



Spring visit to Nepal and Ladakh

The Indus River where it meets the Zaskar River
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On 22nd April Sr Roberta Hoey, Chair of the British Province and Unity Board Chair, and I began our journey to Nepal. We met Br Jørgen Bøytler, Unity Board Administrator, in Amsterdam and continued to Kathmandu.

After a brief time of rest we met with Br Shanti Kumar Pradhan, the newly elected Chair of the Provincial Board of South Asia Mission Province at the Shristi Academy and shared a meal and fellowship with the new Provincial Board who had travelled from their various regions. This was their first meeting since the election at Synod in January in Delhi. Sr Roberta, Br Jørgen and I were attending in an advisory capacity to enable the Board to establish their agenda for the future work of the Mission Province. We suggested some key areas they should focus on including structure, ministry, finance and relevant sections of the Book of Order. As someone who has been on the British Province Provincial Board for only a year, I found it intimidating to learn so many new structures, procedures and duties. For this new Board with no such infrastructure in place, it must be a daunting task to establish this from scratch.

After a restful night we met again for breakfast and a further meeting. They had completed fruitful discussions the night before and were ready with many questions which we were able to help with in part, always mindful of the potential variations in local law and polity. A series of action points were agreed, and roles delegated to ensure an even share of responsibility

and load. They have a gentle and compassionate Chair who is well respected. After these meetings we felt confident that the Board possesses a strong skill set and a determination to ensure the very best for the South Asia Mission Province in accordance with the mission of God.

After sharing a traditional Nepalese lunch with several members of the Khokona congregation, including Sr Kamaleswori, we travelled with Br Shanti to a high point in Kathmandu called Chandragiri where we 'enjoyed' a trip on a cable car. We reached 2,520m above sea level and experienced some amazing views of Kathmandu and a distant sneak peak of Everest through the clouds. Whilst it was a little bit scary the amazing views took away both our breath and some nerves.

The following day we had some free time and took the opportunity to visit Durbar Square, a World Heritage Site where cultures and religions collide in a rich clash of ancient buildings and pagoda-style temples dedicated to many deities. It was a culture shock and made me more conscious and appreciative of the simplicity of my own faith.

In the afternoon we travelled to the Khokona Church and met with representatives from the committees and leadership of the three churches of Khokona, Baneswar and Chasikot. Again, we were there in an advisory capacity to help the churches discern the best form of leadership structure. Currently Br Shanti

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Editorial

I am obviously writing this before the general election and you are reading it after every last vote has been counted and the colour and shape of the new government has been sketched out.

My mind goes back to a popular anarchist slogan when, many years ago, I was a student. It was 'Whoever you vote for the Government always gets in!' I have always felt that it is a fairly accurate description of what happens after elections.

This is because things don't magically happen if the colour of the government changes or stays the same because the issues are still the same. The problem of how to raise money and how to spend the money so raised; how to reconfigure the health service; what to do about social services, education, defence and foreign affairs and more. We may have real hopes and dreams of what our society should look like and what changes are needed but we have to be realistic that there are no instant fixes and things usually take much longer than we might hope.

In addition, many of the things are linked to things outside an individual Government's control because we live in such a complex global world. More international cooperation rather than less is needed for issues like climate change, international trade and finance and migration.

This is not intended as a counsel of despair but a call to realism followed by prayer and individual and corporate action. We should pray for our politicians, that they will have wisdom and integrity and work for the good all in the country. It is also good to let them know that you hold them in prayer even if they are not the one you voted for!

Neither can everything be solved by politicians. There is such a huge space in our civic life that can and should be filled by volunteer action and good neighbourliness. Jeremiah writes to the exiled Jewish people in Babylon that they are 'to seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and to pray for the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare' Jeremiah 28:7.

The list of things that we can do for the good of our neighbourhood or country and fellow citizens is as long as your arm and mine: conservation action, recycling, charity shops, food banks, caring for neighbours, raising awareness on issues that concern us etc. Its not distracting from our Christian witness but an integral part of it. Jesus was always concerned about the needs of individuals and crowds and took time to meet their spiritual and physical needs; the lame man had his sins forgiven and was told to get up and walk, the crowds who listened to Jesus were fed spiritually and physically.

So, start praying for your MP and the Government and start thinking about what more you as an individual and as a congregation can do to take up the Holy Habit of Serving those around you in the name of the Lord Jesus who came not to be served but to serve.



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

Br Robert Pangani's Consecration as Bishop of the Moravian Unity on Sunday 2nd June 2024

The election of a bishop takes place at a synod.

The synod of the South-Western Province of the Moravian Church in Tanzania came together in November 2023 with one item on the agenda: the election of a bishop. Br Robert Pangani received 317 votes out of about 400. So, the planning of the consecration began.

Before I give a taste of the bigger picture, let me come straight to the main event.

As Moravian bishops from Europe Br Volker Schulz from Switzerland and myself were able to take part in the service of consecration of Br Robert Pangani as bishop of the Unity. The service took place in the grounds of the Teofilo Kisanji University in Mbeya. When we met with our fellow bishops from Tanzania on the day before, I asked how many people they expected to attend the service. The answer was: up to 4,000! I don't know if this number was quite reached, but there were definitely many, many people. The Moravian Church in this part of Tanzania is one of the major churches. Accordingly, the service can only be described with superlatives: a six hour celebration with thousands of people worshipping under big gazebos which protected everyone from the sun, a good number of choirs singing and dancing, a music group playing, Bible passages being read and prayers offered, a sermon given and many greetings conveyed. The central part of the service was the act of consecration: 'Reverend Robert Yondam Pangani, today, on the second Sunday after Pentecost, the second day of the sixth month, the year of the Lord two thousand and twenty-four, we lay hands on you to bless and ordain you to be a Bishop in the Church of God, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' All Moravian bishops present, laying hands on Br Robert, said, 'May the Lord bless and protect you; may the Lord shine the light of his face on you, and give you peace. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.' 'Let all the people sing: Amen Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen Hallelujah!' What a solemn and blessed time!

