



SEPTEMBER 2026

Introducing a new member to the Provincial Board

Br Philip Cooper was elected at this year's Provincial Synod.

I was born and grew up in Greater Manchester, and I am married to Janet - we have three adult children, two daughters-in-law, one son-in-law, and two young granddaughters.

Baptised as an infant at St Andrew's Anglican Church in Droylsden, when I was five or six years old, I began attending Fairfield Moravian Church Sunday School, and was confirmed at Fairfield when I was 16 years old.

Leaving school that same year, I first worked in administration at Manchester Social Services but then began training for ordained ministry in the Moravian Church in 1984 at Northern College in Manchester. I spent a year studying at the Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA, and was ordained as a Deacon at Fairfield Moravian Church in 1989.

This is my second time serving on the Provincial Board. From 2010, I served for four years as a non-stipendiary member of the Provincial Board. From 2010 onwards, I have been a Provincial Ecumenical Officer, and presently also the Chair of the Unity Committee on Theology (UCOT).

Over the years, I have served on two Provincial Standing Committees: the Faith & Order & Ecumenical Relations Committee, which I chaired for a period of time, and the Mission & Society Committee. I have also previously served on two committees formed to organise events to celebrate important dates in Moravian Church history.

At this present time, the Province faces many challenges, including a declining membership, aging congregations, a reduction in the number of ordained ministers, and increasing

financial costs. As a Province, we need to face these challenges by asking the difficult questions and prioritising those aspects of the life of our church that are central to God's mission, and letting go of those things that are not. The important question is: are we willing to do this?

Another extremely important part of the Provincial Board's work at this time is the moving of Church House, from Muswell Hill, in London, to the Robinson Building, in the Fulneck settlement, in Leeds, including all that that move involves, in terms of staff changes, the sale and renovation of property, etc.

There is, also, the important matter of the appointment of a General Secretary for the Province, and the change to the membership of the Provincial Board that will take place in 2028. As you may be aware, following Provincial Synod 2028, there will only be one full-time stipendiary member on the Provincial Board, rather than two.

There were, of course, many proposals passed at this year's Provincial Synod that will have to be considered and implemented by the Provincial Board, along with the Provincial Standing Committees, during this inter-synodal period.

It is an honour to be elected to the Provincial Board. With my past experience and God's help, I pray that I will make a valuable contribution to its work.

Br Philip Cooper
Provincial Board

In the next issue we will hear from another new Provincial Board member elected at this year's Synod: Sr Carmen Warner.



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At last, it rains

Well, it is raining here in Northern Ireland (16th August) as I write this and I can see that the temperatures in England are due to drop slowly to more normal levels over the coming week. There is the hope for rain in the Southeast by next weekend and I pray that there will be weeks and weeks of gentle rain for England to soften the ground, damp the dry grass, nourish the trees and crops (those that are not already lost) and slake the thirst of creation.

Yet in Assam there was terrible flooding in July following very heavy rainfall and at the height, over 700,000 people were affected. Many people were displaced completely from their homes. 810 villages remain submerged and 34,970 hectares of crop land have been damaged and there are 274 relief camps and distribution centres across the affected areas (Source: *New Indian Express* reporting on 26th July).

We think we are so clever; we think we can reach the heights and touch God with our ziggurats of AI knowledge, and the rich can spend all they want on everything they want without regard for anyone or anything. Yet none of us can control the weather and we are helpless in the face of no rain and too much rain. The tragedy is that the poor of the world will suffer the most from drought or flood.

I find it hard to believe that some politicians feel it is right to abandon net zero commitments by the year 2050. Surely we need more green power not less in the coming years, more clean energy and less reliance on fossil fuels. I remain to be convinced that that using more fossil fuels now will help us to turn to green energy in the future, but I recognise this is a personal view.

I am frequently encouraged by the collected wisdom from our Church, and I note that in the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum 2023* there are two statements (in Chapter 3, the Witness of the Unitas Fratrum) that should directly challenge us.

- Following the example of Christ, we Moravians strive to overcome the barriers which exclude people and God's creation from living a sustainable life in peace and dignity, such as racism, power imbalances, and poverty or climate injustice.
- As Christians, we are called to change our way of life so that all God's creation can be sustained.

Many Christians now mark the month from the 1st September - 4th October as the Season of Creation. This initiative started with the Orthodox Church and has now become an important time in all Churches calendars calling us to take regard of God's good creation. Resources can be found on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website. It is an appropriate time to reflect on our abuse of the world around us, our destruction of habitats, our carelessness of the good of those who live far away and to realise that perhaps the pigeons are coming home to roost for all of us.

May God give us all the grace and strength to change in the way we need to live the life of witness we are called to as Moravians.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



What has the Lord done for you or for me?

Part of the Church Service Committee session at Synod focused on this very personal question in small group sessions. There were eight groups each with a notetaker. People spoke in turn and comments were noted but no names were recorded.

There was a wonderful sense of sharing of what God had done for people in the groups and what the Church meant to those people. Below is a collation and summary of the recorded comments. We pray these will inspire and encourage you too to reflect on what the Lord has done for you and how you can serve him in your own context.

What has the Lord done for you:

Encouraged my Church; changed my life and given me purpose, protection, direction, a way to live, everything; given me a new family in the Moravian Church and a spiritual home (for some 'in a new country') and a sense of belonging, grounded; supported me through difficult times and kept me on the right path; given me my life back; a sure foundation; I feel God is with me, God didn't give up on me; a companion to me; I have felt God's call on my life; the Spirit has given me strength; I have deep peace, a sense of blessing; I have someone to thank for my healing, health and well-being, my spouse and my friendships; grateful for the Church's schools; for opportunities to travel; for support, encouragement and guidance through congregations, ministers, MWA etc; I am what I am, I have what I have, because of God; I have calmness, hope and talking to God in prayer; I have had second chances and a light in dark times; God supported me during the troubles in Belfast; God has been there for me in the difficult times. My wife was a church goer but I wasn't, I went with her one day and felt welcomed. It was like joining a family, God opened my eyes and I realised what it was to be a Christian; God speaks to me through music.

