



Consecration of Sister Claire Maxwell

On Saturday July 22nd Horton was privileged to host the consecration of our Minister, Sr Claire Maxwell, as Presbyter. Claire has only been with us and Lower Wyke for a short time but she has made her mark and we feel fortunate indeed to have her, her husband Steve and their two children, Phoebe and Zachary, in our congregations.

On the day many Moravians, members of Claire's and Steve's families and friends filled our little church. For those unable to attend the service (there was a rail strike called on that day) Sr Roberta Hoey, seated in the Baptistry, was able to film the proceedings on Zoom allowing other Moravians from around the world to augment the congregation of about 100.

The service began with a procession through the church of all attending ministers. Three Bishops took their places at the Communion Table and Sr Claire sat with her family at the front. The liturgy was led by Br Joachim with Br John and Sr Sarah taking their parts in the proceedings. Br Peter Gubi, who had taken over Sr Claire's supervision on the death of Br Paul Holdsworth, delivered the sermon which was about Grace, a gift given to Claire from God in abundance. Once the vows had been given, hands laid upon Sr Claire's head and the Bible presented by two representatives of Horton and Lower Wyke committees, Sr Claire was given the right hand of fellowship by



© Sr Sarah Groves

all serving and retired ministers, the Church Committees and invited local ecumenical partners.

At the end of the service everyone was invited to partake in a splendid banquet set out in the Sunday School rooms. Thanks must go to Sr Liz Wood for organising the refreshments and to the Horton sisters and brothers for serving them. After everyone had been fed, as in the story of the Feeding of the 5000, there was so much food left over that many baskets of food went home with the partakers of the feast.

Sr Claire felt it was a very special day and a wonderful affirmation of her Ordination in lockdown at Fetter Lane.

Sr Maureen Colbert
Horton Congregation



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Planning to travel?

I have been greatly privileged to attend the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the Christiansfeld Moravian Settlement on Sunday 13th August. The events began the night before with a Singstunde (Singing Service), in the Sisters House, and then on the Sunday a 10.30am service in the Church with the Crown Prince and Princes of Denmark in attendance and then ending with a Lovefeast at 7pm. In between the services there were music and tours around the settlement. Getting home was another adventure because during the day and a half I spent in Christiansfeld I met a lovely woman from Dublin, not a Moravian, who took me back to Billund airport in Denmark early in the morning saving the local minister another trip out. So, it has been a wonderful time which I have thoroughly enjoyed. But I write about this not just to share my travel notes but to urge other Moravians to travel to other places in the UK and other countries in the wider Moravian world.

It just feels like we have become very congregationally focused and don't want to travel even to District events. I am sure that COVID has a lot to do with that. Yet there are wonderful things going on outside our own circles. There has just been Summer Camp for young people in Bedfordshire, a District Barbeque in the Irish District, a Moravian Women's Association retreat at Swanick, as I write the Moravian History and Music Conference in Bethlehem PA and there will be a Provincial Men's Rally in Royton, Lancashire on 16th September.

At these events you get to know others and make links that can last a lifetime. I am always inspired talking to sisters in the

MWA about the travels they have made across Europe and the people they have met, and relationships formed. Young people remember the time they had at Summer Camp for years.

Wherever you go you will find people to talk to and who want to talk to you. You will make friends and learn so much more about your faith and culture and about the culture of others. There are things that we do the same as others and things that we do differently and exploring these is so rewarding.

So, when you are planning next year's holidays and activities see what is going on in the Church as well and give it a go. Could your children go to Summer Camp? Will there be district activities or are any Churches or Districts planning weekends away? Are there opportunities to volunteer abroad coming up or conferences or special events taking place? We always try to advertise these in the Moravian Messenger.

Because we are a small but worldwide Church it is easy to get to know other people and places and make connections and I have found that there will always be someone to help you. We are part of something so much bigger than just ourselves and our own congregation - it's just a question of taking a chance, seizing the opportunity, and going for it.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



Abuse of older people

Thursday 15th June was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2023, an opportunity to highlight the prevalence of abuse against the older members of our communities. Hourglass (<https://www.wearehourglass.org/england/welcome-hourglass>) are calling for more to be done to reduce the violence against elders and have launched a campaign to appeal for a strategy to act to prevent it. This has been informed by the following:

1. The abuse of older people exists and affects millions of people.

It's estimated that 1 in 5 people over 60 experience some form of abuse or neglect. That means 2.6 million older people in the UK experience abuse each and every year.

2. The problem is getting worse.

Factors affecting this include an ageing population, the lasting legacy of the pandemic, and an ongoing cost of living crisis. Calls to Hourglass 24/7 helpline have increased by 66% since 2022.

3. Physical abuse is a reality for many older people in the UK.

Physical and sexual abuse has a detrimental impact on older victim-survivors and their loved ones. Data from Hourglass 24/7 helpline reveals that 16% of calls involve some form of physical violence.

4. The abuse of older people is closer to home than you think.

Since 2021, 11% of calls to the helpline involving physical or sexual abuse in care homes, compared to 74% of cases occurring in the victim-survivors own home.

5. Abuse doesn't always have to be physical to be violent.

Non-physical forms of abuse such as economic abuse is often linked to violence, or the threat of violence through coercive control, predatory marriage and more.

6. Older victims of abuse need specialist support services.

The abuse of older people requires specialist support services to deal with the unique ways that abuse manifests in later life. Services such as the 24/7 helpline must be at the centre of a

Violence Against Older People strategy.