Bishops Conrad Sikombe and Kenan Panja were leading the service. Bishop Ezekiel Yona preached on some verses of Joshua chapter 1: As God was with Moses so he will be with Joshua. As God has guided his people throughout history, so Br Robert can be sure of God's guidance and promises.

High-ranking officials of the Tanzanian government attended the service. One of them was the Honourable Dr Doto Mashaka Biteko, deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Minerals. He emphasised how important it is that church and government work together for the good of all. He was very appreciative of the Moravian Church's contribution towards improved education and health in society, and of the role the church plays in



© Br Joachim Kreusel

promoting peace and nourishing people spiritually. He said that Br Robert Pangani is known to the President of Tanzania, Mrs Samia Suluhu Hassan, for his efforts to bring people of different backgrounds and religious persuasions together. Br Robert told me afterwards that, if the church would engage in conflict, the whole region would be in conflict (this is because of the size of the church and its influence), therefore the government keeps a close eye on it. At the end of his address Dr Doto Biteko was leading in a Christian song!

Sr Roberta Hoey, chair of the Unity Board, and Br Jørgen Bøytler, Unity Board Administrator, have sent greetings from the worldwide Moravian Church. Br Volker Schulz brought greetings from the European Continental Province of the Moravian Church (which is the Partner Province of the South-Western Province of the Moravian Church in Tanzania) and also from 'Mission 21', a Mission organisation in Switzerland with the Moravian Church being a main stakeholder in it.

I was able to bring greetings from the British Province of the Moravian Church, the British Mission Board, from Hornsey Moravian Church in London (which has a special relationship with Br Robert Pangani) and also from the South Asia Mission Province.

I included a basic outline of the history which Br Robert and I share together. Here is a shortened version, which is also part of the 'bigger picture' that I mentioned at the beginning of this article:

'Dear Br Robert, dear Sr Bahati, with your children Demetria, Amani, Aruni and Placeda; dear Sisters and Brothers, distinguished guests.

It is a joy and privilege to be with you on this special occasion. Br Robert, God has connected our paths in 2001 and we are in

contact ever since. We met for the first time in person in the village of Nkangamo in 2006, then at your graduation, and on two other occasions. You wrote in one of your letters after your graduation, 'We shall always remember each other in prayer. The word of God says, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and I say rejoice.' (Philippians 4:4-5). Today I would like to echo these words: Rejoice! We can rejoice even in the face of big challenges, because we know that God is at work, bringing healing and joy that the world cannot take away. When you finished your theological studies the Principle of the University wrote, 'Student Robert Pangani is proceeding well. He will become a good pastor. Let us continue praying for him.' And a lecturer wrote at the beginning of your studies, 'We know Robert Pangani as a very serious person, Christian and student. He has the capacity. At the same time, he is humble and has a heart for other people. And he is brave. We like him very much. This will lead to blessings.'

It is your humbleness the lecturer mentioned that attracted many people including myself, and your ability to step into the shoes of others. You live with people on eye level. You know what hardship is. The role of a bishop in the Moravian Church is a pastoral role, and I know that you do this very well. May God bless you, your wife Bahati, your children and all those in your care.'

I felt blessed to be with our sisters and brothers in Tanzania. Br Volker Schulz and myself had many more encounters, including a visit to Rungwe, where the Moravian Church in Tanzania began in 1891. We learnt something about remote communities receiving water provision by 'Mission 21', and could meet local people in different settings. 'Rejoice in the Lord always!'

Br Joachim Kreusel
Bishop of the Unity

Spring visit to Nepal and Ladakh

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Pradhan provides pastoral support and sacramental cover while Sr Kameleswori is the primary organisational leader with a team of worship, youth and house group leaders. They are working towards a more sustainable future, and we discussed many aspects of the ministry in Kathmandu including the possible ordination of some leaders. This would be brought to the attention of the Provincial Board as it is now their responsibility to recommend training and subsequent ordination. We had an opportunity to visit the site of a new mission opportunity in Sanga, Bhaktapur and met with Sr Seema, the leader of this new work. In the evening, we shared in a time of fellowship and hospitality with Sr Kameleswori and Br Joshua, her son and shared memories of her late husband, Br Nagendra Pradhan.

The next morning, we were departing for Delhi and our final destination of Leh, Ladakh, but not before a visit to Shristi Academy to see the new school venue. We met staff and children and Sr Vani Pradhan and discussed their hopes for the future. This is a marvellous school with a welcoming atmosphere and a palpable thirst for learning. It always makes me smile when I visit. Br and Sr Pradhan exercise an amazing ministry in this place.

After a stopover in Delhi, we arrived in Leh on Saturday 27th April. I was immediately struck by the clarity and thinness of the air and tried to acclimatise to the altitude (3,500m). After a brief rest we met with the Leh Church Committee and ministers in the district, Br Samson Thangpa and Br Danish (also members of the Provincial Board). The Committee took over in April 2023, and this was an opportunity to establish a rapport and to understand their hopes and aspirations for the Leh congregation which is currently in interregnum following the call of Br Dimchui Rongmei to Assam, North East India last December. At times the discussions were challenging, and it was good to have members of the Provincial Board present, strengthening their awareness of the situation. One of the priorities for the Provincial Board to consider will be future ministry provision for Leh, and Ladakh as a whole.

On Sunday we shared in worship with the Leh congregation. Sr Roberta and I brought greetings from the Unity, the

British Province and the British Mission Board and Br Jørgen brought the message. The congregation has a broad demographic and includes members of the Nepali Refugee Church. We shared in tea and fellowship after the service and had the opportunity to see the old church which sits alongside the newer building.

In the afternoon we were able to meet with members of the Leh congregation including Br Dechen Chamgha and Br Eliud George, previous members of church committee. They shared their concerns with us in spirit of reconciliation.



Kathmandu from cable car

© Sr Jane Carter

In the evening, we travelled to Sheh Congregation and shared in worship and fellowship. We enjoyed songs from the children and choirs. Br Danish led the service and Br Samson brought a short message. During our greetings Br Jørgen taught the congregation to say 'Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him' in Swahili - Tumfuat! We shared in hospitality with the congregation and had an interesting conversation with committee representatives who shared their thoughts about the future Provincial structure.