How can you share what God has done for you?

Tell others; sharing testimonies, the preacher can do this during the service; helping others who are in need; leading from the front; As a midwife I would encourage the mothers; working with the young people; I do the Church gardens and people approach me and ask about the Church; I share extra copies of the Watchwords / Messenger with friends; I have conversation with others and encourage them.

Sharing the confidence and personal growth that faith has brought. We need to become more comfortable talking about church and faith with others, even for naturally private people; Meeting people where they are, listening to their experiences and being receptive to opportunities for conversation.

Highlighting and communicating the positive ways faith and church involvement have benefited one's life; Demonstrating faith through actions as well as words.

Offering to pray for people; People ask when they see my cross/lamb and flag pendant; I struggle with words but there are other ways; People are curious.

Being friendly and welcoming; Being present in the community; Leading by example.

Examples of leadership in church have helped in personal employment; Encouraging lay people to talk to their friends and in Church about faith; Engaging in discussion - even if you face challenge; preaching and don't leave it all to the minister; discussions in the pub; welcome people, show love, compassion and empathy; interfaith dialogue; letting people see Christ in me; authentic personal witness.

What do you call a group of Church National Safeguarding Leads?

Well that rather depends on your perspective. I would call it a support network, an information source, and a valuable set of people. Others may call it a bit odd, a group of weirdos (after all most people don't even want to think about the stuff we have to learn about and manage), others in 'safeguarding' may consider them to be a bit of a pain, yet others may go 'what is that?'

The main group existing in the four nations is CFS, Christian Forum for Safeguarding, and I have been a member of this group since 2008 when I started at the Moravian Church. It is a group that meets at least three times a year and pre-COVID this was in person in a variety of venues, but COVID put a stop to that and the meetings moved online. As a group we were determined to continue meeting as we reflect a completely different landscape for safeguarding and need to support and learn together. Each



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meeting has a guest speaker on a variety of topics, some very general, other quite specific.

Wednesday 8th July saw 23 of us gather at the CTBI offices for our first full in person meeting since COVID. As I arrived at the offices the wall of noise told me that there was already quite a group present. The in-person meetings have always been about more than the official business, the networking, random chats and just being with people who understand the complexities of your job is all so important. Having lunch together and meeting people with large teams, small teams, teams under immense pressure, this trying to work in difficult situations where they are a single voice calling out is enriching for all of us.

The guest speakers were from the Charity Commission and gave a clear and useful presentation about the Charity Commissions expectations around

safeguarding. They answered our questions and giving us plenty to think about. Some of this will make its way in the new level 1 training due for introduction early next year.

Other items on the agenda included discussion about Safeguarding Sunday (15th November, Safeguarding Sunday), the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) for Safeguarding in Faith Communities with an update on their current work, 'meet a member', updates from subgroups and finally a discussion in small groups addressing the value of CFS and what is wanted for the future.

The meeting closed with the Grace and lots of chat and goodbyes. Attending the meeting was invigorating and very valuable. So to answer the question above what do you think? A roar, a motivation, a knowledge pool.

Sr Joy Raynor

Provincial Safeguarding Lead

Why do you go to Church?

Enjoy the music, preaching, quiet and fellowship; I grew up in the Church, a part of my life; fellowship; I relax, reflect and find peace, I enjoy the service; It is what I do (a habit); Post COVID some have returned as they missed the fellowship; I go to sing and praise God; Friendship; Duty - jobs to be done; Discipline; Learning about our faith; I don't know; If I don't go I feel empty; Struggle to go if I'm not leading worship; I try to go even if on holiday; Reflection and to feel fulfilled (recharged) to get through the next week. You can't be a Christian on your own, need community; A renewed sense of spirituality. An opportunity to 'recharge batteries' amid the pressures of everyday life. The joy of worship, particularly singing together; Exposure to a different worldview and perspective on life; Time and space to focus on God and spiritual priorities; Made to go - changed to wanting to go; Inspired to go by other people of my own age; it resets the week; To keep God in focus; friendship; Show and give values; its integral to life; I enjoy different styles of worship; Music lifts you.

One group said - The act of worship is a 'step away from the busyness of life' - therefore to make worship 'busy' with much interactive activity is to lose something of the worship. Worship should Encourage, Empower and Inspire.

How can you share in making the good things happen and encourage others?

Share through conversation; Tell, help, be an example; Music and variety in music; Preaching (sometimes); Singing; Children; just being in God's house; seeking the spirit's guidance; I feel blessed when I feel God has turned up - it could be the music, the teaching, the atmosphere, it can move me; Bible Study; The revelation when you are expecting the ordinary and experience the extraordinary; Differing things each week; Prayers; Different preachers; Opportunity to have fellowship; Table fellowship/food

and invitations; Strength of being together; Flowers - beauty of creation; Seeing new people; Sense of belonging and pastoral care from the congregation; Holy Communion; Laughter and joy; Meet with Jesus Christ; share and talk about our faith more; Discuss your Church at work; Open door welcome policy; Community events; being open to how people connect with God and don't be critical; Exercise tolerance; sharing what is happening; Be inspired by what other people are doing in their congregations; Be permission givers - allow people to play a part; Have confidence to play a role; Volunteer and be prepared to receive feedback; Make others aware of opportunities where they can serve; Don't just do once, persevere; Try a different approach if something didn't work before, try again with a different perspective; Attitude - positive; By gaining courage; Build confidence in people to share their faith; Give people the opportunity to practice telling what they believe in a safe space; Enable table talk opportunities within worship; If God has given you skills to do something then share those skills; Giving space for others to share something of themselves; Encouragement; Recognising gifts of others and yourself; Open and honest; Natural Church Development may have more resources which would help with this.

We rarely get the opportunity to share personal testimony (what God has done for us) in worship or even after Church. Can we create a culture of 'how has worship touched you today?' in after church coffee conversations, rather than conversations about health and weather.

