, they too have a shortage of ministers, with two congregations per minister, but in their case, this is because they are sending their ministers to serve in the smaller islands. How things have changed since missionaries were sent to the West Indies.

There was a board with the names of missionaries who had served in Antigua. A couple of the names from 80-90 years ago - Brethren Lloyd and Connor - sounded familiar. Bishop Herbert Pearse Connor (1905-1961) from Heckmondwike (father of Margaret Connor) and Rev Harry Lloyd (1882-

1941) from Oldham (father of Rev George Ronald Lloyd), who both served in Antigua: from 1935 to 1938 for the former and from 1926 to 1941 for the latter.

There is a school in the Church grounds, and they were using the Church as a kindergarten because there were workmen making a lot of noise in the school building. Their teacher (seen in the picture outside the Church with Cath) told them about us, so there were lots of little hands waving at these strange people from Yorkshire!

Br Paul & Sr Cath Snowden
Baildon

CONGREGATION NEWS

Royton (formally Westwood and Salem), Greater Manchester

We were deeply shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden and unexpected death of Br Paul Holdsworth on 25th January 2023. We were looking forward to welcoming Br Paul and Sr Patsy to the Lancashire District in February, so the news was especially upsetting. We remember Sr Patsy and all the family in our prayers and give thanks for Br Holdsworth's life and service and commend him to his Lord.

As our period of interregnum continues, we are grateful to Br Peter Gubi who has postponed his sabbatical and remains in the district. We have been supported by Br Peter Gubi, retired ministers and lay preachers, including those who have made the journey across the Pennines from Yorkshire, and members of our own and other congregations and we are so thankful for their time and fellowship.

On Friday 3rd March, Sr Benedek led a service for the World Day of Prayer. The material this year was prepared by the Christian women of Taiwan, and the service included letters of encouragement for women who face suffering and injustice. These stories of faith focused on issues shared by women and girls around the world, including discrimination and abuse, which continue to challenge us to prayerful action. It was lovely to welcome people from a number of other Churches in the area, and everyone enjoyed tea, cake and a good natter afterwards. Thanks to Sr Lesley, all the readers and everyone else who helped to make this such a warm and uplifting occasion.

As the season changes and we move from winter to early

spring our social events have brought welcome opportunities for fellowship. A Beetle and Bingo Night in February was enjoyed by all and included a tasty supper and a raffle. We sent proceeds raised on the evening together with money from after Church refreshments to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal in response to the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

In March Srs Barbara Skiba and Hannah Cooper hosted 'A trip to Herrnhut' afternoon, taking congregation members on a journey to Herrnhut and places of significance in the history of our church through videos, music and photos of their visits. The afternoon included a delicious buffet, and was enjoyed by all, and donations raised went to the MWA.

In April Sr Beryl Healey invited everyone to an afternoon of 'My Music': a variety of musical tracks introduced by Sr Beryl

as she shared her family memories associated with each piece of music and accompanied by a delicious afternoon tea. Donations raised were in aid of Church funds. Thanks go to Sr Beryl and her family and all who helped to make this a most enjoyable afternoon, and to everyone who helped with all our social events.

The Congregation continues to support the Oldham Food Bank with donations of food and other items. They are very grateful for our support, and stress how important it is to keep donating at this most difficult time for many families.

Sr Barbara Skiba and Sr Gail Holden



© Sr Barbara Skiba

Moravians & the World • Moravian Heritage • Moravian Sites

The 8th Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music

THE WALTER VIVIAN MOSES LECTURE IN MORAVIAN STUDIES
Christina Petterson

MORAVIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY KEYNOTE LECTURE
Winelle Kirton-Roberts

CONFERENCE CONCERT
Lititz Moravian Collegium Musicum in Concert

August 17-19, 2023

HYBRID FORMAT: ATTEND IN-PERSON OR ONLINE
MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY, BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

REGISTRATION OPEN | MORAVIANCONFERENCES.ORG | 610.866.3255

The conference is sponsored by Moravian Archives, Moravian University, and Center for Moravian Studies, in partnership with Moravian Music Foundation, Moravian Theological Seminary, Moravian Historical Society, and Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites, with additional funding generously provided by Bethlehem Area Moravians and Penn State University Press.

