AUGUST 2025

MORAVIAN MESSENGER

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If only stones could talk

A very early rise on the morning of Saturday 28th June 2025 saw various members of Gracehill up and about, ready to set off and meet others belonging to the Moravian Church in Ireland History and Heritage Society at Sprucefield, outside Lisburn. Our first visit was to be Cootehill and our second the Moravian graveyard at Whitechurch Road, Dublin. In total basically a driving time of three hours to visit both places - how long, many years ago, would it have taken people from Gracehill or Cootehill to travel to Dublin - all done by foot and by horse?

At Sprucefield Br Mark Kernohan and the rest of the group were waiting for us. All were set for a day discovering burial grounds and gravestones.

I had visited Cootehill a few years ago but with no idea of its Moravian history. I later discovered the work of Patrick Cassidy, 'The Moravian Church in Co Cavan 1751-1924', which is an excellent account of the area. Of course, rushing back to Gracehill to inform Sr Roberta Thompson of this, I discovered that the author had already been to the village and stayed with her!

Here is a very short history of Cootehill for those not aware of this village. It is a market town in Co Cavan between Monaghan and Cavan town.

The earliest reference to Moravians here is 1751. It was visited by John Cennick in 1752 and a congregation came into being in 1765. The Burying Ground was first mentioned in 1771 - those who had died before this date were buried in Gracehill or other Moravian burial grounds. Some well-known names who visited the village were Bishop Boehler, Turkington, Latrobe, Nitschman, Toeltsig and John Wesley, to mention just a few. In the early 1800s the population was in decline and looked on the verge of extinction but the interest of Br John Carey called for the re-establishment of the ministry. In 1826 Br John Willey was appointed and added life back into the area. The last minister to serve in Cootehill was Rev William Osborne Lang who baptised his grandson there in 1924. Having discovered all this information, I think this is another subject to research!

On arrival at Cootehill we parked in front of two small cottages. These turned out to be the original Moravian Church (founded 1754)! It would be lovely to see an information sign as you would have no idea what these buildings had once been. Two hundred yards up the road and over the bridge, we arrived at the burial ground which had been taken over by the Church of Ireland. Only a few stones remain to be seen, but, with a lot of clearance from our group, some names started to appear. There is a list of burials in PRONI and we will look into them.

After 'uncovering gravestones' we had a lovely reading by John Costley of a short poem entitled 'The Moravian's First-Born' by the Rev Henry Henderson. This was written when Henderson saw a Moravian clergyman and his wife standing at the grave of their first born and only child. With some research John thinks it is about the burial of Charles Frederick, the son of Rev Charles Sutcliffe and his wife Elizabeth in 1846. 'The mother grieves for

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Editorial

By the time you read this I will have retired from congregational ministry. At the time of writing I am anticipating my last service as a 'Serving Minister' and wondering how I will feel when it is all over. And yes, I know that retired ministers are still serving in so many ways and that we depend on them for so much. So, retirement is not an end to preaching and teaching but it is an end to being the local pastor which has been the joy and privilege of my working life.

I know ministry is not the best paid profession in the world and that we move at the call of the Church. I know too that sometimes we have to put up with things that in a traditional work place would not be allowed. Also, we don't have a defined career path that would suit the ambitious.

But the joy is that we work ultimately for the King of Kings and Prince of Peace and the advancement of the Kingdom of God. And the privilege is that we have access into people's lives in times of huge thanksgiving and in times of grief as well as those ordinary day to day times. We can give comfort and offer up prayer in so many different situations. We work with children and the elderly and all ages in between, serve on Boards, go visiting, study and public speaking as well as preaching and leading worship.

Each congregation is different with varying needs and strengths but that gives the interested person great opportunities to learn and to become involved in issues in their local community. And age is not a barrier, it is a generalisation to say that youth brings energy and enthusiasm and age brings resilience and experience but we all have things to offer at the different stages of our life.

So, looking back I am so full of gratitude for what has been, for the kindnesses I have been shown, for what I have learnt of God's goodness. Of course, there are regrets and things I could have done better and some difficult issues I have faced. But I am glad that I had the chance to offer for ordained ministry all those years ago and I am looking forward to what God will lead me to in this new phase of life.