The importance of enabling people to participate in church life even when they are unable to attend in person; the opportunities provided by technology and make greater use of livestreaming, online resources, and digital communications so that those who are housebound, geographically distant, caring for others, or otherwise unable to attend regularly can remain connected to worship, fellowship, and the wider life of the Church.

Young People's Missionary Association - Update

I know you have waited a very long time to hear news of the YPMA and for this I sincerely apologise. Lots of things have been happening 'behind the scenes' which have prevented us giving a spotlight on the work of the YPMA, but I hope this report will put matters right.

I was so pleased to receive the donations from the churches named below and I want to thank each and every one of you.

Cliftonville £475.17 General donation from congregation

Dukinfield	£1,096.00	4 collectors
Fairfield	£157.20	2 collectors
Gracehill	£742.60	21 collectors
	plus £1,354.79	General donations
Lower Wyke	£800.00	10 collectors
Royton	£400.00	2 collectors

Wellhouse £160.00 General donation from congregation

If you add these figures up, you will see that there were 39 children giving donations during 2025 and a grand total of £4,442.16. Let's see if we can increase this number this year!

So, what happens to the money you donate? Well, this year, we heard about two very needy charities. The first was **Binnikandi School** which is situated in Northern India. They recently lost their funding which meant that the teachers were working without pay. On your behalf, we sent £2,500 to help with this shortfall, and I do believe that other Moravians around the world are also contributing. We have said that if they need any more, then they should please let us know.

Also, the school roof had been infested with termites and had collapsed. This was a horrendous situation but was



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put right with a donation by us of £2,500 to help rebuild this roof. We are so relieved that the children can still continue with their studies.

Also, you may have heard of **Sikonge Hospital** which is situated in Western Tanzania. This hospital has been in action for over 100 years now and never turns away people because they cannot afford treatment. They have a maternity section that was particularly in need of funds. There could be up to three labouring mothers at one time in one room, which is on the ground floor with a window so privacy was difficult. And once the mums have given birth, they could be sharing one bed with at least one other new mum. Our donation of £3,650 will enable three new delivery rooms to be built as well as providing two sets of toilet blocks.

At Synod this year, I spoke to members from Cliftonville and Wellhouse, who have no official YPMA in action having no children in the churches, but remembered us in their giving. I was so touched by this and would ask that any other church can do the same if they so wish. Your donation should be sent to Church House, as usual, but if you could please drop an email to me, letting me know, I will be able to add your giving into our yearly totals.

I also would like to make an appeal to any churches who do have children attending but who don't have a YPMA at present. If this applies to you, please let me know and I can give you all the information you need.

Thank you, once again, for your generous giving.

Sr Sue Selby
Provincial Secretary



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Graham Walkden (1936-2026)

- Printer and Distributor of the Moravian Messenger



© James Walkden

Graham Walkden, who printed and distributed the *Moravian Messenger* for nearly 50 years, sadly passed away in June 2026.

Graham first became involved with the magazine in 1976, while working as a manager at the *Spenborough Guardian* in Cleckheaton. He later took full responsibility for its printing and distribution in the early 1990s.

Although Graham eventually retired from his professional career, he never retired from his work with the Moravian Church. He continued printing and distributing both the *Moravian Messenger* and the *Moravian Daily Watchwords* throughout his retirement and until shortly before his

death. His dedication ensured that every edition was carefully produced, prepared and sent to readers across the United Kingdom and overseas.

Born in Bolton in 1939, Graham was a printer by trade and remained passionate about printing throughout his life. For many years, every edition of the *Moravian Messenger* passed through his hands before being dispatched to its readers.

His work involved far more than simply printing the magazine. Graham maintained the distribution records, prepared the copies for posting and ensured that the magazine reached its readers month after month. He took great pride in the work and valued the relationships he developed with members of the Moravian community over the years.

Outside of printing, Graham a devoted

family man, had a lifelong love of cycling, hillwalking and Bolton Wanderers Football Club. He completed many memorable walks and cycle rides, including cycling from Land's End to John o' Groats in 2001.

Graham's long service to the *Moravian Messenger* was a significant part of his life, and his family know that he would have been very proud to see the work continue. Following his passing, his grandson James has taken over the distribution of the magazine and hopes to carry on the work with the same care and dedication Graham showed for so many years.

Graham will be greatly missed by his family, friends and all those who knew him through his work with the *Moravian Messenger*.

James Walkden

The Moravian Unity Cultural Heritage Foundation (MUCHF)



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Br Jørgen Bøytler and Sr Nonhlanhla Nkosi (President of the Moravian Unity Foundation), centre, with members of the MUCHF Board in South Africa.

The Moravian Unity Synod of 2016 passed *Resolution US2016.6*: charging the Unity Board Executive Committee to form a Steering Committee to develop the Moravian Unity Cultural Heritage Foundation (MUCHF).

This followed a recognition that many Moravian provinces have property including settlements, mission stations, church buildings and other structures that date as far back as the 18th Century, which are considered cultural heritage of historical and sociological importance. For a whole variety of reasons, most if not all communities, face challenges in restoring, maintaining and using these structures.

Moravian building culture and Moravian architecture are part of the heritage of our faith; and have been proven to be extraordinary, important to maintain, and valuable for society far beyond the limits of the Moravian constituency, as most recently evidenced by the inscription of a number of representative settlements on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

As a result of the pandemic there was a delay in actioning the resolution and the first meeting of the steering group, led by Br Jørgen Bøytler, and involving sisters and brothers from across the Unity, took place in Christiansfeld in May 2023.

A key task was to develop a Mission Statement:

Essentially united to preserve, study and stimulate appreciation of Moravian Church Cultural Heritage, acting as a resource center for maintaining and restoring Moravian structures and identity. To inspire Moravians around the world to take charge in ensuring that future generations may live in and continue to bring life to Moravian communities by using accumulated knowledge and skills at the highest level of quality. To advance knowledge of Moravian tangibles and intangibles that

collectively represent the broadest spectrum of Moravian Church identity, life and faith. All things done in love.