On Monday we visited the Moravian Mission School meeting the Principal Mrs Madu Simon and other members of staff



Sheh Congregation

© Sr Jane Carter

and children. The school seemed well equipped and was undergoing a series of renovations.

We then set off with Br Samson Thangpa to visit Khalatse, an 80km journey travelling along the course of the Indus River. I have not mentioned up to now the scenery in Ladakh. It is breathtaking! The snow-capped mountains, the wispy tall poplars and then in parts a desert like landscape. But the river is by far the most beautiful thing I have seen. We stopped at the Srinagar viewing point and took in view of the Indus River where it meets the Zaskar River. The journey was long but there was so much to see including the significant military presence along the entire main road. Ladakh sits close to the borders of significant political power houses and India is aware of its vulnerability.

We arrived in Khalatse and met the school staff of the Moravian Academy and had a tour of the classes. We learnt that the school has been granted authority to increase the education provision to year ten and this would necessitate the building of a second storey for classes and accommodation. We stood on the prospective site in its raw state and look forward to seeing the transformation in the near future. We also visited the Khalatse Church.

This was our last day before the long series of flights to return to the UK. We journeyed back via an ancient monastery (no photos allowed), a reminder that India (and indeed Nepal) enjoys a huge fusion of cultures; Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs and various tribal populations offering a rich diversity. Only 2.3% of the population in India are Christians and Islam is the fastest growing religion. We pray for the continued growth and flourishing of the Moravian Church in South Asia under the leadership of the new Provincial Board.

Sr Jane Carter

Chair, British Mission Board

Preparing for Synod 2024

The 2024 Great Britain and Ireland Provincial Synod will take place at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire, from Thursday 18th to Monday 22nd July.

The synodals, including ministers, lay workers, congregation deputies, youth representatives, Unity guests and ecumenical guests, will arrive at lunchtime on Thursday. The Synod will begin as usual with the opening service after lunch. This will be followed by the opening session, chaired by the Chair of the Provincial Board, when various formalities are gone through, and the Synod President and Vice-President are elected. The President is responsible for worship during the sessions and is the official correspondent on behalf of the Synod.

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Sessions, elected at the previous Synod, will then take over and the business will begin with the Provincial Board reports. This is followed by reports from the various provincial committees - Finance and Property, Church Service, Youth and Children, Faith and Order and Ecumenical Relations, Mission and Society, and Archive and Heritage. Reports are usually taken as read, but there is an opportunity for synodals to ask questions. There will be a report from the Principal of Fulneck School on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday afternoon there will be reports from the Moravian Messenger editors, Diaspora Secretary, and the Young Peoples Missionary Association Secretary, and memorials from the Moravian Women's Association and Men's Fellowship.

Proposals relevant to the work of a particular committee will follow that committee's report. Any other proposals will be taken when time allows between other business. The proposals include updating manse guidelines, changing the way we

calculate stipend increases, encouraging meetings to discuss climate change, the introduction of youth workers, recognition of the merger of the Salem and Royton congregations, and the formal closure of the Kingswood congregation and Stoke Newington society.

The elections will begin on Sunday. Unless there is a proposal to elect a new bishop, the elections will begin with the Provincial Board and then the Provincial Committees. Nominations for these elections can be received until lunchtime on Saturday. There will also be elections for the Advocatus Unitatis Fratrum in Anglia and the Secretarius Unitatis Fratrum in Anglia, both historical positions, for the Moravian Union Synod Advisors, who represent the Province at the Moravian Union AGM, and for the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Sessions for the 2026 Synod.

Each day of Synod begins with Morning Prayers and Bible Study, and ends with Evening Prayers, except for Sunday evening when the Synod Communion service will be held, and it is hoped that we will be able to stream this service so that members from across the province can join us. There will also be special sessions on Friday and Saturday looking at Project 32 and the progress made at provincial and congregation level over the last two years.

We look forward to an interesting and productive Synod. Thank you to all who have been busy making the preparations, including the Provincial Board, staff at Church House, Church Book Committee, and other volunteers.

Br Michael Newman

Provincial Board

Have you considered serving on a Provincial Standing Committee?

Continuing the series where some members offer insight to their work and why they serve.

The Provincial Archive and Heritage Committee

I joined the Provincial Archive and Heritage Committee for a simple reason - I am a complete history geek! I'm never happier than when I am poking around archives, archaeology, or ancient buildings. To me, history really matters, as only by learning the truth, about where we have come from, can we understand what we are today.

When I became a member of the PAHC, I'll confess that I thought I would spend more time getting happily dusty, leafing through venerable church manuscripts, but I quickly realised that the committee's work is far more fundamental, for, without it, those dusty manuscripts might have an uncertain future.

It's easy to explain what the Provincial Archive and Heritage Committee does because the title says it all - it's exactly what it says on the tin! The committee has been established to bring all the archival and heritage material of the British Province together - the maps, the church diaries, the buildings, the 'no one is quite sure what it is, but a missionary brought it back' curiosities, not under one roof, but with properly established points of access and conservation standards.

This is not simply a case of tidying up, or 'looking after our own stuff'. The British Moravian archive is of enormous historic significance, and we are working towards bringing it into line with other national collections and museums. Our past is part of the greater history of the country, socially, economically, and spiritually and we need to make it available to serious researchers from other backgrounds.

The Moravian Church is possibly unique, in its loving preservation

of its own history, but no two congregations are alike in the way that they curate it. Put simply, a manuscript that is fastidiously catalogued and kept in climate-controlled splendour in one congregation, can be 'somewhere in a cupboard' in another, with its whereabouts only known to the person who last spotted it!

It is essential that, in addition to keeping records of where the historic items that are central to our sense of identity are stored, we must ensure that, often fragile items are conserved to museum standards. There is also now a pressing need to put in place a system to preserve 'new technology' as more and more material only exists on computer files. That is possibly one of the most endangered parts of our collection, as more recent items are often not considered to be 'proper history' and can so easily be deleted with the click of a mouse.