Fairfield Moravian Settlement in The College,
Fairfield Square Droylsden M43 6AD

FAIRFIELD MUSEUM

**Open every
Saturday 3 June to
26 August 2023
1pm-4pm**

Admission: Adults £2, Concessions £1.50,
Family Ticket £5 (under 5's free)

New Star Exhibition for 2023

We invite you to join us

Windrush

**Community celebration
and Thanksgiving Service**
hosted by the Moravian Church

Music . Food . Stories

Sunday 25th June 2023
Gathering from 1pm (Service starts at 3pm)

Wesley Hall Methodist Church
Mere Road, Leicester LE2 0GN

Lower Wyke, Yorkshire

As 2022 drew to a close it was good to, once more, have a packed church to join together in the Christingle Service. The Junior Church and the Adventurers Youth Group amalgamated to lead us through the Nativity Story. Young voices bring the words alive every year!

A new year and a new minister - in January we were delighted to welcome Sr Claire Maxwell, her husband Steve and their children Phoebe and Zach. We have already enjoyed several joint services, both with the district, and with the Horton congregation with whom we are now twinned. It is good to have a young family worshipping with us and we look forward to many more happy occasions together.

Sadly, one of Sr Maxwell's first services was the funeral of the late Br Paul Holdsworth. Br Paul grew up at Lower Wyke and it was a joy and privilege to welcome the Province to pay their final respects to Br Paul who, through his ministry, touched so many lives. Our thoughts and prayers are still with Sr Patsy and Br Alan.

On Palm Sunday the young people delighted the congregation by entering the church singing and waving their newly made palm branches. The Passion Week readings were followed every night and as the week progressed we were joined by our Horton friends and other Christians from the Wyke Churches. Easter has come and gone and, as we begin the new life that Jesus gives, we now turn to welcoming a new earthly king - Charles III.

By the time you read this we will have hosted a Coronation Street Party for the village, the Horton Congregation and a wider circle of friends. The BBQ and picnic tea will, we hope,

have been a good time of celebration together. Also, in May our annual Art Exhibition will have taken place. The exhibits, of course, will have been on sale and have shown the great wealth of talent in the area.

We have a small, but enthusiastic, group of teenagers who, with the guidance of leaders, have enjoyed organising two social events to raise money for a mental health charity - 'Casual Minds Matter'. Both the Beetle Drive and the Bingo Night were a great success and saw the Sunday School filled with young people and their families. Music, fun and laughter were on the menu along with good food prepared and served by the young people themselves. Long may it continue!

We have embarked on the suggested Holy Habits programme led by our two 'champions'. As well as being the focus of some of our Worship Services we meet for weekly Bible Study over a lunchtime when we share a simple soup lunch together. I think the planned programme is designed to grow the church spiritually and numerically. Let us hope that it does!

Our monthly MWA meetings, Adventurers, Greenfingers,

Community Lunch and Men's Snooker evenings continue to run, and a new group has started. It is called 'Wake and stretch with Julie' and consists of half an hour of exercise followed by refreshments and fellowship. Julie runs a dance school in London during the week and having bought a property in the village is with us for church at the weekends. We are told that exercise is good for you, and you will certainly enjoy her sessions.

If we look forward to the summer months, it is hoped that our Scarecrow Festival, Strawberry Fair and Proms in the Paddock will all take place as usual. Do come along if you can.

Sr Diane Thornton



© Sr Claire Maxwell

LETTER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are grateful to so many people for all the kind words, messages and cards following the death of my husband Chris and of course dad to Howard and Debbie, father-in-law to Emma and Andy and granddad to George, Felicity and Joshua.