Subsequently at Unity Synod 2023, Resolution 12 was agreed:

Whereas the Moravian Unity Cultural Heritage Foundation (MUCHF) Steering Committee has met and discussed the further development of the kind and scope of action of MUCHF, - Be it resolved that the Steering Committee be changed to the Board of MUCHF with representatives from the four regions of the Unity: Africa, America, Caribbean & Latin America, and Europe. There will be two representatives per region of the Unity.

Several meetings and much in-depth discussion followed, not least around a definition of Cultural Heritage.

UNESCO defines culture as 'the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs' (UNESCO, 2001).

The UNESCO definition was adopted with a clear focus on buildings (and associated structures, ruins, landscapes and graveyards), collections, documents and artefacts.

However it was agreed that cultural heritage in the context of a Christian church refers to the traditions, beliefs, practices, and values passed down through generations that shape the identity and spiritual life of the Christian community. Importantly for the Moravian Unity this included tangible and intangible expressions of culture:

- Tangible: Church buildings, structures and layouts, artefacts and music.
- Intangible: Oral traditions, hymns, rituals, and theological traditions and practices.

Scripture emphasises the importance of passing down faith and values:

'These words I am commanding you today are to be upon your hearts. And you shall teach them diligently to your children ...' - Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

This underscores the role of cultural heritage in sustaining spiritual continuity and communal identity.

For a Christian church, cultural heritage is not just about preserving the past - it's about living faith in context. It helps believers understand their spiritual lineage, strengthens communal bonds, and provides a framework for engaging with the world in meaningful ways.

MUCHF has now been established as a Unity Undertaking (similar to Star Mountain and the Unity Archive) with a governing Board. Future plans include:

- Seeking funding to employ an administrator to coordinate our work.
- Identifying internal Moravian and external national and international funding sources.
- Promoting Moravian Cultural Heritage both nationally and internationally to inspire both Moravians and non-Moravians.
- Identifying expert resources in Moravian Architecture, Church History, restoration, historic craftsmanship, cultural heritage management and other relevant subjects to offer guidance and advice to projects.
- Establishing a central register of structures to be considered as cultural heritage within the Unity.

As we plan for the future, mindful of the past it is perhaps wise to remember that 'The church is not tradition; the church is not the past. The Church is what we do next.' (From the film 'Conclave')

Br David Johnston
Member of the MUCHF Board

A grateful farewell

One of the sad things about Synod is saying goodbye to those who have served for many years but will not be with us at future Synods. One such is Sr Sue Selby who has served as Synod Secretary for 18 years. Sue sits in a room to the side of the main Synod hall typing up all the minutes from the sessions along with the amendments and resolutions to Synod that are presented there. It is a task that requires attention to detail and a calm head particularly when the minutes

are read during Synod. Sue has brought kindness and care to this role and her 'office' is often a place of peace when all else is bustle. Thank you Sue from all of Synod.

Another senior figure who will not be at Synod next time is Br Bob Hopcroft who has attended 24 Synods over the past 48 years, as minister, Provincial Board member and most recently as Secretarius Fratrum in Anglia. This is an honorary elected position at Synod which is given to those who have contributed much to the Church over the years.

Sr Sarah Groves
President of 2026 Synod



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Synodals at the 2026 Synod

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My Reflections on Synod 2026

As we journeyed to Swanwick in Derbyshire on the first day of Synod, I felt both an excitement and a responsibility. I was not only representing my brothers and sisters in Hornsey, but I was one of the synodals attending the 2026 Great Britain and Ireland Provincial Synod. Compared to my church committee, this felt like attending the Moravian equivalent of Parliament. This was my second attendance at Synod, so I knew that before important church matters were discussed, we had the opportunity to reaffirm our faith at the opening service.

Over the coming days, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Sessions guided us through the Provincial Board Reports and reports from the various committees. Although the process is serious and demands much concentration, it is also informative and I felt I was also learning a great deal about all the good works being done in God's name by the Moravian Church.

I listened with particular interest to the report of the Youth and Children's Committee and its work in supporting the youth and children's activities as well as fostering spiritual growth and safeguarding. It is so important that young people understand that Church isn't only for Sundays. The report of the British Mission Board was also fascinating, and it was nice that during the Synod there was the opportunity to meet and hear from guests from overseas who had travelled to Synod to present reports and take part.

One item of Synod business which was of particular interest to me was the broadening of the role of lay pastors, enabling those appointed to work alongside ordained ministers rather than only leading congregations without one. This change may enable lay pastors to offer service more widely as well as allowing more people to be involved in ministry when the number of ordained ministers is reducing.

It is clear that despite the many challenges facing the Church in these modern days, there is much to be positive about in the development of the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland as well as in other parts of the world. Inevitably though as new projects begin, others may come to a conclusion, and it was with great sadness that the Synod confirmed the closure of Fulneck School. The school, an independent day and boarding school in the historic Moravian settlement of Fulneck, near Leeds,

was closing after nearly 275 years of operation, having been established in 1753. The decision followed a comprehensive strategic review which explored all possible alternatives, but no viable options or investment offers had materialised. After the decision was made the Synod held a silence in honour of all those who had worked in or attended the school over the last three centuries. After that decision, I included my own prayer for those affected.

The Synod runs for five days, and I found it spiritually uplifting to start each day with Morning Prayers and Bible Study and end each day with Evening Prayers, except on Sunday evening when the Synod Communion takes place. It was a reminder to us all that in carrying out the work of Synod, we were not only working in the name of God but also receiving His guidance.

On the Sunday, elections were held for the Provincial Board, the Provincial Committees, and other roles linked to the AGM and the next Synod in 2028. This is part of the Church's process to both smoothly go forward and to create a direct link with the following Synod. I was honoured to be asked to allow my name to be included in the nominations and I congratulate all those who were selected to carry on such important work in those roles.