Since its inception, the committee, which now draws members from every UK district, has been working to put together a means to accomplish these complex tasks. We have been addressing everything from a practical model for curation that is practical for all congregations, to deeper issues such as how to make ourselves known to the wider population, and make sure that our fascinating 'stories' are told, engagingly and accurately.

It may not be 'evangelism' as we often imagine it, but, personally, I believe that the need to tell those stories fits us firmly within that tradition of the church.

Sr Jayne Brewster

Ockbrook

Moravian Women's Association Retreat: May 2024

Drumalis, Northern Ireland

On 3rd May 2024, an excited group of Gracehill MWA members set off from a sunny village square on our annual retreat weekend to join in worship and fellowship with sisters from around the UK. As a new MWA member, I was particularly looking forward to this opportunity to meet some of the ladies whose names I had heard so often mentioned during our Circle meetings. Our location for the weekend was Drumalis Retreat Centre in Larne, County Antrim, owned and managed by the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. We were instantly welcomed into an atmosphere of tranquillity and beauty: expansive gardens flanked by woodland areas for exploration, sheltered terraces and the attractive Rose Garden for times of repose, prayer and reflection.

During the course of the afternoon, MWA groups from Yorkshire to London arrived, some of whom had been on the move since 5:30am and had experienced retrospectively amusing airport setbacks; others were laden with bags, having already managed to fit in a comprehensive tour of Belfast city centre and shops!

After a most welcome evening meal, we were eager to meet our guest speaker, Sr Janet Cooper, and engage in her opening session of teaching on our weekend's theme, 'Fruits of the Spirit'. The gentleness, good



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humour and clarity of thought with which she embarked upon the topic would be characteristic of the spiritual nourishment we were blessed to receive throughout our time together.

Saturday morning dawned to find us refreshed and eager to tackle the range of creative and contemplative activities planned for us by Sr Janet. We were very glad to welcome four additional members of the Gracehill & Belfast University Road Circles who joined us until after lunch, including Sr Roberta Thompson who was MWA President for nine years. The morning was filled with much fun, laughter, learning and sharing.

Our 'free' afternoon enabled those of us intrepid enough to face the classic local drizzle to explore the town's main street or stroll along the blustery seafront. Others made the most of these leisure hours to enjoy chat with friends old and new, relax in the stillness of the chapel and interior garden spaces, or browse in the gift shop. The evening brought a change in tempo as we were treated to a most entertaining time of witty, yet poignant poetry and local anecdotes by Mrs Elizabeth Jones from a

legacy of personal pieces written by her mother.

Our final morning was a particularly moving and inspirational session of worship and contemplation as we were invited to individually and prayerfully consider a contemporary painting, 'Touch of Faith', by South Korean Christian artist Yongsung Kim. His motifs of courage, tenacious faith and spiritual healing consolidated the fundamental themes of our whole weekend: the transformative power of the Spirit and the amazing depths of Divine Love.

Twenty-seven ladies had gathered for this weekend from diverse areas and cultural backgrounds, and I believe that we all returned to our homes feeling assured that, in a plethora of both personal and shared moments, Drumalis had indeed fulfilled its aspiration to provide 'an oasis on the journey of life'.

Thanks to the wonderful Drumalis reception and staff, to the caterers for a delicious range of home-sourced food, and to Irish District Secretary Sr Kathleen Kitson for her seamless organisation of the whole event. Roll on May 2026 reunion!

Sr Ruth Johnston

European Continental Province Synod June 2024: Connected



© Sr Lorraine Shorten

I was invited by the Provincial Board to represent the British Province at the 2024 European Continental Province (ECP) Synod. It was held in the historic town of Herrnhut, Germany from Saturday 8th to Saturday 15th June, and the theme of the Synod was 'Connected'.

The ECP is made up of eight countries: Albania, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, The Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. Along with myself visiting from the British Province there were also guests from South Africa, the Czech Province and the various mission agencies. The Synod was conducted in three languages, German, Dutch and English and we listened to proceedings via translators speaking into our headsets.

Synod was divided into six committees and each committee met together every morning for prayer and Bible study. There were many reports and proposals received

and debated during the week, and these were then passed on to the various committees for further discussion before returning to the Synod for approval, or not. The topics brought up included: falling numbers in congregation members; how to attract people to ministry; safeguarding; climate change and sustainability; employment law; ways to revitalise the church; the rise of Right-Wing extremism; issues that are mirrored in the British Province.

I was allocated to the Mission and World-wide Church committee and the topics we discussed were: how can Herrnhut be better utilised as an international volunteer retreat centre? What is the impact of climate change in the province and how can the congregations share ideas of what they are doing to reduce its effects?

The business day started at 7am with morning prayers and ended at 9pm, and all sessions were opened and closed with the singing of a hymn. We were well fed and watered by the Komenský guest house in Herrnhut for meals and the church café for coffee and cake during the breaks. During the week there was plenty of time for fellowship and opportunities to catch up with friends and make new friends. On Tuesday afternoon we were honoured to be entertained by the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, PA who were on a European Tour. They led

us in a German-American Singstunde, and also sang some pieces of choral music for us. It was a most beautiful respite from the hard work of Synod.

As at the British Synod there were elections. Some for standing committees and also for two new members of the ECP Board. Unlike the British Synod the four prospective candidates for the Provincial Board had 15 minutes to give a presentation to introduce themselves, why they felt they were eligible and what they could bring to the Board. Synod were then given permission to ask the candidates questions. After only one round of voting Sr Erdmute Frank and Sr Lilian Stuger-Kembel were elected to serve the Provincial Board, they join Sr Heide-Rose Weber and Br Raimund Hertzsch. We sang hymns and offered them blessings for their new roles in service to Jesus Christ and the Moravian Church.

I am very grateful to the Provincial Board for asking me to represent the British Province. I was able to offer a UK perspective to the discussions and learnt much from the European Province. May we continue to work together and stay connected to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in our united but unique forms of service around the world.

Sr Lorraine Shorten

Minister for Bath Weston and Bath Coronation Avenue Congregations

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Jane Carter

Sr Carter is the minister of Swindon and East Tytherton Moravian Churches and a member of the Provincial Board and Chair of the British Mission Board. Previously Jane has served as President of the MWA.