Many older adults will not recognise they are being abused or refuse to admit it through embarrassment or shame. As a church we can be a safe forum for people to bring this up whether in an after-church chat, at a coffee morning or in a pastoral visit. As a church we can be more than happy to accept 'I'm fine' from the people we encounter, and many of them will be, but sometimes it hides something that is abuse. Being non-judgemental, open and accepting of everyone and their situations, may be the opening someone needs to speak out, so the abuse stops.

If you come across a situation and need advice, please approach your Congregation Safeguarding Lead or me, or phone the Hourglass helpline tel: 080 8808 8141.

Sr Joy Raynor

(not quite an OAP but well on the way!)

Provincial
Safeguarding Lead



Introducing Peter Dornan - Project 32 Coordinator



My name is Peter Dornan, and I am delighted to have been appointed the Project 32 Coordinator for the Moravian Church in the British Province.

Who is Peter?

I live in Belfast, am married to Nadia, have four grown-up children and five grandchildren.

The most important thing in my life is loving God and loving and caring for people. Although I am a flawed man, I am seeking to grow and change in order to live my life the way Jesus would live His life if He were me. I have still a long way to go, but I am committed to growing and changing every day.

I play guitar (acoustic, bass, and electric), love to sing - although not very well! I enjoy photography and going for regular walks with my wife and grandkids. I read regularly and enjoy learning new things.

I am an analytical problem solver, eager to improve people through personal development, systems and processes in organisations through innovative ideas. I have a talent for seeing possibilities for improvement whether in myself, others, at work or at home.

I enjoy applying myself to pioneer projects or ideas and putting concentrated effort into transforming vision into achievable goals. I relish turning ideas into reality. I am an introvert, people oriented, discreet, industrious, analytical, logical, deliberate, efficient, a finisher, structured and methodical.

I have had a wide variety of roles, experiences and skills:

- Registered General Nurse: worked as a Staff Nurse doing Renal Dialysis and Transplanting.

- Youth Pastor: spent six years doing youth work in a church in East Belfast and planting new churches.
- Volunteer Manager: managed 450 volunteers in the NI Hospice, caring for the terminally ill.
- Education and training: 10 years in community Health Promotion, teaching on drugs, relationships and sexuality from a Christian perspective.
- 10 years with Belfast Education Authority; in the pastoral care team, writing the curriculum, working in Special Needs and working as a Social Enterprise Manager.
- 15 years serving, leading and managing a church in Holywood, Co. Down, four years of it in a paid position.
- Project Management: two National Lottery Heritage Projects; one in Kilwarlin Moravian Church with their Battlefield Garden and one year in Portaferry. My last role before Project 32 was working in Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) as a Project Manager.
- Now Project 32 Coordinator!

What is Project 32?

In 2022 the Moravian Church arrived at the 300th anniversary of the arrival of settlers in Herrnhut in 1722 and the re-awakening of the idea of the Unitas Fratrum. Between 1722 and 1732 the fledgling Moravian community went through a process of reconstruction, from which it emerged in 1732 with a clear sense of mission. The year 2032 will be the 300th anniversary of a confident and courageous community looking out on the world. The leaders of the Moravian Church in the British Province have been

seeking God to try and honestly evaluate where the church is currently at, what is its general state of health, and to ask the question: what do we want the Moravian Church to look like in 2032?

The Moravian Church is one of God's treasures, and has much to give to the other parts of the worldwide universal church, and to the communities they are based in. Project 32 is an opportunity for British and Irish Moravian churches to look back, to remember their original DNA and to refresh, renew and recover this unique heritage. Then, to look forward in confidence to being relevant and effective in being the hands, feet and heart of Christ to our contemporaries in this new generation.

Most of our churches are currently declining in numbers, so we need to urgently assess why this is the case. We want to address the things that are causing it, enabling all our members and congregations to renew their spiritual health and take steps to grow in quality and quantity, in a God honouring way. We want everyone to engage, participate and help create a solution in cooperation with what the Holy Spirit is saying to our church at this time. This body needs you to play your part.

In September and October 2023, we will start to outline proposals to explain how each interested person can get involved, engage, influence, and shape our future together. Come and participate! The adventure begins!

Peter Dornan
Project 32 Coordinator

How the Irish Council of Churches and Irish Inter-Church Meeting work together today



A recent panel of young people at the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM)
© Irish Inter-Church Meeting

This article follows on in this series marking the centenary of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the fifty-year anniversary of the Ballymascanlon Talks which led to the formation of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM).

From my experience of international inter-church work, I would say that the structures developed for the island of Ireland in the form of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) and its relationship to the Irish Council of Churches (ICC), given practical expression through the work of the Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC), represent a unique response to the particular circumstances of the Irish context.

Practices vary around the world in terms of the participation of the Catholic Church in national inter-church structures, from full membership in some places to others where there is no formal relationship. On this island, the Protestant and Orthodox members of the ICC relate to each other through a formally constituted Council. This is the registered charity for inter-church work, working across both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference relates to the ICC through the IICM, which is an activity of the ICC, underpinned by a Memorandum of Operation, with a Joint Management Committee to consider issues of governance and resources, and the Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC) where the work of relationship-building and outreach is developed.

These structures are undoubtedly complex - during my time as ICC General Secretary (2016-2021) I was often told there were too many 'I's and too many 'C's confusing our inter-church space - but I would argue that these structures have helped, rather than hindered, the development of strong working relationships between Christian churches on the island of Ireland in recent years.