During my time at the Synod, I got a better understanding of just how much work had gone into the preparation, organisation and smooth running of the Synod. Great credit must be given to all those involved, including the many unseen people working tirelessly in the background.

As the Synod closed on Monday, 13th July, I felt both tired but spiritually refreshed. I was looking forward to reaching my home again and sitting quietly in my garden, knowing that when I did, I could look back and reflect that, with all the other synodals, I had played my part and followed the path that God had laid down for me.

Sr Patricia White
Hornsey



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Reflections on Synod - from a newcomer

The Synod fellowship started when I met many of the Northern Ireland contingent at Belfast City Airport on Thursday 9th July. The conversations and laughter flowed during our journey to the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick. Fellowship was to continue and was extended to many other brothers and sisters throughout the duration of Synod.

The opening worship service introduced the theme of Synod of 'Faithfulness in a time of change'. The joyful singing of a group of Moravians in worship is uplifting and this service made me feel part of a special group and reduced any apprehension I had ahead of my first Synod. The singing of hymns was a consistent thread throughout Synod.

After the opening service on the first day there were three Synod sessions. There was a full programme each day including 9am morning prayers, five sessions and concluding with evening prayers at 9pm. This seemed like an intense schedule but there was plenty of time to meet, share, reflect and discuss between sessions, over mealtimes, coffee breaks or in the evening.

Morning prayers were led by Br Mikie Roberts. Br Mikie reintroduced us to the skill of singing canticles. We had thoughtful discussions of the hymn of the day in our home groups when we linked phrases from the hymn back to Biblical texts. Each morning Br Mikie also led us in the singing of the Hawaiian hymn of *Ka ma na 'o 'I 'O* (Faithful is our God). By the end of Synod we had mastered the pronunciation of the Hawaiian words and were singing confidently and prayerfully. This is a hymn which will remain with me, and I am sure will be introduced to many congregations across the Province.

I was struck by the formality of the Synod sessions. The formal seating arrangements, the presentation of reports and the rules around voting and discussions of proposals. Mentimeter as an online voting tool was new to me and many other brothers and sisters and caused a few issues until we all became familiar with the technology. I found some of the discussions and reports interesting but challenging at times. The theme of 'Faithfulness in a time of change' was appropriate as we move forward as a Province within a changing society. I have learnt more about the oversight and workings of the British Province of the Moravian Church and the challenges of managing this within the current legal framework.

Evening prayers concluded the formal programme each day. Br

James Woolford led prayers and Bible readings through music. Br James introduced us to a new hymn 'May You be Near' which he had written. This is another hymn which is a lasting memory from Synod, and I am sure will be introduced in many congregations.

Each Synod session started and ended with appropriate hymn verses, and a sung grace before lunch and dinner. So added to the hymns at morning and evening prayers, there was a lot of hymn singing each day. This reiterated the perception that as Moravians we like to sing!

Singing continued during the service of Holy Communion on Sunday 12th July. This was another memorable and meaningful service which was simultaneously broadcast to our brothers and sisters across the Province.

The Hayes conference centre was a perfect setting for Synod at a time of dry, hot weather. There were places outside in the beautiful grounds for walks, sitting and relaxation allowing spaces for further conversations, discussions and fellowship. I reconnected with some brothers and sisters I met during my days at Summer School and youth weekends and I also had the pleasure of meeting new brothers and sisters from across the Province.

As a newcomer to Synod, I was a bit apprehensive about what to expect before I arrived, but I need not have worried. The formality of the sessions, elections and discussions of proposals was offset by the times of fellowship and worship in the relaxed atmosphere and space of the conference centre.

I am grateful that I was given the opportunity by University Road Moravian Church to attend Synod. I would like to thank all involved with organising Synod and other synodals for making it such a memorable experience. Synod afforded me the time to deepen my faith through discussion, prayer and fellowship. Synod has also encouraged me to become more involved in the wider Provincial committees and other church work. If given the opportunity, I would encourage you to attend Synod in the future. It is not as daunting as it seems!

Sr Sandra Biggart

University Road Moravian Church, Belfast



Opening of the 2026 Synod



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'What I Believe'

**Moravian Messenger Editor
Sr Sarah Groves interviews
Rev Dr Winelle Kirton-Roberts**



© Sr Sarah Groves

Sr Winelle is the minister of the Geneva Moravian Fellowship in Switzerland. She was born in Barbados and has served as a minister in Trinidad, Barbados and the United States Virgin Islands before coming to Geneva. Winelle was the preacher at the opening service at our Synod in July.

Tell us a bit about your background, family, education, etc.

I was born in Barbados and raised in a loving multi-generation family. After primary and secondary education in Barbados, I attended United Theological of the West Indies in Jamaica to pursue a bachelor's degree in theology. Following this, I completed graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary (ThM in Ecumenics and Missions) and thereafter at the University of the West Indies (PhD History).

How and when did you come to faith?

I grew up in a devoted and active Moravian home where faith and participation in the life of the Church was a given. Attendance at Sunday School, 'walking' for Confirmation, Weekly services, Youth fellowship and Church activities were a regular part of my upbringing. At age 17, there was a revival service in our community, and I responded to an invitation to fully surrender my heart to the Lord. This became a significant point in my spiritual journey as I understood what it meant to have a growing relationship with the Lord.

What led you into the ministry? How did you hear God's call and where did you train?

After that spiritual experience I devoted much time to personal prayer and the study of the scriptures. In addition, I became more active in my local Moravian Church. For us in the Eastern West Indies Province, youth camps were spaces in which we were challenged to discern the call of God to ministry. At the 1985 Provincial youth camp many of us, including Mikie who later became my husband, began to wrestle with a call to ministry. It was in 1989 that both Mikie and I made applications for full-time ordained ministry in the Moravian Church. The call to ministry was finally

confirmed after a Moravian layman's conference in Antigua.

How do you integrate your passion for history into your life and ministry?