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

I grew up in the village of Hazlemere in Buckinghamshire with my parents and brother Paul who is 15 years my senior. We moved to Northamptonshire when I was 17 and I started working at a GP surgery as a Medical Secretary.

How and when did you come to faith?

I think I always had a belief, but I came to a fuller understanding when the lady training me at the surgery invited me to church. I started attending Priors Marston Moravian Church at the age of 17 and in that beautiful setting and with the encouragement of the minister and his wife (Michael and Janet Rea) I committed my life to Christ.

What led you into the ministry and how did you hear God's call?

After many years serving the church in different roles (church committee, MWA Circle Leader, District Conference Secretary, MWA Secretary and President) people began to ask me 'What next? Have you thought about ministry?' I had, but I was still waiting for God to speak to me, not realising that God was speaking to me through everyone who asked.

You went into training for ministry as a mature student - how did you adapt to that training?

I worked for a roofing manufacturer for 23 years and I had begun a distance learning degree in inventory management. However, it was still quite a shock to the system to be back at college in my very late 40s, embracing so many new ideas and faith perspectives. Attending Northern College with colleagues from the Moravian Church and making new lifelong friendships with mature students from other denominations really helped the learning process; we all struggled and thrived together.

What experiences from your life before training have you found useful in ministry?

I was trained as a secretary and the transferable skills acquired in the office environment were essential to deal with the information technology and administrative tasks that we all have to deal with in ministry. I hope it has helped me to be organised.

What has been your greatest joy so far in ministry?

There have been so many, particularly in growing relationships in pastoral ministry with several lovely congregations. My experience serving on the British Mission Board has also broadened my experience and pleasure in meeting people from the same denomination but in such culturally diverse situations and I love the variety that brings to my ministry.

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

Anger is a strong emotion. I lost both my parents whilst still in



my 30s. I felt like I still had so much to learn from them and to share with them. Whilst I am not angry with God I do wish I'd had a little more time to appreciate them as the lovely people I remember.

Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death, and do you believe in a resurrection?

I am not really afraid to die, but I do worry about experiencing pain and sometimes wonder what will bring me to the end and will I be alone. I do believe in a resurrection but not in a corporal sense, more of a shared spiritual consciousness where we reconnect with loved ones and God.

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

There is so much competition for people's time and energy these days. Wellbeing and balance seem essential to many people, but 'church' is not necessarily their first place to search for this because they have been

jaded by generations who have turned their backs on faith as being irrelevant to their lives. We need to find ways to emphasise that wellbeing can be achieved through a deeper spiritual, Christian connection.

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

My all-time favourite singer/actress/director is Barbra Streisand; I have a large collection of her music and am interested in her philosophy on life. Favourite film, probably Out of Africa, partly for the musical score (and Robert Redford!). I'm not a great reader but I did enjoy 'A Year of Biblical Womanhood' by Rachel Held Evans.

The place where you feel closest to God?

It sometimes sounds cliché, but God has always been most present to me in nature; in the beauty of a landscape and the humble simplicity and complexity of every flower and living creature on the earth. How can you not wonder at the miracle of creation when faced with natural beauty.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

I do not plan to have a headstone, but I do love the quote from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', spoken by Helena about her friend Hermia: 'Though she be but little she is fierce.' I hope to be remembered as someone who was, if not fierce, then at least determined in belief, in joy, in compassion, in commitment, in humour and in relationships.

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

Some of my greatest joys have led, eventually, to my greatest disappointments, but everything that has happened to me has led me to a deeper understanding of myself and my dependence on God to bring me to and through every hurdle. I am grateful for the blessing of family and the joy of friendships which have always sustained me. To quote my favourite musical (Les Misérables) 'To love another person is to see the face of God.'

Mrs E M Bates - Yesterday and Today

If you live or worship in the Moravian settlements at Ockbrook in Derbyshire or Gracehill in Northern Ireland, or if you've visited and conscientiously read plaques and booklets, you'll know the name of Mrs Elizabeth Mary Bates.

She was a beloved visitor and generous donor to the Church, both nationally and locally. Perhaps a slightly imperious donor; on occasions when visiting the Moravian communities she loved, she appears to have paid for some radical rebuilding that provided her with just the accommodation she wanted.

Mrs Bates life is fascinating, but ably told elsewhere. As a regular visitor to Gracehill, I've slept in her bedroom, paid my respects at her grave, and heard regularly about her keen business sense (alongside her gifts, she often loaned the balance required for her pet projects, usually at a steep 5% interest) but I have another connection. In 2020 I was invited to join the Trustees of the Mrs E M Bates Trust.

The Trust takes care of two substantial gifts that Mrs Bates made to the Moravian Church in 1813 and 1815. Ever since the income from those gifts have been paid as grants to the Trust's two beneficiaries: £500 a year to Gracehill Church (which would be equivalent to £29,000 today according to the Bank of England if it had kept pace with inflation) and the rest to the British Province of the Moravian Church.

Mrs Bates appointed Trustees to take care of her gifts. As Trustees retire, the Moravian Church, or other members of the Trust, recommend suitable volunteers who then have a balancing act to perform; investing to create as much income as possible today while leaving enough invested, in the right places, to make sure that income is keeping up with inflation for tomorrow, next year, and for decades to come. As Trustees for Mrs Bates, we take the long view.

It's difficult now to put a value on the two parcels of land and property that Mrs Bates originally gifted. Until the 1970s, much of it appeared in the Trust's accounts at a nominal value of £1. The Trust prospered for more than 150 years by investing chiefly in bricks and mortar, and being a good landlord. The purchase of a strong box for the Trust's deeds, a hard-fought battle with the Inland Revenue, compensation for bomb damage in the Second World War, and eventually the sale of Mrs Bates' original gifts are all reflected in the papers archived at Church House in London.

In 2000 the two Trusts created by the original gifts, with their lengthy, complex and detailed trust deeds in copperplate handwriting, were combined and given a simpler, modern governing document. Charity law has been updated several

times in recent decades and the new Trust reflects that. A professional valuation of Trust property in 2000 reveals that the newly combined Trust was by then worth £7,362,221 held as land and buildings and stock market investments.