When I took up the role of General Secretary the IICM had just been through a process of restructuring and renewal led by my predecessor, Mervyn McCullagh.

Prior to 2015 the IICM structure was larger, with separate bodies for theological and social issues, both reporting to the Irish Inter-Church Committee. In the restructuring process this work was brought together in the IICC to help ensure best use of resources. At the same time, an in-depth process of reflection and dialogue on the values, identity and purpose of the structures had taken place, leading to the adoption of a new logo with the accompanying message 'Churches in Ireland - Connecting in Christ' placing the shared identity in Christ at the heart of all the churches seek to do together.

It was a great privilege for me to work with ICC/IICM at a time when both bodies had a renewed sense of purpose and a desire to maximise the impact of their work and outreach. I began by listening to the experiences and priorities of member church representatives. A significant contribution was made by the late Rev Dr John Stephens of the Methodist Church who emphasised the need for the work of ICC and IICM to be complementary, but not overlapping, because Church representatives did not have time to attend the same meeting twice! With this in mind, the Joint Management Committee took a lead role in designing annual work plans that provided a variety of opportunities for engagement - the meetings of the ICC Executive moved around the island, engaging with individual member churches and local inter-church groups, to share learning and offer encouragement. The Irish Inter-Church Committee met in Dundalk and provided the space for detailed work on advocacy and public engagement. It was a great encouragement that ICC members

considered it vital to include the Catholic Church in all of this work which, during my time, included issues of peace and reconciliation, Brexit, homelessness, climate justice and racial justice amongst others. I suggest that the relationships that make this work possible are supported by the inter-church structures which, despite their complexity, offer clarity in terms of processes and parameters for collective decision-making. The diversity and different experiences of members are respected, so that collective endeavours add value, rather than taking a lowest common denominator approach.

Fifty years on from its establishment the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, now an annual residential gathering, continues to make an important contribution to the life of the churches. Each year a priority theme from the work of the IICC is explored in-depth and prayerfully, through both informal and formal dialogue, using a range of different methodologies and a wide variety of contributors. In the relationships that make possible honest dialogue and reflection on major challenges facing churches and society, we see the value of the investment that has been made over time in the development of our national inter-church structures. The consistent commitment to meeting and sharing, with a strong sense of purpose, and also with the freedom to bring our concerns as well as our hopes and good news has created a space for encounter and fellowship that offers a model to a wider society that is struggling more and more to hold spaces for respectful dialogue about difference.

Dr Nicola Brady
Former ICC General Secretary



Where is God when things go wrong?

Continuation of a series of reflections

This is a question that I have reflected on many times throughout my spiritual journey, as I have encountered many things go 'wrong' in my life, and in the lives of others. However, I have come to know and trust that God is in it somewhere.

If we have any sense of our Bible, or of the lives of many Christians, we can see the pattern of what Walter Bruggeman terms as 'orientation, disorientation and reorientation' played out in the lives of God's people - whether it be in some Old Testament characters, like Joseph, who was sold unjustly into slavery in Egypt, only to eventually become the man who helped his abusers to prepare for, and survive, famine, and gave him the ability to forgive and to look after his abusive family; or the Israelites who were made slaves by an insecure and neurotic Pharaoh, but who eventually set out across the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, to eventually (after many difficulties) arrive in the promised land; to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who was unjustly crucified as a common criminal, only to be resurrected and bring people closer to God - and I could go on... There are numerous examples of 'orientation, disorientation and reorientation' played out in the life of God's people. So, why should it be any different for us, or for me? It seems that trauma, suffering and difficulty can be a way in which God draws us closer to Himself.

In my own life, I have encountered people when I have been at the lowest times of

my life, who have said just what I needed to hear at a crucial moment; who have lifted my spirit in their wisdom and compassion, and kept me on the path that God intended. It was as if God was speaking to me through them, even though they often knew nothing of my



Christ as homeless

difficulties and challenges. What I know is that my soul has been touched by God, through them, in a very tangible and profound way.

I have sat next to angels on the bus, on a train, or in a counselling room, who have shared their problems with me. Through my accompaniment of them, I too have been helped and shaped by the encounter. It never fails to inspire me just how resilient the human spirit is in many

who have been touched by trauma and struggle. Through my encounters, I have been changed. One of the real privileges of ministry is to be alongside folk who are very ill or dying, and to take their funerals. It is an honour to be present to others (the dying, or their families and friends), and to hold faith gently for them, and to honour their darkness, at what is often one of the lowest points in their lives. I always feel God's presence in those encounters, even when they may feel abandoned by Him. Sometimes, I have felt that folks whom I have visited in their despair, hold a stronger faith than I sometimes think I do. My presence may be comforting to them, but they put me to shame in what they have taught me about God.

So, I always seek to ask in my reflections, 'where is God in this?' - not out of a sense of His abandonment, but rather as a seeking and discernment of His presence and will. I may not have been able to see Him in the moment, but I can often see His hand at work retrospectively in the way my life has taken different directions through traumatic events. I can see Him in the building of my resilience. I can see Him in the strengthening of my faith. Maybe, rather than things going wrong, I have often wondered if they have actually gone 'right' - because I have felt closer to Him because of them, and He has set me on a better path to serve Him than I could ever have imagined for myself.

Br Peter M. Gubi
Minister of Fairfield Moravian Church

LETTER TO THE EDITORIAL TEAM

In the July edition of our newsletter, 'Inside', our minister James told us how he made the decision to offer for our ministry. It was a very interesting and revealing article and it made me think about how events in my life led me to becoming a Moravian having come from a strongly held Wesleyan Methodist family background.