I've always loved history. I have a natural curiosity to know and to connect dots. I did 'A' level history, and from my bachelor's thesis, I researched the history of Mount Carmel, one of the early Moravian congregations in Jamaica. Being in archives make me feel like a child in a candy store. Knowing my history has enhanced my ministry as a Moravian Pastor. I have an appreciation for all the good that we have done but I have a commitment to make sure that we do not repeat the ills of our past.

What has been your greatest joy so far in ministry and what do you struggle with?

Generally, it is accompanying people in the various seasons of life. For me, my greatest joy is found being with my family. In ministry, it is a joy when I see spiritual growth, i.e. people maturing as they apply faith to their daily lives. My struggle is that I am result oriented. So I lack patience when in ministry; we get bowed down with rules, regulations and traditions and not make ministry a life giving sharing of our Christian faith.

How can we integrate young people into the life, service and leadership of our Church?

In my home Church, Dunscombe Moravian, youth were always at the centre of the Church. I took this approach

to ministry. When Jesus said to seek first the Kingdom of God, I interpret that to mean to seek first the children and youth. So I have always created the space for children. I invite them to participate in church service from as early as possible and especially after confirmation. I firmly believe that we ought to take the time to prepare them for leadership. That means setting an example by affirming them and refusing to pass judgement.

Are you afraid to die? Can you look beyond death and what does that look like?

I am not afraid to die but I believe that there is still much more for me to do on earth, so I am focusing on living life in abundance. I have this sense that there is yet much that God has in store for me to accomplish and because of that I am not afraid to die. I have poured myself first into my children, and into those whom I have served. I have already seen some fruits as my life's legacy. But I firmly believe that I will live long enough to see even more.

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

Honestly, I am not a movie fan, but my husband managed to get me to watch some movies during the pandemic.

In terms of books, there are too many to choose from.

I love all genre of music; it just depends on which day and what time of the day. My mornings may include mainly hymns, like 'Abide with me' (my absolute favourite), and spiritual songs, like 'Lord I'm available'. My afternoons, I usually listen to classical music and that could be anything from Bach, Mozart or Beethoven. For the evening, when I am prone to get home-sick, I switch to Caribbean music, and I sometimes wind down with instrumental jazz.

The place where you feel closest to God?

Early morning during exercise. The voice of the Lord is very clear to me then.

What inscription would you like on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

God's grace was sufficient.



© British Province of the Moravian Church

40 Years of the Moravian Men's Fellowship

Over the last 40 years or so, we have enjoyed wonderful times of Fellowship, learning many things, reflecting on how they impact on our lives as individuals and as a Church. It has always been a special time as we have met around the Lord's Table and celebrated together.

It began in 1986 in Yorkshire after a discussion about how to encourage and support the brethren of the Church. We first met at Lower Wyke when Br Bob Hopcroft was the minister and we heard a speaker from Wheatfield Hospice in Leeds talk about the support and care they gave to their patients. The gathering was well supported, and it was decided to meet together annually for a District Men's Fellowship. We met at different Churches and then decided to invite the Lancashire District Brethren to join us. A few years later we decided to invite the brethren of the Province to join us for our Brethren's Fellowship afternoon.

It was following the gathering at Dukinfield that the brethren of the Hornsey congregation suggested that there should be more involvement from other districts in organising the Fellowship Day because up to that point, Yorkshire were still organising it. So, we thank the brethren from Hornsey for their initiative and their invitation to hold a meeting at Hornsey on Saturday 12th February 1994 to discuss this. Representatives from all the Districts were invited to attend. This meeting was chaired by Br Fred Linyard, and from that meeting the Provincial Men's Fellowship was formed and a committee was elected to continue the work.

We have met around the Province and enjoyed many interesting topics and subjects over the years. In the earlier years, we obtained from our speaker a series of papers, or the recommendation of a book or pamphlet, which the Men's Fellowship groups could use as a study document to prepare for the presentation on the day. These we found quite useful as follow-up information.

Some of the following themes have been enjoyed over the years. We started at Lower Wyke with a speaker from Wheatfields Hospice. The following year we had a talk about Social Care for the Elderly; then we heard from Br Chris Wessels from South Africa, who talked about Christians in Politics, (the Moravian Experience); we heard about Christians in Sport from Ray Boyes, a Chaplain from Manchester United; from the Provincial Youth Committee about, 'Young People and their reluctance to Religion'; about Christians in Business and Finance by Br Healey from the Moravian Church Foundation; Medical Ethics with Sr (Dr) Claire Summers; Renewal with Sr Groves and Br Greenhough from the Renewal Committee; Communicating your Faith through Art, Music and Poetry, with the Brethren Dickinson, Holdsworth and Saville; Encounters with others Faiths with Dr John Parry from Northern College; Reaching the Reluctant, (a

Mission to the Men); Industrial Chaplaincy around Manchester; Fair Trade/Traidcraft; the Mission Aviation Fellowship; Living your life through the power of the media with Soin Coleman a local Baptist Minister and broadcaster on local Radio, the interview he did was broadcast next morning on local West Midlands Radio! The Yorkshire Air Ambulance; prison chaplaincy at H.M.P. Wandsworth; Rev Dr Rosalind Selby spoke about Ecology and preserving God's Creation, and from Dr Margaret Barker about Solomon's Temple and the significance it has for the Church today; Holy Habits; The British Mission Board and it's work; Sr Lorraine Parsons spoke about Capt. Jackson and the Moravian Mission Ship 'The Harmony', Br Livingstone Thompson spoke about The Decade of Evangelism. A good variety of speakers and a wide spread of subject matter.

We especially give thanks for all who have, over the years, supported these Fellowship Days and the Men's Groups and Congregations who have raised money for our various projects, many are mentioned on the bookmark we have produced for our 40 year celebrations. These projects are all very worthwhile causes, some are Moravian and some non-Moravian, some are ongoing work and some are for emergency funding.

I would also like to thank the committee, who have all worked hard over these 40 years to sustain and grow our work. The committee has met at least twice a year to plan and implement activities as well as the Fellowship Days which have changed along with the format over time, to try to accommodate the views and the requests of those attending.