This summer is a chance to rest and relax and perhaps think about where you are in life and what you want to do in the future. If you love the Lord Jesus think about how you can serve him in the Church. That may be locally in your congregation or in a role across the Province - there are always opportunities to serve in different roles. Or you may be thinking of ordained ministry, in a stipendiary or non-stipendiary capacity - there is a great need for more ministers!

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

It is with deep sadness that we share with you that Sr Lindsey Newens, our fellow Editorial member and Provincial Administrator, has died suddenly on Wednesday 18th July. Please keep her family and friends, all at Church House and members of the Provincial Board in your prayers. More details to follow in the next issue.

Provincial Men's Fellowship Day 28th June 2025

On a superb summer's day in Ockbrook, thirteen brothers and two sisters met to enjoy the Provincial Men's Fellowship Day. We were welcomed most warmly - literally - both by the weather and, from the heart, by Br Joachim.

Most of the population of Derbyshire seemed to have arrived in Ockbrook that morning, whether for the Well Dressing or for the Over the Wall summer fayre and fun day. Despite Br Joachim's encouragement, none of our group succumbed to the bouncy castle or the face painting tent!

The hymn singing, prayers and devotions were all enthusiastic and apposite to the occasion. Greetings were welcomed from the Provincial Board and from our sisters at the Moravian Women's Association.

Sr Jane Carter gave us an inspiring presentation covering her work on behalf of the British Mission Board, especially in Tanzania and in South Asia. Jane's visit to the Zanzibar Slave Museum was especially poignant. The sterling work with the Sikonge 100 hospital project was especially insightful. In Tanzania, it was fascinating to hear that churches are having to be re-built and extended to cope with the increasing growth of congregation numbers. It was also a treat to see 'Our lamb has conquered' pictured and described in other languages.

© Br Edwin Quildan

Church members often wonder how our donations and funding is well spent. A school in Binnakandi has had to be rebuilt as most of it has been eaten by termites; there is a need for school buses, in addition to the need to build and sustain relationships with key parties and to encourage growth and development.

Br Joachim led us in Holy Communion and also led a Well Dressing ceremony in the church grounds. Here we were joined by several locals and a dog, and a rousing singing of 'All things bright and beautiful' rounded off the occasion in style.

Our thanks go to Br Joachim and to the brothers and sisters of Ockbrook for making us so welcome and for all their hospitality. Thanks also to Br Kenneth Evans for organising and introducing the day with his customary enthusiasm and aplomb, and to Sr Jane for her enlightening presentation.

We were encouraged to consider whether to have biannual events for the Provincial Men's Fellowship, and as a first timer at this event, I can but encourage brethren from throughout the province to come next time. It was very special to meet for the first-time brothers from Harlesden and from Ockbrook in addition to catching up with familiar friends and faces.

In the meantime, to quote Br Joachim's blessing, 'travel lightly, but share each other's burdens.'

Br John Holmes
Fulneck

Neurodiversity and us

Let me first say that I think neurodiversity is a fantastic thing: without it we would all think the same, learn in the same way, like the same things and life would be very boring. I love being me and recognising the difference between the way I think and the way others think, it helps me recognise my strengths and weaknesses and enables me to learn from others.

But when we think of neurodiversity we tend to think of Neurodiversity and challenge. The difference a capital letter can make! In this case we are considering people who think differently from 'normal' parameters. (How I hate 'normal' - what does that mean?) You may have heard the terms ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder), autistic, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), Aspergers (now a discredited term) and your mind may leap to the idea that people who are neurodivergent have something wrong with them (disorder?). This is an outdated view and people who are Neurodivergent are now recognised as a significant section of all communities whose brains are wired in a different way from the majority of people. Autistic people is an all-encompassing description and the recognised terminology for Neurodivergent people, it is also a recognised disability (but is this a disability in the 'normal' population and the structures of society?). This includes those with ADHD who may or may not have a diagnosis of autism alongside the ADHD. Anyone with Neurodivergency has to work hard to 'fit in' with society, modify they way they behave in order to be accepted (but we know they are made in the image of God) and can be misunderstood.