Basically, it was the outbreak of WW2 which, at 10 years old, resulted in my being sent to Fulneck Girls' School as a boarder for seven long years! This involved Church attendance twice every Sunday which, as I suffered from crippling homesickness for a while, was comforting, as it was familiar and very soon I was coached by the minister's wife, Mrs Summers, to read a lesson in church! My first 'involvement'? She was one of the few people who always called me by my 'Sunday go to meeting' name 'Elizabeth'!

This brings me back to the ministers who have influenced me throughout my life. Mr Summers and Mr Foy (who confirmed me aged 16) and later the 12 men and women whose names are emblazoned on the board at Baildon Moravian Church ... and many others who, with their partners, became good and precious friends throughout the 66 years I have been an active member of our church.

My loyalty is to my Congregation and my Church, not to any particular man or woman, although I hope I have supported and helped them when needed as indeed they have supported me.

Shared love and much laughter are the best recipe!?

Sr Libby Mitchell
Baildon

Impossible, Difficult, Done: The journey towards world heritage



Jorgen Boytler, Roberta Hoey and some members of the assessment team
© Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Back in 2003 we first heard about the 'Christiansfeld Initiative', an aspiration of the minister of the Christiansfeld Settlement in Denmark, Rev Dr Jørgen Bøytler and the local Mayor, Mr Jørgen From, to achieve UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage inscription for Christiansfeld and a number of other Settlements around the world. Srs Roberta Thompson and Vera Montgomery attended a meeting about the scheme on behalf of Gracehill. After discussion locally it was agreed that Gracehill should get involved in the process. Despite Gracehill being Northern Ireland's first designated Conservation Area (1975) and the only complete Moravian Settlement in Ireland, it seemed impossible that such a tiny village in a relatively rural area could be successful in such a project. We quickly realised that the process would require the active support and involvement of local and national government in addition to the local community and Church and so began a series of local meeting and discussions.

Ballymena Borough Council, our local authority at that time were supportive of our approaches and subsequently sent council representatives to Bethlehem, USA for a conference in 2005. Again, they supported delegates, including myself, to attend the next meeting in South Africa in 2006. Gracehill was privileged to host a conference in 2007 and we were delighted to welcome visitors from Holland, Denmark, USA and South Africa. Thereafter the settlements in each country focused on the first hurdle of getting on their national 'Tentative List' - this is the list compiled every ten years or so of places that might be suitable to go forward for nomination for assessment by UNESCO. Christiansfeld had already been on the Danish list from 1993.

In 2011 Gracehill Old School Trust made an application on behalf of the Settlement to the Department for Culture, Media & Sport in London to join the UK Tentative list.

While Gracehill was not immediately added to the list, importantly it was not rejected either. The report stated 'Gracehill provides excellent evidence of a socio-religious system - the Moravians - which, unusually for its time was highly tolerant. The international importance of the Moravians is high and there is potential for a transnational nomination of Moravian sites. This site was judged not to have the potential to demonstrate OUV [Outstanding Universal Value] on its own. The Government should consider adding Gracehill to this Tentative List in the future if firm proposals for a transnational nomination should be developed, provided that it can be demonstrated that the site could make a substantial contribution to the OUV of the series as a whole.'

Very happily Christiansfeld undertook significant research, including a comparative analysis of Moravian Settlements around the world and after a huge effort it was successfully inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2015.

All the while Gracehill Moravian Church and the wider community was working away in the background with ongoing exchange visits and research to support an application.

Gracehill has a vibrant congregation and having completed a new church hall building in 2006, which was fully utilised by the community, a programme of restoration of the Church, manse

and warden's house as well as the historic pipe organ was subsequently completed. In addition, Gracehill Old School Trust raised further funding of approximately £2.5 million to restore other buildings and sites in the village including The Square.

Christiansfeld's success brought renewed vigour to the international partnership and Herrnhut, Germany joined with Bethlehem and subsequently Gracehill to develop the current nomination entitled 'Moravian Church Settlements'.

Over the last number of years there have been many meetings, several rounds of exchange visits to each other's settlements and a lot of research in the Gracehill Archives (now called The Moravian Archive of Ireland) and further afield. We are very appreciative of the support of our local council, now Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and also the Northern Ireland Government, Department of Communities for their invaluable support, both financial and in terms of research and assistance. It is also worth noting, particularly in a Northern Ireland context, that Gracehill has enjoyed ongoing cross party political support.

Early in 2022, Gracehill was added to the UK World Heritage tentative list and the 'Moravian Church Settlements' nomination was submitted to UNESCO in Paris by the United States Government on behalf of all the partners in the Spring.

The next step in the process was a 10-day assessment visit covering all the nominated sites. The Gracehill section took place over three days at the end of July and involved a travelling team including the assessor and government representatives from Denmark, Germany, USA and UK. In Gracehill we were also delighted to welcome Rev Dr Jørgen Bøytler as Minister of Christiansfeld Moravian Church and as Worldwide Unity Board Administrator and Sr Roberta Hoey, as Chair of PEC of Moravian Church of GB and Ireland and President of the Unity Board.