We would also like to thank all the various congregations who have over the years offered hospitality to the Men's Fellowship Day. In the earlier days it required the provision of a sit down tea, but then, so that we could hopefully receive invitations from the smaller congregations within our Church, who maybe didn't have the space or facilities to seat our number, we just asked for a cup of tea to be provided on arrival and another whilst we ate. Three years ago, we decided to centralise and so now we meet in Ockbrook to hopefully make travelling as easy as possible for everyone. Today we have opened the Fellowship Day to anyone unable to join us in person by the use of Zoom.

We still very much appreciate the opportunity to meet each year, and long may we continue to share fellowship, and to learn together some of the interesting issues which surround us in our world today. Issues, strategies and facts which will hopefully lead us onward to follow our Lord, on the path which he has led us.

By Gum, that last 40 years has flown by!

Br Kenneth G. Evans
Chair, Provincial Men's Fellowship

Bath South Moravian Church (formerly Bath Coronation Avenue)

Bath Coronation Avenue congregation are on the move again! After worshipping at the Church of the Ascension on Claude Avenue, Bath for over 23 years the congregation are moving to new hospitable and modern premises at Rush Hill URC, Bath, about one mile up the road. The services will continue at 3pm and on Zoom for people who are unable to meet in person. So, in order to prevent future confusion, and to recognise the locality, the congregation have decided to rename themselves 'Bath South Moravian Church (formerly Coronation Avenue)'. This change was approved at Synod in July.

Please note our new address: Bath South Moravian Church, Frome Road, Rush Hill, Bath. BA2 2QG. We are excited to continue the work and mission of Jesus Christ in our new home.

Sr Lorraine Shorten



© Sr Jane Carter

Bath Weston

On Sunday 19th July, we held a Western District Church Service, which included an adult baptism plus Holy Communion. The baptism was for Judith as the photograph shows, who has been faithfully coming to

church for quite a while now, bringing her dog Sunny who just lies down and sleeps through the service. Judith has now found God through her sessions with Sr Lorraine, and likes to help out when she can and her speciality is shortbread.

This was also Sr Jane Carter's last time with the whole Western District, which was sad, but she went out with a great talk about her Sabbatical leave and love of sewing, which keeps her sane!! Sr Jane brought along her finished quilt - it was gorgeous, so neatly done.

All this was followed by a BBQ lunch with all the trimmings to go with it, plus scones with jam and cream for afters. This get together was a great success.

Sr Carole Young



© Sr Naomi Hancock

Fetter Lane, London

Following on from Count Zinzendorf (August Messenger) we welcomed another distinguished visitor to the Close recently, a descendant of Count Reuss (buried in our vaults).

Sr Naomi Hancock



© Br Paul Snowden

Baildon, West Yorkshire

Members of the Baildon congregation met after our morning service on 2nd August to celebrate Sr Patsy's first year as our minister. We look forward to many more years to come!

Br Paul Snowden

Bedford Queens Park

Sr Sharon Steel was put back on the membership roll. Br Daniel Steel was received into membership by the right hand of fellowship. During the service we often have a hymn with actions shown on our large screen which we follow jumping up in the air, bending down and arms wide young and old do all the actions. Our youngest boy Miles sang at the Bedford River festival with his school choir.

Br Eric Moore



© Br Michael Newman

Hornsey, London

During the summer months we have had two of our annual social events which are always very popular and enjoyed by all ages. The first of these is our Summer Fete which was held at the end of June in the nursery garden next to the church. We had our usual stalls - bric-a-brac, plant stall, raffle, cakes - plus a BBQ and music from the steel band, with the proceeds going to church funds. Thank you to everyone who was involved with organising the day, helping to set up beforehand and pack up afterwards, and those who ran the stalls, prepared the food, and provided the music.

As this is being written, it is one week since the congregation outing to the seaside, which this year was to Walton-on-the-Naze. A coach load of congregation members, family and friends enjoyed the day. Some chose to spend their time enjoying the sandy beach and the sea, some went for a wander along the seafront to the tower, and some enjoyed sitting in the shade, taking in the sea air, chatting, and enjoying the views.

On the first Saturday in August, Hornsey Church was privileged to have the Moravian Brass ensemble, who were visiting from Germany, for an evening concert in our church. They treated us to a selection of pieces including a couple of hymns which we all joined in with. It was a good turn out with church members from Hornsey and the other churches in the district, family members of the ensemble, and some locals, all together enjoying the sound of music. The ensemble joined us again the following day at our communion service, not only playing for us during the service, but also playing some pieces outside the church beforehand which passers-by enjoyed. We felt very lucky to have them perform for us twice before more concerts at Fetter Lane, Leicester, and Ockbrook later in the week.

Sr Claire Newman

Wellhouse, Yorkshire

Over the past year we have enjoyed our usual services and activities. We hosted a Christian Aid Lunch, which was a great success raising £300, a far more enjoyable way of supporting that charity than collecting envelopes. We hosted the Dance Class Presentation Service and welcomed a full Church for the occasion, and we welcomed the Dance Class to perform at our Christingle Service as well as supporting their local charity for the Forget-me-Not Children's Hospice. The service to remember loved ones was repeated again this year and we welcomed some newly bereaved families as well as some who still remember loved ones from years gone by.

We started a Coffee Morning last year on the 1st Wednesday of the month, that continues and now attracts up to 20 people from the local community to come and chat, enjoy fellowship and appreciate the welcome they feel.

Last December instead of our Men's/Christmas Supper we decided to have a get together and invite our new friends who have been supporting the coffee mornings. We bought in Home Made Meat and Potato Pies from a local

butcher, served a dessert to follow and charged just £7, enough to cover our costs. We had a short quiz and a game of beetle and about 30 came along. Husbands came with the wife's who had come for coffee, and it was a wonderful evening of fellowship at very little cost, even making a little profit, which wasn't the aim.