Most of you will have encountered a Neurodivergent individual and that will colour what you expect from a person with autism. Please rethink. Every Neurodivergent person is an individual and may show a range of different variations in behaviour and communication skills. The 'Core characteristics' of autism can be stated as:

- social communication and social interaction differences;
- restricted and repetitive behaviours and interests (RRBIs) - including potential sensory differences.

These include a huge range of differences from those you can easily identify to those it is really hard, without experience, to identify. This is not a straight line of symptoms but think of a cloud of different signs and severity where any combination can lead to a diagnosis. Autistic people also tend to mask so they seem to fit into the world. For many churches the key may be in bad behaviour, lack of ability to sit still in church (don't we all feel fidgety sometimes), a seeming lack of ability to respond in the 'expected way', or looking confused when given a seemingly simple instruction. The challenge is for us to make church open for all. We want to be inclusive and sometimes this may be including those we find don't fit the 'normal' expected behaviour. A little knowledge on the part of congregations can go a long way to an autistic person finding a place where they can connect with God, and his people.

Individuals with ADHD may be perceived as never still, unable to concentrate and high energy people but their brains don't always work in this way; they can be inattentive and/or impulsive too. They too are considered Neurodiverse.

Current research indicates that ADHD and autism are both genetic, meaning people with it have no more control over it than they have over the colour of their eyes. It is likely that this isn't just one genetic factor but several genes working together that cause the Neurodiversity.

The chances are your congregation has come into contact with Neurodiverse people, some whom may never had a diagnosis but always struggled to fit in. Neurodiversity doesn't mean not contributing and fitting into society, many of our most brilliant minds may be Neurodiverse. So what differences do you need to make to ensure our churches are places where all are welcome?

More information can be found on the internet:

https://www.autism.org.uk/
https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/
https://adhdandautism.org/

and many other sites. Please do some research.

Note: I am not an expert but an interested individual.

Sr Joy Raynor
National Safeguarding Lead

Statement of Inclusivity

Here is the British Province of the Moravian Church's Statement of Inclusivity as adopted at the 2022 Provincial Synod:

We believe all people are made in the image of God and are loved by God. We welcome all people, who seek to be faithful to the Gospel, into the life and membership of the Moravian Church; and we are grateful for the talents and gifts that they offer in the service of God's kingdom.

We believe in an inclusive Church - a Church which celebrates and affirms the value of every person and does not discriminate.

We will continue to challenge all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, learning disability, mental health, or neurodiversity.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

We recognise our imperfections and are still working with the Holy Spirit to overcome barriers to inclusivity and further discrimination on our journey with God.

First Nepal District Conference: *A Historic Gathering*

© Br Shanti Pradhan

On this historic day, the Nepal District came together in Khokona Moravian Church, for its very first District Conference, uniting the three congregations, Chyasikot, Baneshwor, and Khokana along with their elected deputies, observers, ex-officio and invited guests to participate and witness the district conference process. A total of 37 participants were present, out of which 21 were voting members.

The sessions were led by Br Nirmal Dangol (Chair) and Br Joshua V. Pradhan (Vice Chair) from 11:00am to 6:15pm. We are thankful for the pastoral support of Br Nabin and Br Rajan, elected on the floor as President and Vice President, respectively, who guided us in prayerful discernment throughout the sessions.

Br Kancha Peter Dangol led the gathering in a heartfelt time of praise and worship, creating a spirit of unity. This was followed by a meaningful reflection on the theme 'Newness' by Br Simon Shah, who brought the devotional message from 2 Corinthians 5:17:

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.' Similarly, Sr Jane Carter, Chair of the British Mission Board, shared an uplifting message through a recorded video which was projected on the screen extending her support and blessings to the gathering.

Though the time allotted was not sufficient to fully cover the individual agendas of the three congregations, we successfully completed the three major elections:

District Executive Board:

1. Br Kancha P. Dangol (Chair)
2. Sr Kamaleswori Pradhan (Vice Chair)
3. Sr Lydia Shah (Secretary:)
4. Sr Sunita S. Tamang (Assistant Secretary)
5. Br Simon Shah (Treasurer)
6. Br Nirmal Dangol (Assistant Treasurer)
7. Br Rajan Maharjan (General Member)

Provincial Finance Representative:

1. Br Saubhagya Maharjan

Next District Conference Chair & Vice Chair:

1. Br Narendra Maharjan
2. Br Nabin Napit

We give heartfelt thanks to our Chief Elder for guiding us through this first and foundational Nepal District Conference. The outcome exceeded our expectations. We also extend our deepest appreciation to everyone who upheld this event through prayers, guidance, and encouragement.