We will miss Chris dreadfully but we take great comfort in the fact that he meant so much to other people too and that they have wonderful memories of him. We shared in ministry over 32 years and I know that he has left his mark on many places and people in the British Province.

As a family we give thanks to God for Chris's life and for all he gave to us over the years. We also give thanks for all the friendship and support that we, as a family, have received over the years in so many places and situations.

Thank you for all your love and prayers for us now, we value them all.

Sr Sarah Groves and family

Gracehill

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

23rd April 2023	Enzo Beau Williams Webb	Swindon
27 Nov 2022	Amina Alexandria	
	Ramani Mdiaye	Fairfield

Confirmation/Reception into Membership

9th April 2023	Neil Alexander Pithouse	Swindon
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Deaths

13 Nov 2022	Patricia Metcalfe	Fairfield
4 Dec 2022	Derek Ellwood	Fairfield
30 Jan 2023	June Barker	Fairfield
14th Feb 2023	Eunice Gibbons	Royton

Sr Shelagh Connor

- Tribute from the Bedford Congregation

Revd Shelagh Connor and her husband Revd Richard Connor lovingly known as Shelagh and Dick were both integral parts of the Queens Park, Bedford Congregation from 1986-1996. They worked as a team, and they also looked after Kimbolton Moravian Church that is now closed. Monthly healing services were held as part of their ministry. Both continue to be lovingly remembered within the Bedford congregation along with their grandchildren, Gabriel and Rachel who would also be present at the services. Br Dick and Sr Shelagh Connor loved their Lord and Saviour.

They both enjoyed singing and would encourage a music group to sing in the service. Additionally, during their ministry at Bedford, a choir was formed that met on a Thursday, to practice new hymns and songs, that was introduced to the congregation. The congregation made special mention of the green camper van that was owned and cherished by Br Dick Connor along with the many picnics the Church held by the river Ouse, in Bedford.

On Sunday evening at 7pm a successful young people's group met in the manse at 7pm. Sr Shelagh was also instrumental in starting the Shalom Churches together group in Bedford that is still going today. Condolences are sent from the Shalom group to you all.

Sr Shelagh loved to study, and she took on German as a challenge. Being technically able, she kept up with the times and was on Facebook - keeping everyone up to date on the wide family at Christmas. Sr Shelagh and Br Dick rest in the peace of the Lord.

A poem by Henry Scott Holland, that reminds us of Sr Shelagh: Death is nothing at all.

Death is nothing at all.

I have only slipped away into the next room.

I am I and you are you.

Whatever we were to each other, that we still are.

Call me by my old familiar name.

Speak to me in the easy way

which you always used.

Put no difference in your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed

at the little jokes we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word
that it always was.

Let it be spoken without affect,

without the trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same that it ever was.

There is absolutely unbroken continuity.

Why should I be out of mind

because I am out of sight?

Dates to remember!

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Consecration

We are pleased to announce that the consecration of Sr Claire Maxwell as Presbyter will take place on Saturday 22nd July 2023 at Horton Moravian Church. The service will begin at 2pm. Br Joachim Kreusel will be the presiding Bishop and the preacher will be Br Peter Gubi.

Provincial Diary for June

18-19	Provincial Board	Church House
22	Sr Claire Maxwell's Consecration	Horton

NOTICES

Portrush Moravian Fellowship

Portrush Moravian Fellowship will be meeting in Portrush Town Hall on the following evenings:

- Sunday 23 July 2023 at 6pm
- Sunday 30 July 2023 at 6pm
- Sunday 6 August 2023 at 6pm

All welcome.