Since then, bricks and mortar have been entirely replaced by shares in a specialist fund - the Charities Property Fund - managed by experts on behalf of many charities and owning currently 108 warehouses, shops and office blocks across the UK. Meanwhile around 60% of the Trust's money is invested in stocks and shares and investment funds. Investments are carefully selected by professional managers with years of experience and teams of researchers to help them. Our investments are 'diversified' - spread around the world, and into different sectors of the economy. The theory is that when one sector or location is 'down' another will be 'up' and overall, the value of our funds won't seesaw too wildly but rather grow steadily while they provide a reliable flow of dividends and interest into the Trust's bank account.

Our investment managers report to the Trustees regularly and we meet with them twice a year. Among the current six Trustees are people with experience of stock market investment, charity finance and commercial property. High risk investments that seem to offer tempting returns aren't appropriate but leaving money 'somewhere safe' and watching inflation eat away its buying power is also off the menu. We ask our advisors, and ourselves, some hard questions.

We have a policy to invest ethically - no companies engaged in arms manufacturing, gambling, brewing or tobacco appear in our portfolio. The way we invest to avoid doing harm follows the policy of the Moravian Church.

Twice a year we hear reports from the staff at Church House who keep track of the Trust's day-to-day affairs, and then from the Provincial Board on how the previous year's grants have been used. Just as our investments span the world, so too does the work that Mrs Bates' Trust supports.

And finally, we set the grants we intend to pay in the coming months. In 2024-2025 we plan to give £366,661 plus the £500 to Gracehill. Everything we do as Trustees is directed at maximising and maintaining those grants.

Sr Jane Seaton
Bates Trustee



© Sr Sarah Groves

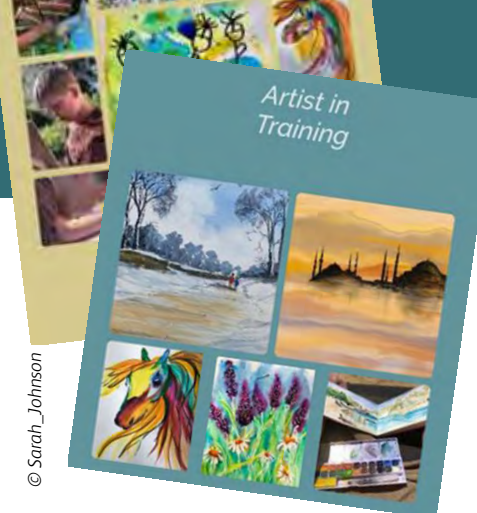
Notes:

The Trust's accounts are available on the Charity Commission website under Charity No. 1082306.

More information can be found in Edition 33 of the Moravian History Magazine The life of 'Mrs Elizabeth Mary Bates' edited by Edna Cooper.

With thanks to the Archivists at Church House and Gracehill for their help.

An Artist in Training



© Sarah Johnson

I would like to welcome you to sit a while and share a precious gift. A gift of time that I was given when, at 46, I had to retire due to ill-health and my degenerative disability. Perhaps that's a strange notion, of the gift? But this is how I have processed it as I cycled around grief and having to release some of my hopes and dreams.

You see, I'm 'An Artist in Training'. Within my disabled body I am able to process my thoughts and feelings through my art and journaling as I respond to the movement of The Holy Spirit guiding me onwards and deeper into connection with God through a range of mediums. As I watch the watercolour paints mix, blend and flow across the page creating a

beautiful background of abstract art I am reminded of the way that we each bring our colours to the page. The ways that we are drawn together to create something new and beautiful, embracing our uniqueness and stepping out in faith to experience what is possible.

The 'training' part allows me to accept the times I start again, the times when I am disappointed with the result and the times when things don't go the way I hoped. It also reminds me that I'm often my own worst critic! I need to speak to myself more often in the way I would normally speak to others. That, for me is in the commandment to 'Love on another ... as you love yourself'. That gentle reminder to be gentle with yourself as you should be with others.

There's another wonderful part of 'training' and that is encouraging others to 'have a go' and I have done this outside on holiday, at home with friends and more importantly with my grandson who is seven years old and Autistic. He is another 'Artist in Training' and the medium of art allows him to explore colour, texture and form through different lenses and different media. There is no

greater joy for me than sharing the creative space with him as we work together to create, make and share our art. Gifting artwork is an intensely pleasurable experience especially when you have created it!

Not only does this opportunity to be creative together enhance how we both engage with the world, but it also allows us to both express ourselves beyond our disabilities in ways that create connection with others. In Genesis we read how God created the world and all that is in it, so the creative element that I seek to grow, nurture and develop as 'An Artist in Training' encourages me to seek God in those moments. Perhaps you can engage with your creativity today? Perhaps you can draw, paint, write, collage or journal. Lean into the space because you might just find something drawing you closer to the deep connection with God.

Sarah Johnson
Walton-on-Trent,
Derbyshire



Moravian Worship Leaders Course November 2023-May 2024

Back in early November Peter Gubi persuaded me that I was not too old to join the Zoom service leaders' course and I am glad he did so because I thoroughly enjoyed taking part.

On the first Friday evening we met most of the tutors and then on Saturdays and Friday evenings once a month we covered different areas of Moravian worship. It was fairly intensive, especially some of the seminars, though others were lighter, and all were interesting.

We covered titles such as:

- What do you mean by worship? - Livingstone Thompson
- Public speaking and preaching and the word of God sermon preparation - Sarah Groves
- The meaning and forms of prayer - Peter Gubi
- The sacraments - Michael Newman
- Gadgets, visuals and modern technology - James Woolford
- Moravian worship and special services - Lorraine Shorten

We came from different parts of the country so as it was on Zoom it was easy to take part. Janet and Julie represented Fairfield, Gloria from Fulneck and Kieran and Leigha are from Bath, Coronation Avenue.

On the first Saturday of May, we all presented a short service and reflection on different passages from Matthew's Gospel. These were assessed by Sr Lorraine Shorten.