The visit involved tours, viewings, presentations and opportunities to meet Church members and the many volunteers who make Gracehill the special place it is - the Tuesday Club and village committee, the archivists, God's Acre stewards, Church committee, tour guides and Trustees of Gracehill Old School Trust. The support of local facilities such as Galgorm Castle and Galgorm Resort and Spa was also important. Overall, the sense of a living community with local, national and international links and support was palpable. The Moravian living cultural tradition is a central part of the nomination and highlights of the visit included an early morning service in Church featuring the Watchword and also a presentation by Sr Sarah Groves on Moravian culture and intangible values - this was perhaps the first time we had a Christingle in Gracehill in July!

There is an old saying 'We do not inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'. The real value of heritage is less in thinking about yesterday and more about planning tomorrow. A rich heritage is the foundation of a bright future. What seemed impossible and what was certainly difficult at times is now moving towards 'done'. Whatever the outcome we are again reminded that the Moravian Church has a precious heritage of faith and service that has found practical expression in unity, tolerance and love and that is something worth sharing.

Br David Johnston
Gracehill

Two become three

Continuation of Br Hopcroft's memories
of his call to Labrador in 1971

By September 1973 we were starting our third year in Nain. I had been appointed Vice Principal the previous year, and as our dear friends, Dick and Bobbie Johnson, had decided to return to the United States, where Dick had secured a post as Principal of a large private school in New Jersey, I was starting this year as Principal.

This was a big step up for me, with responsibility for twelve staff and around 230 pupils from Kindergarden to Grade 8. Even more importantly, we were thrilled when we learned that Wendy was pregnant and due to give birth at the end of October, and although she was, thankfully, fit and indeed blooming in health, important decisions had to be made.

Nain had a nursing station run by the International Grenfell Association with two English nurses stationed there, but the nearest doctor was 250 miles away at the air base hospital in Happy Valley/Goose Bay. It was strongly recommended that women living on the coast who were expecting a first baby should go to Happy Valley for the final couple of weeks of pregnancy in case of any complications. After much debate it was decided that Wendy would leave Nain and fly down to Goose Bay where Br David and Sr Myra Dickinson had very kindly invited her to stay with them in Happy Valley. So, we made plans for Wendy to fly out on the mission plane and when she arrived safely she was met by Br and Sr Dickinson.

As her due date fell during the October half term, I then made plans to also fly down to Happy Valley, ostensibly to visit the School Board Superintendent and head office, in order to be around for the birth of our first child. It was an exciting time - but 'the best laid plans of mice and men ...' as they say! First of all, Wendy's due date came and went. The weather up the coast became nasty and unpredictable and the only means of communication was to book a call through the radio telephone 'over and out' system. My flights were cancelled, re-booked and cancelled again. Half term was coming to an end and still no news. Wendy was increasingly fed up as she waited, despite the warmth and patience of Myra and David. Finally, Wendy was told that if nothing happened over the weekend she would be admitted to the hospital and labour would be induced. So, on Monday 5th November, one day after her own birthday on the 4th, she was admitted, and I hastily booked my flight for

Saturday 3rd. This was then cancelled because of bad weather - how frustrating!

On that Monday evening I received a call from the hospital, very kindly booked in advance by Wendy's midwife Mai Ling, and the conversation went something like this:

*Wendy: Hi darling, I have some wonderful news
- we have a baby girl! Over.*

*Me: That's fantastic! Are you both OK? When
was she born? Over.*

*Wendy: We are both fine. She was born just after
7. Over.*

Me: What? This morning? Over.

*Wendy: No, this evening - half an hour ago. When
are you coming down? Over.*

Me: As soon as the weather clears. Over.

Wendy: Must go now - very tired. Over and out.

As I replaced the receiver it immediately rang. It was the telephone operator to congratulate me on becoming a father. Well, although the calls were supposed to be confidential, I appreciated that she had to listen in and swap from 'transmit' to 'receive' so I didn't mind at all. However, over the next hour the phone never stopped ringing and it was only later that I discovered why so many people had radios in their homes when there was hardly any radio reception available: their radios were tuned into the telephone system and they were able to entertain themselves by listening in!

The following Thursday, I finally arrived in Goose Bay in time to pick up Wendy and our new daughter, Danielle Marie from the hospital, returning to the Dickinson home where we planned our journey home - now that two had become three!

Br Robert Hopcroft



'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Diane Thornton

Sr Diane is a retired teacher and a member of the Lower Wyke Congregation in Bradford. Diane is a Lay Preacher and was a Summer Camp Leader for many years. She has written the Devotional Papers for the MWA during the past ten years and was the Secretary for ten years before that. She is at present the Musical Director of the Moravian Singers in Yorkshire.

Introduction to your background, early years, education and family

I was born in 1949 in Bradford and apart from a short time living in Lancashire I have spent the rest of my life in that part of Yorkshire. I attended the local Primary and Grammar School and then went on to Nottingham where I gained a Certificate of Education (we didn't need a degree in those days), but I returned home to start my teaching career. I had a younger sister who died when she was 11 (I was 14). This was obviously a traumatic time for my parents but looking back they were a wonderful example for me as to how to cope with the difficulties we face in life.

I married in 1971 but sadly Steve passed away in 2010. I have two sons and five grandchildren all of whom bring me much pride and pleasure. I am glad to say that three of my grandchildren have been baptised at Lower Wyke and are still part of the church today.

How and when did you come to faith?