4	Trinity Sunday
5	World Environment Day (www.worldenvironmentday.global)
17	Renewal of the Brethren's Church: beginning of the building of Herrnhut by the immigrants from Moravia in 1722
18	Father's Day
19-25	Refugee Week (www.refugeeweek.org.uk)
21	Summer Solstice
22	Windrush Day
26	International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (www.un.org/en/events/torturevictimsday/)
28	Eid-ul-Adha - Muslim

Holy Family, Blackbird Leys

Blackbird Leys was built as a council housing estate in the 1960s south of Oxford. Holy Family Church was one of the first L.E.P.'s (Local Ecumenical Project) and the only five denomination single congregation in the country.

In 1959 Peter Malden was offered the job as priest and arrived in June 1960. Discussions for a church were underway. Peter used his house as a temporary church. He sent leaflets to all the estate; introducing the church as a group of people meeting together in each other's homes and himself as the priest. He soon decided it was time to look for a temporary church building after trying to make provision for 47 children in his sitting room one Sunday morning!

Plans continued for the church building. Architect Colin Shewring's idea was to build a modern church which would be functional and yet include what people felt a church should contain. A prominent feature of the building would be the sanctuary, an egg-shaped area standing out from the wall, with a circular altar flanked by the pulpit, a reversion to very ancient Christian practice. This emphasised the dual nature of the Eucharist, teaching and feeding, and the natural lighting would be arranged so that it would flood the altar during the main Sunday service. The Baptistry wall would be tomb-shaped, symbolising death and resurrection, and would be situated between the two main blocks of seats. The font would be approached by three shallow steps to symbolise the descent into the river Jordan from the bank. The pebbles and freestone dug from the foundations of the building a reminder of the Jordan shore. There is running water to symbolise the rebirth, the paschal candle to light in rejoicing. Later the font was inscribed with a palindrome in Greek writing which when read either way says the same thing:
NIYONANOMHMATAMHMONANOYIN 'Wash my transgressions, not only my face'.

The question of a musical instrument for the church had produced some very heated discussions. In the end a grand piano was bought for £50 which is still here. A much-travelled Julius Kreitzburger, it was in the German Embassy before being impounded at the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, then at Savoy Hill in the early days of the BBC, and later at the Royal Academy of Music.

The church building was completed in 1965 and dedicated for use by the Anglican Church and the Free Churches.

With much of the population on the estate coming from the Caribbean so arrived the Moravians and although they did not become official partners of the Ecumenical Experiment until



Inside of Holy Family Church - showing the font and Greek inscription and Br David Newman giving the children's address! (June 2013)

© Rev Heather Carter

sometime in 2002; nevertheless, many of the church members have been attending and full members of Holy Family since the very early days.

In 1969 The Sharing of Church Buildings Act became law. The Bishop suggested that the church authorities be asked to consent to a Sharing Agreement, which would allow the Free Church congregation a shared use of the church. In 1972, Blackbird Leys was declared an Area of Ecumenical Experiment. The Church of England, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, and the Baptist Churches pledged their support for the experiment. The Moravian Church finally signed into the partnership in becoming a part of the Western District of the British Province. It has been used on many occasions, most notably perhaps for Sr Beth Torkington's consecration as Bishop! But also, for Men's Fellowship and MWA meetings.

I wrote in a previous edition of the Messenger; our beautiful roof was condemned in 2018. Since then, we have been meeting in our church hall. This is a lovely if small space, and the room is used during the week daytime as a café, as a meeting space for Anonymous Groups ... Alcohol, Cocaine and Narcotics - which we love hosting. We feel it is a very real part of our outreach, giving them a safe and welcoming space in their recovery. We run a Toddler's Group and Brownies meet. Junior Church at present has children under five years old (two of these are the two boys we foster) and a number of teens who occasionally grace us with their Sunday morning faces!! We were very pleased to host the Moravian Pilgrimage on their way through too!

We have full planning permission to have a complete rebuild of the church and community space, with a requirement of a bond for £10m to the City Council. To give them the confidence that we will complete the build, not just knock-down a listed building. This is proving to be a challenge to raise in our current climate. All prayers are so gratefully received.

Sr Heather Carter

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