Our presentations were at Oblate Retreat Centre, Crewe. We arrived Friday from 5pm and it was good to see in the flesh those we had just been together with on Zoom. It was great fun to get to know one another and watch everyone's different presentations of a Moravian service. The accommodation at the retreat centre was excellent and we had delicious home-cooked food. We did not have time to explore the grounds, but it would've been lovely to have done so.

I was given the passage on the Wisemen and took the theme of them going on a journey to seek and worship Jesus, just as we are on a journey seeking to worship Him more and more. Gloria spoke on the temptations of Jesus and gave us some wonderful spiritual insights, and a delightful song. Gloria added 'Yes it was a very interesting, informative and friendly time together. Most of my anxieties vanished when we all met. Lorraine was very encouraging especially with her constructive feedback. Thanks to everyone for making me feel welcome'.

Janet's talk on loving others was really

good and she did a practical children's talk as well as a more in-depth study of being perfect which was really interesting. Janet said, 'Just to say I had such a great experience on the residential weekend, I loved the differences in the way everyone presented their work, there was so much thought and commitment and so much to learn and take away.'

What I think we all got was that each one had a different flavour and I am going to attempt now to include a more inclusive and relaxed chatty approach that Kieran speaking on 'salt and light' gave us and Leigha who had thoughtful insights on 'good deeds and The Lord's Prayer.'

Now we all have to lead a service in Church before receiving our certificate.

A big thank you to Lorraine who looked after us well and gave helpful feedback at Crewe and to Peter who organised it. Also to all the tutors who gave of their time to instruct us.

If you are interested in leading worship, I encourage you to join the course when it next takes place.

Sr Julie Andrews



© Sr Elaine Stephens



Ballinderry, Northern Ireland

Ballinderry continues to have a full programme including worship, coffee mornings, lunches, movie nights, youth group and book club. We had a successful spring fair which was a lovely opportunity to invite the community to join us. There were lots of stalls and a BBQ - we were blessed with beautiful weather which made it all the more special.

This year we have had a number of baptisms and welcomed new members. Ballinderry has also started its first ever scouts group and has over 40 young people attending. We have started a Sunday school and are planning a Holiday Bible Club. In Sunday School we have recently been learning about the story of Daniel and the importance of prayer. The children did a brilliant job decorating lion biscuits! Please support us in prayer with our new projects as we plan for the coming months.

Sr Elaine Stephens

© Br Edwin Quildan



Bedford Queen's Park

On Sunday 12th May we welcomed our new minister, Sr Christine Emanuel, who took Holy Communion. Br Edwin's last service took place on Sunday 21st April. We will miss his interaction with the children during the services and his many quizzes with the newsletters every two months. At his last service we had a meal afterwards and said our goodbyes.

Our Shalom inter-denominational group of Churches in the Queen's Park area of Bedford, Biddenham and Kempston town centre which started up on 15th March 1986 at Shalom (Convent) House has finally ceased. Sr Sheleagh Connor was involved from the start and many activities took place during the 38 years. Sadly, due to those who were involved in the early days being elderly and infirm, and no younger people are able to continue it and organise things. Hopefully, we will still be able to meet together from time to time in the future.

Br Eric Moore

Fetter Lane (London) and flowers

Fetter Lane Moravian Church is located in Chelsea, famous throughout the centuries, and at the end of May, the site of the Chelsea Flower Show. To mark this annual event, local businesses along the King's Road decorate their shop fronts with floral displays. Although Fetter Lane is at the far end of the King's Road, we decided to get into the spirit, thanks to the creative abilities of two of our friends, Jennifer Dunrod, floral artist, and Ian Foster, historian and Fetter Lane's groundskeeper.

Thanks to this duo, the entrance gates, which can appear forbidding, were surrounded by fresh and artificial flowers and topped by two tropical birds fixed to the iron work 'Moravian Close' arc. The plain Cross marking the location of the Chapel along the Close pathway was also draped in flowers. The display was greatly appreciated by the groups who regularly meet in our space, including the children from a local nursery for whom the Close has become their Forest School. During our open morning on that Friday, we welcomed 25 visitors, many



Chelsea in Bloom - Moravian Close gates

Jennifer Dunrod - floral artist



© Sr Cynthia Dize

looking for a bit of peace following the busy Flower Show and no doubt attracted by the welcoming and beautiful floral frame.

Sr Cynthia Dize

Gomersal, Yorkshire

We had a very early start to our Easter Sunday morning service as the clocks moved forward one hour. The weather was kind to us as we made our way to the Burial Ground, which looked immaculate thanks to the hard work of Jeff and John. Following the service we all made our way back to church for our breakfast of cereals, bacon sandwiches and toast, made and served by the Brethren of the congregation. Our thanks go to them and also to Simon Dunn who accompanied us on the organ. It was wonderful to see him, Kathy, Hannah and Peter again and welcome them back on their visit to Gomersal.

The Jimmy Joe Show was held in Church on Friday 19th April. The star of the show was, of course, the Rev James Woolford who, as usual gave us a wonderful evening of song, magic and lots of laughter. I don't know how he remembers all of his jokes. The event was very well attended and enjoyed



© Sr Norma Machell

by all, including a supper of jacket potatoes with various fillings. Thanks to James and also to his son, Edward, who also sang for us. A chip off the old block springs to mind.

Sr Norma Machell

NOTICES

Moravian Stars for Synod

As the cost of postage continues to soar, we are now taking orders for Moravian Stars for collection at Synod. Any purchased before 16th July can be brought to Synod for collection with no postage cost. In addition, we will be bringing a limited number of stars to purchase at Synod. If you would like to buy and collect at Synod please call Church House on 020 8883 3409 or email office@moravian.org.uk.

The following types of Moravian Stars are available from Church House:

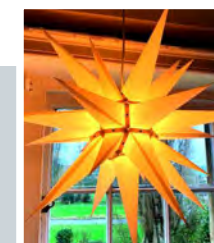
- Indoor star (paper 60cm) £25.00 (without P&P)
- Outdoor star (plastic 68cm) £45.00 "
- Crib size star (paper 13cm) £21.00 "

Colours of both indoor and outdoor stars in stock are: white, yellow, red, red/yellow, and red/white. The crib size star is only available in two colours: white or yellow.