I started attending Lower Wyke Church in the 1950s when Br Wilfred Mortimore was the minister. The children I went to day school with also went to Sunday School, so I went along with them. Some of them I am still in touch with even though they are spread throughout the world, and some are very close friends. I'm not sure whether this was the beginning of my faith but the teaching I received, the friendships and other influences have certainly formed my beliefs. My mother had a strong faith. My father, having lost his daughter, at first turned away from the church but thankfully with the encouragement and friendship of several ministers he returned and remained an active Christian for the rest of his life.

What led you into teaching?

Teaching is just something I always wanted to do right from playing at schools with dolls and friends as a little girl.

What has been your greatest joy in church life and what have you struggled with?

Making lasting friendships when working and playing together; as a Summer Camp Leader, at MWA Retreats/Conferences and at Congregation, District and Provincial Events.

How important is music to you?

It is an integral part of my life. Watching young people making music thrills me - (three of my grandchildren play or have played in orchestras and sung in choirs.) For many years I enjoyed singing choral music. I love joining in with the hymns in church



- such a variety of old and new, most with wonderful words.

Have you ever been angry with God?

No, when awful things happen I don't think 'why me?' I think 'why not me?'. With God's help I will get through this and be an example to others. I truly believe that God never gives us more than we can cope with.

Are you afraid to die or can you look beyond death?

Do you believe in the resurrection and if so, what will it be like?

No, but I hope that I will not be alone. I have no idea what comes next, but I believe that it will be a beautiful, peaceful place where everyone exists in harmony.

What can we learn from other churches and other faiths?

We have more in common with other denominations and faiths than we realise. We should work on emphasising these and try to be tolerant. There is more than one way through life.

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

Maybe because of the great selection of attractive alternatives and so many national

organisations are shown in a bad light. Sometimes the younger generations do not want to make lasting commitments.

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

Sadly, I am not a great reader. I should be having spent many years encouraging others. At the top of my bucket list is to go to the Last Night of the Proms at the Albert Hall. This is replicated every year at Lower Wyke in our Proms in the Paddock! I have always been a big fan of Sir Cliff Richard and have a life size cardboard cut out of him that lives with me. My favourite film is The Sound of Music. It combines my love of music and countryside but holds many great truths regarding life and religion.

What is the place where you feel closest to God?

I feel closest to God anywhere in nature especially where the countryside meets the sea like Criccieth in Wales. It shows God's power and peace as the surroundings change day by day.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

No inscription just the hope that I will be remembered with a smile.

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

No real regrets in life. I have been very lucky. I was born into a stable, loving family, enjoyed my work and family life, have had many opportunities to travel and now enjoy wonderful support from my family, friends and church family.

Legacy weekend at Fetter Lane, London

The history of our site, Moravian Close in Chelsea, southwest London, is long and varied, encompassing so many strands. Originally part of Sir Thomas More's property until his execution by Henry VIII in 1535, it sits just south of the King's Road, originally a private road built for King Charles II in the latter half of the 17th century. Bought by Count von Zinzendorf for a Moravian settlement in 1750, it's been a home, place of worship and workplace for many people including the sculptor, Mary Gillick, who in 1952 designed the effigy of Queen Elizabeth II, so familiar on our coinage.

All of this information and much more can be found in a newly printed booklet written by Sr Naomi Hancock that will be given out free of charge when we once again take part in Open House London on Saturday and Sunday, 9th and 10th September from 1pm to 5pm. Visitors will learn about the rich history of the site, its biodiversity and the significance of its long Moravian heritage, past and present.

Come the autumn, we hope to increase our local outreach, making Moravian Close a space for all to rest, reflect, learn and pray.

Sr Cynthia Dize

Gracehill Heritage Open Day

Saturday 9th September
12.30-5.00pm



Come for an exciting day of historic Settlement tours. Visit the Church, Old School, Shop, Single Brethren House and enjoy Tea in the Hall!

Further information: www.gracehillvillage.org

Lower Wyke Heritage Days

At Lower Wyke in Yorkshire the Heritage Days will be 9th and 10th September 2023.

The church will be open from 10am-4pm on Saturday and 12noon-4pm on Sunday. There will be a display of memorabilia on the history of Lower Wyke and information on the Moravian Church British Province and beyond.

All welcome.

heritage open days

FAIRFIELD MORAVIAN CHURCH, SETTLEMENT & MUSEUM, DROYLSDEN

Sunday 10 September 2023 1pm to 5pm
Location for Great British Railway Journeys, Peaky Blinders & the film Mrs Lowry & Son
Tours every half hour 1pm-4pm (booking preferred but not essential see HOD website for details)
Exhibition, Stalls and Light Refreshments available
Free Admission
(All parking in Fairfield High School off Fairfield Avenue M43 6ED)

www.heritageopendays.org.uk
@heritageopendays
#HODs
/heritageopendays
@heritageopendays

heritage open days

Love

Life

Labour

Saturday 16th September
Fulneck Settlement
10.30am-4pm
Free entry

Come along and have a guided tour of the Settlement

Visit the exhibition in church and the museum

Childrens' Activity

Refreshments

For a small fee you can also visit the Vintage Car Show
www.fulneck.org.uk postcode LS28 8NT

Girls Brigade at Bath Coronation Avenue



© Graeme Smith

We have had an exciting time with the Girls Brigade in Bath. First we welcomed the Bath Mayor to our Awards evening when the girls all did items to show the things they had done during the year. All the girls had parents and in some case grandparents to watch them. It was a wonderful occasion. We then moved into the church for everyone to watch photos of the years activities and the girls received their awards from the Mayor before refreshments were served.