The Katies Philpot School of Dance still meet in our building each week which allows us as a Church to support the local community in some small way. See the photo of the Dance Class rehearsing outside in our field for a local fete and for the Mirfield Agricultural Show and also an article below posted on Facebook from the Dance Class.

We are a small Church and may struggle to attract new members but through our efforts and our influence we can effectively serve our local community.

Br Kenneth G. Evans

KPSD Student Dance Hub: Katie Philpott School of Dance

Some places become so much more than just a building. For the past 24 years,



© Katie Philpott

Wellhouse Moravian Church has been the home of KPSD. Thousands of dancers have walked through those doors, taken their first steps, built lifelong friendships and created so many special memories.

We feel incredibly lucky to have such a special relationship with the church, who have always made us feel so welcome. A very special thank you has to go to Kenneth Evans whose kindness and support over all these years has meant so much to myself and my teachers.

Here's to many more years of dancing! Thank you for being such a very important part of our dance family!

Katie Philpott

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Church House

From Tuesday 1st September, the temporary location of Church House will be the former Senior School at Fulneck until refurbishment of the old Robinson building has been completed - that will be the permanent location of Church House. The new address from September will be: Moravian Church House, Fulneck, Pudsey, West Yorkshire, LS28 8NT.

Cara Dyer has been appointed Finance and Operations Manager (cara.dyer@moravian.org.uk), and Chantal Erasmus (office@moravian.org.uk) is the new Administrative Support Officer to Church House.

Lorraine Parsons continues as Provincial Archivist and will remain based at Muswell Hill until the archive facilities at Fulneck are ready.

Calls

As previously announced, Sr Jane Carter will commence her call on 1st September 2026 at Fairfield following the retirement of Br Peter Gubi from stipendiary ministry. Tytherton and Swindon congregations will enter a period of interregnum, and will be supported by the wider district.

We are pleased to share with you that Br Colin Jones has prayerfully accepted a Call to serve in the Irish District, with his ministry commencing on 1st September 2026. Br Jones is an ordained minister who previously served in the Presbyterian Church and resides in Gracehill.

Please keep Sr Carter, Br Gubi, Br Jones and all the congregations in your prayers during this season of transition.

Provincial Diary for September

7-10	Unity Board	Calgary, Canada
12	Youth and Children's Committee	Fulneck
22-23	Provincial Board Meeting	Fulneck

Hurricane Melissa Appeal

The British Province is supporting recovery efforts following devastation left by Hurricane Melissa. To donate now, please contact Church House or go to

www.justgiving.com/campaign/hurricanemelissaappeal

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

7th June 2026	Edward Charles John Boulton Flint	Ockbrook
19th July 2026	Judith Lyn Craft	Bath Weston
14th June 2026	Christopher James Owen Mack	Ockbrook

Confirmations

14th June 2026	Christopher James Owen Mack	Ockbrook
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Deaths

4th August 2026	Debbie Matthias	Hornsey
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DATES TO REMEMBER

11-20	Heritage Open Days (www.heritageopendays.org.uk/)
13	Education Sunday (https://cte.org.uk/education-sunday/)
16-22	World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (www.worldweekforpeace.org)
21	UN International Day of Peace (www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/)
22	Autumn Equinox
23 Sept-8 Oct	Fairtrade Fortnight (www.fairtrade.org.uk)
25	Sukkot - Jewish

Harold Road, London

Sadly, Br Denzil Cummins has died at the age of one hundred and one. Before he retired to live in Antigua we at Harold Road were blessed to have him as part of our congregation for many years. His wonderful singing voice is well remembered together with his quiet faithfulness and trust in God. May he Rest in Peace. Our thoughts are with Vernessa his wife of many years and her family.

Our congratulations go to Sr Carmen Warner on her recent elevation to the Provincial Board.

Br Michael O'Sullivan

Heritage Open Weekends

FAIRFIELD MORAVIAN CHURCH, SETTLEMENT & MUSEUM, DROYLSDEN

Sunday 13 September 2026 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 on Everyday Lives associated with the Settlement, Stalls and Light Refreshments available
Free Admission
 (All parking in Fairfield High School off Fairfield Avenue M43 6ED)








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






Ordinary Days

Extraordinary Lives

Saturday 12th September
Fulneck Settlement
10.30am-4pm
Free entry
Guided tours of the Settlement
on the hour from 11am.
Exhibitions in church and the museum.
Family Trail Refreshments
 Sponsored by Leeds Civic Trust. In the Boys' Brigade.



 www.fulneck.org.uk postcode LS28 8NT

Fetter Lane Moravian Church Open House Festival 2026



A two week celebration of London's housing, architecture and neighbourhoods.

All are welcome, on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September, when Moravian Close will be open from 1pm to 5pm on each day. As well as giving an historical overview of the Moravians in London, past and present, visitors will learn about the Close's evolution and special features including the Tudor wall surrounding God's Acre and the Gillick Pageant, a set of heraldic shields showing the ownership of the estate from Sir Thomas More in 1524 to Sir Hans Sloane in 1737.

This year we shall be showing for the first time our new plaque in Studio 1, produced by the Royal Mint, celebrating Ernest and Mary Gillick, sculptors and artists, who lived and worked at the Close from 1914 to 1964. Mary Gillick modelled Queen Elizabeth II's head for our coinage.

Moravian Close is located at 381 King's Road, London SW10 0LP. Please note that there is no parking inside the Close but pay and display can be found in the immediate area. Dogs are welcome on leads.

Tytherton Moravian Church Open Weekend



The Church and Burial Ground in East Tytherton will be open to the public from 10am-7pm on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September, with walking tours and talks.

Refreshments will be available in the church and various literature etc will be displayed.

The church is located at East Tytherton, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 4LX.

Lower Wyke Moravian Church Heritage Open House

We will be welcoming friends and colleagues on Saturday 12th September from 10am until 4pm and the following day, Sunday 13th September from 1pm until 4pm. Photographs, documents, various displays, alongside interesting information from Sr Mary Holmes about some women of the Church, will be available.

It will give us great pleasure to renew our friendship with friends old and new.

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