We also stock power supply cables for all three types of stars:

- Indoor star £10.00 (without P&P)
- Outdoor star £15.00 "
- Crib size star £15.00 "

Please contact Sr Gladys Korsah at Church House for more details.



FROM CHURCH HOUSE

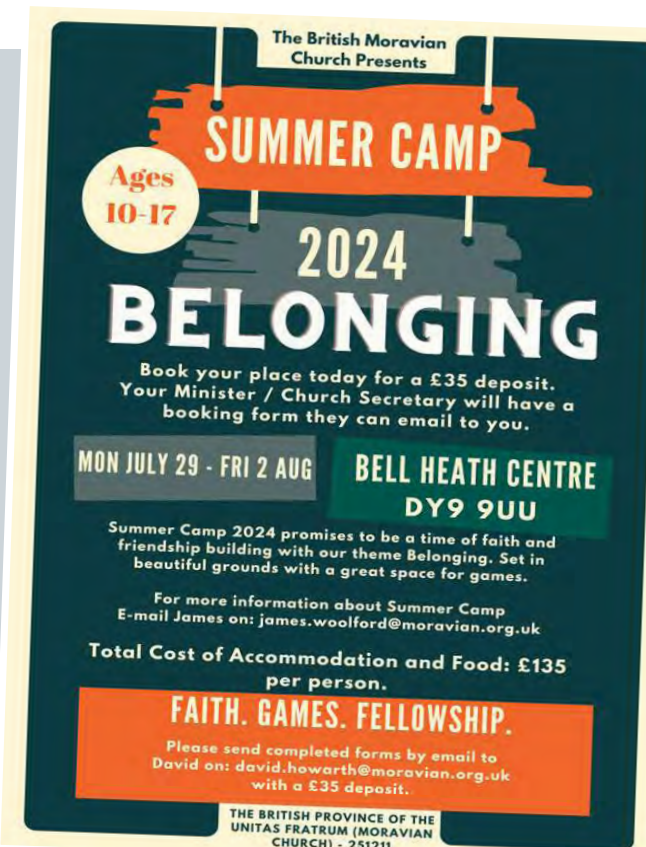
Provincial Diary for July

- | | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------|
| 23 | Provincial Archive and Heritage Committee Meeting | Online |
| 29 July-2 Aug | Summer Camp | Bell Heath Centre |

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Deaths

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------|
| 10th June 2024 | Barbara Cooke | Gomersal |
|----------------|---------------|----------|



Dates to remember!

- | | |
|----|--|
| 6 | Martyrdom of Jan Hus at Constance in 1415 |
| 7 | Muharram/Islamic New Year - Muslim |
| 14 | Sea Sunday (www.seasundayhero.org)
Disability Awareness Day (www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk) |
| 17 | World Day for International Justice |
| 30 | World Day Against Trafficking in Persons |

RECONCILIATION



Conference – “Called to a process of reconciliation” Reconciliation in our lives, church and the world

5th – 8th November 2024 in the KOMENSKÝ Guest House,
Comeniusstrasse 8 + 10, 02747 Herrnhut

Reconciliation is a vital part of our history as a church. August 13th, 1727, is celebrated as the spiritual birth of the renewed Moravian Church, but the events of that day and all that followed came about through a time of reconciliation in the fledgling community in Herrnhut.

Christians are called to be reconciled to God, to be reconciled to each other and to share in the ministry of reconciliation. However, we recognize that there are often unhealed wounds in our families, congregations, communities, and provinces.

As a way of preparing to celebrate our Church's 300th anniversary in 2027, we would like to invite brothers and sisters in the European Region, who are interested in the theological and practical aspects of reconciliation, to come and share in a conference to explore this further.

Speaker

The speaker at the conference will be Rev. Dr. Alex Wimberly who is the leader of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela is Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation organization and was founded in 1965 as a way of building a more peaceful Northern Ireland. The community continues to inspire people around the world to live out reconciliation in their daily lives. Alex is a Presbyterian minister originally from the United States; his doctorate is from Notre Dame University and looked at themes of reconciliation in the American Presbyterian Church. Alex is married to Kiran, also an ordained minister, who is currently serving with the Moravian Churches in Northern Ireland.



As well as input from Alex the conference will also include a trip to the church and Zinzendorf's Manor House at Berthelsdorf, a walk along the Sculpture trail, Bible Studies, discussion and sharing of experiences and perspectives, social activities and worship. There will be the opportunity in the free time to walk to the Herrnhut God's Acre or visit the church and historical exhibition or some of the other attractions in Herrnhut, which

include the Herrnhut Star Factory and shop, the Ethnographic Museum and the local history museum.

Practical details

The language of the conference will be English. The cost of the conference is €50, which includes all meals including supper on Monday Evening and breakfast on Friday Morning. We hope that everyone will arrive at Herrnhut on the Monday afternoon and depart after breakfast on the Friday morning. The Komenský Guest and Conference House is a well-equipped modern conference centre with en suite rooms (www.komensky.de).

Travel to Herrnhut:

1. Participants from the UK usually find it easiest to fly into Prague and catch a train from Prague to Zittau or Löbau
2. Participants from Latvia and Estonia via Berlin
3. If you need any travel information, please contact info@ebu.de

There are up to 40 places available for this conference. Please make your booking by emailing info@ebu.de and book before 15th September noting your address, email, phone number and any food allergies and accessibility needs. The cost of €50 is to be paid by bank transfer at the time of booking (keyword: conference). You will receive an email of confirmation about your booking. After the 15th September you will get more information about the program of the conference.

The bank details

Bank für Kirche und Diakonie eG BIC GENODED1DKD IBAN DE04 3506 0190 1560 1000 15

For more information, please contact info@ebu.de 0049 35873 48711

Conference Organizers

Benigna Carstens, Germany, ECP Erdmute Frank, Germany, ECP
Sarah Groves, Northern Ireland, British Province
Dena Fortuzi, Albania, ECP

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