The other big occasion was Girls Brigade camp when we joined with Charlton Kings Girls Brigade for five days in Weymouth Baptist Church. Our new Minister, Lorraine, came

to see us all off on a rainy Monday. We did lots of fun activities: crafts, sealife, Nothe Fort, funfair, swimming in the sea and in the swimming pool, a treasure hunt around Weymouth and putting. We had a resident Chaplain and had worship sessions twice a day.

The girls had a wonderful time, and we all became one wonderful Camp Family together.

Sr Sandy Smith



© Lauren Foster

East Tytherton, Wiltshire

Time once more to write my annual update from East Tytherton. In many ways it seems a long time with a winter that went on forever and a Summer that hasn't really arrived yet, though looking back we have had many bright moments to be thankful for. However, I have to begin on a sad note by mentioning the passing of Victor Just on 6th October 2022 just nine days before his 91st birthday. Victor really loved coming to our soup lunches. He was a true gentleman, and we miss hearing his wonderful anecdotes and memories he so often shared with us all.

This year we joined St Nicholas Church, Tytherton Lucas for our service of remembrance. On 18th December our beautifully decorated church welcomed both our congregation and visitors for a lessons and carols service with Christingles. This occasion was made particularly special as we celebrated the baptism of Nellie and Archer, the grandchildren of Lynda Gulwell, a very proud grandmother. On 21st December it was wonderful to hold the village carol service with Christingles in the church at last and mask free! We have all missed this wonderful Christmas get together followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Our soup lunches continue to be popular and in the Spring we gratefully accepted a donation of a new water heater from The Lions Club arranged by one of our regulars.

Spring came and with it Easter preparations. We held a 'Frugal Lunch' in Lent for the first time and raised £60. On

Easter Saturday we organised an Easter Egg Hunt on the lawns which took place in pouring rain, but nobody seemed to mind! It was followed by egg and card decorating in the church hall with refreshments. We also had an Easter Crafts sale and games. The whole event was very popular and will definitely be repeated next year!

Our Summer activities have included a cake sale and on the last Saturday in July our Cream Tea on the Lawn. Amongst the gloomy summer weather, we were thankfully blessed by warm sunshine and blue skies for both events. We had amazing support from the village and beyond and everyone seemed to have a great afternoon and enjoyed both events.

Of course, this takes preparation and work to enable it to run smoothly. A huge thank you to all and especially Pat Holtham for her lovely scones. Our next activity will be a coffee morning with a Bring and Buy stall including a 'de stash', a new word in my vocabulary acquired from Jane, not only our minister but a dressmaker, whose craft skills never cease to amaze me!

So, thank you to Jane for keeping us motivated and giving us encouragement. Thank you to Lynda for all your support, Tessa and James for helping me with the grounds.

We are not a young congregation, but we are an enthusiastic one, which reminds me of something I heard recently, 'Young people go faster but the elderly know where they are going!' ... and so, we continue.

Sr Anne Mellows Waldron



© Sr Jane Carter



Ockbrook, Derbyshire

We were recently blessed with a visit by the Fischer family from Zeist. Dad, Niels, is the organist there, and he was accompanied by his wife Sharisa and children Darian, Yaeli, Thobin and Noara.

Not only did Niels play our organ wonderfully for our services, assisted by son Darian, but the family had also prepared a very large Advent Star, which they assembled inside church.

They have previously made around 100 stars, varying in size, the largest being in Zeist, Haarlem and Utrecht. Ours measures approximately 160 cm from point to point and has 91 points! Each point took about 30-40 minutes to prepare on yellow paper, drawn, cut and scored. These were created in Zeist then brought to the UK by the family. The points vary, some having six sides, others five and the small ones three. Wood glue was used to secure them to the inner polyhedron, also made of paper and strengthened with expanding foam. This inner was suspended through the special Advent Star hole in our ceiling while construction took place, starting with the largest points, then filling in with the smaller ones and energy-saving bulbs were used inside.

The finished star is too large to move, so it will be stored high up in situ, quite close to the ceiling, then lowered during Advent and Christmas, where we will enjoy it in all its splendour!

Our thanks go to Niels, Sharisa and family for this superb addition to our church.

Sr Julie Hague

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Reconstitution of the Provincial Board

Following our Special Synod in June 2023, the Provincial Board met in July and formally reconstituted. While we remain a collegiate body, responsibilities have been divided as follows:

Chair: Sr Roberta Hoey

Treasurer: Br Livingstone Thompson

Company Secretary: Br Michael Newman

Chair of British Mission Board: Sr Jane Carter

Chair of Estates Board: Sr Roberta Hoey, supported by Br David Howarth and Br Edwin Quidan

Fulneck Trustee Leads: Sr Roberta Hoey and Br Michael Newman

Provincial Diary for September

4-10 Unity Synod Cape Town, South Africa

16 Men's Fellowship Royton

19-20 PEC Church House

21-23 ECP and British Province PEC Retreat Herrnhut

NOTICES

Moravian Provincial Men's Fellowship

RALLY 2023

at Royton
Moravian Church,
Oldham

Post Code OL2 5QE

Saturday 16th September at 1pm
Bring your own food. Tea & coffee
will be available from 12.30pm

Guest Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Livingstone Thompson

Subject: A Decade of Evangelism &
the Men of the Church

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

30th July 2023 Wilfred Joseph Hackney
Bath (Weston)

Deaths

18 July 2023 Angela Horsfall Gomersal

Dates to remember!

8-17	Heritage Open Days (www.heritageopendays.org.uk/)
10	Education Sunday (www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234838/Home/Resources/Education_Sunday/Education_Sunday.aspx)
16-23	World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (www.worldweekforpeace.org)
21	UN International Day of Peace (www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace)
23	Autumn Equinox
26	Prophet's Birthday - Muslim
29 Sep-6 Oct	Sukkot - Jewish

Book Review:

Frank Skinner's 'A Comedian's Prayer Book'

This slim volume was a Christmas present from my youngest son in 2021. Sam has seen me growing up and into the Church and my various roles within it all his life (he is now 19). This book took its place on my ever-growing Church Bookshelf. This features everything from the old Black Moravian Hymn book and Liturgy, to 'The Red Tent' by Anita Diamant and even the 'Bible Book' by Nick Page that have all got a steadfast place in my Christian journey.

I had heard that Frank was a practising Christian, and it always fascinates me on what makes a 'Modern' Christian. Though Frank is Roman Catholic, many of the questions he asks in the book are open-ended and make you think about your own relationship with God. This ties in strongly with the 'Holy Habits' initiative, and how we would feel if God / Jesus were sat next to us - what we would say. Sometimes I find myself wryly nodding in agreement with the author and at other times, realising the wide and vast feelings we all have in praise that can differ from person to person.

A quote from the book that I love is 'I never heard your voice - no mighty wind - or, if I do, I don't recognise it, but I have sensed you in the silence. And I rest there for a short time.' I have never felt myself worthy enough to have heard the voice of God, but like Frank, my prayer is a constant conversation in my head that is sometimes followed by a feeling of 'rightness' and calm. Yet, I know Jesus is listening, guiding and as a close friend says, 'holding my hand'. Not just in the bad times but in the good, when I know I am blessed.

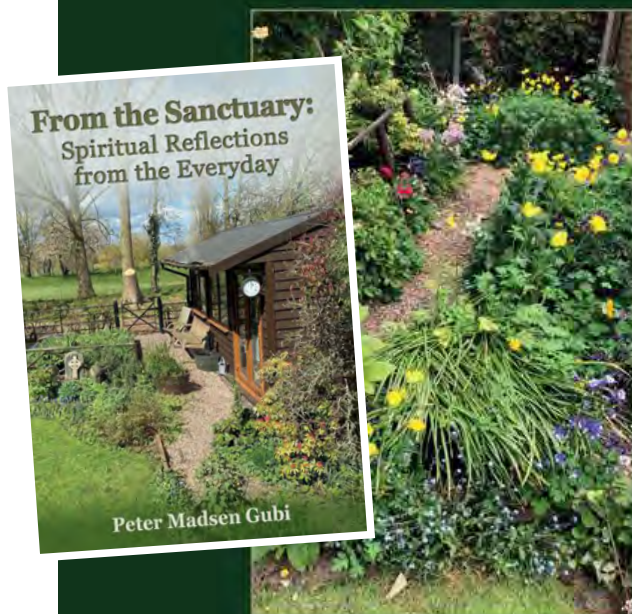
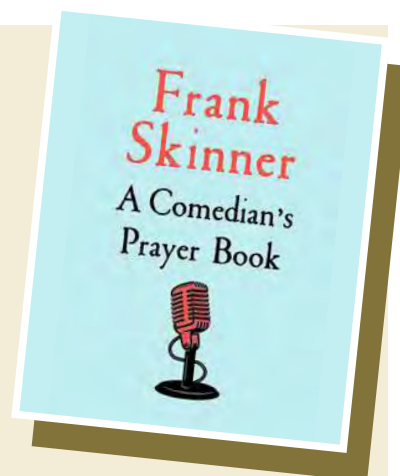
Another quote that resounds with me was 'I like to think it is you at the centre of every religion, just viewed from different angles.' As we live in a multi faith society, I am comforted that on the whole the people of faith that I have met have love and tolerance to share. It also reminds me of the bible verse John 14:2, 'My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?'

Of course, the book has comedic observations along the way, but all told as if it was a discussion from one good friend to another - and with a degree of insight and awe. Frank obviously takes his faith very seriously, as do I. His love of Jesus and the careful way in which he outlines his prayers show that a questioning, but thankful dynamic is very much Frank's style.

So, my summation is that for a modern Christian it is the same of any Christian through the ages, love, hope and prayer are what you need to arm yourself with.

A Comedian's Prayer Book, written by Frank Skinner. Published by Hodder & Stoughton, 2021, ISBN 978-1529368963, £7.99.

Sr Penny Weir



Many of Jesus' parables contain spiritual wisdom found in the everyday. This book follows in that tradition of reflecting on everyday observations to discern the spiritual wisdom that can be gained for living life to its fullest. The reflections follow the pattern and seasons of the Gregorian calendar and the Christian Church. Each reflection is informed by psychological and theological insights, and asks the reader to pause and consider the relevance of the wisdom to their own life.

All proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the British Mission Board of the Moravian Church for work overseas.

Ordering information

Peter M. Gubi, *From the Sanctuary: Spiritual Reflections from the Everyday*, 2023, ISBN 978-1-910481-21-9, £15.00.

This print book can either be purchased from Moravian Church House, through the University of Chester Press (including online ordering) at www.chester.ac.uk/university-press or through booksellers and distributors.

The Book Room
Moravian Church House
5 Muswell Hill
London N10 3TJ
office@moravian.org.uk or
www.chester.ac.uk/university-press
Price: £15.00 (paperback)

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