To God be the glory for this new beginning! Our Lamb has Conquered Let us Follow Him.

Br Shanti Kumar Pradhan
Nepal

If only stones could talk *continued from front page*

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her darling boy, Oh! Dear to her was her first-born joy.' A lovely but sad way to finish the visit.

Back on the minibus again we headed off to the Moravian burial ground in Dublin. Now this is where my ignorance definitely appeared! I thought 'church in Dublin, burial ground beside church'! Not true! In 1754 the Moravians decided to build a new church behind the house in Bishop Street but only had room for a small burial ground. In 1764 a plot of land became available in Whitechurch, Co Dublin (leased from a Moravian member, Moses Verney), this was enlarged by half an acre in 1776 and in 1874 the present entrance (the iron gate and Moravian symbol) was constructed. It is in a really beautiful place and it is stated that over 700 members have been buried there: sisters on one side and brothers on the other. For many years the ground was neglected until members of the Grange Golf Club (situated beside it) asked for the walls to be looked at in 2012. Unfortunately, the gentleman who looked after it has just retired and the church is in the process of trying to get a replacement. At the minute it is really overgrown and quite a bit of work would be needed to clear it. Maybe we should organise a works party to do that!

On entering the grounds, we immediately noticed two newish gravestones - on the brothers' side - which were turned in the wrong direction. One belonged to Ann Telford Monson who died in 2017 and the other to John Herbert Desmond Monson who died in 2004. It seems these have been placed here quite recently and there may actually be the two bodies in the one grave. There seemed to be no room on the Sisters' side for Ann Monson. We tried to change the positions of the gravestones, but this was impossible as they were firmly implanted.

We also had a look at the burial stone of the first person to be buried here: John Toeltschig (1696-1764). When he died in 1764 the burial ground in Dublin was not in place and it was his last wish that prompted the Brethren to get on with the task of providing one. 'After the liturgy was over, … glad and thankful that this congregation had a burial ground of their own where the bones of our brethren and sisters may lie in undisturbed rest'.

The day was finished off with delicious hotdogs cooked by Sr Mandy Kernohan and the playing of the Hosanna Anthem. The end of a fine day!

To finish I would just like to thank Mark Kernohan for organising the trip and for driving in conditions that really needed concentration: four football matches and a parade in Dublin. Thank you Mark. Here's to the next outing!

Sr Jackie Neill
Gracehill

Some Notes from the Unity Prayer Watch

The following are a selection of the prayer requests/suggestions that were highlighted in the notes by the British Province for its coverage of the Unity Prayer Watch last month. It covers some of the work of the Moravian Church in the Unity, which operates throughout the world in many cultures and contexts.

- **For Alaska:** Despite a shortage of clergy, vibrant 'singspirations' bring communities together in worship. Bethel Moravian hosts meals, craft fairs, and youth gatherings.
- **For Burundi:** Over 40,000 members now worship together. A new bishop was elected and consecrated in 2023.
- **For the Democratic Republic of Congo** pray for safe and effective witness in an area experiencing heightened conflict.
- **For Guyana:** Weekly radio and online Bible study reach both local and diaspora communities.
- **For Haiti:** Despite serious political unrest and building damage, the church continues with vital ministries in education and healthcare.
- **For Newfoundland & Labrador:** Two seminary students (McKinley and Darlene Winters) are preparing for ordination.
- **For the South Asia Mission Province** (India and Nepal) pray as it continues transitions as a Mission Province, pray for the new Provincial Board and for their efforts in uniting as one Province.
- **For the prospective mission area of Myanmar** pray for peace in a very difficult political situation, and for the safety of the missionaries supporting the work of the Moravian Church in Yangon and the Chin State especially after the devastation of the recent earthquake.

Global Spotlights

South Asia Mission Province

In January 2025, the second Provincial Synod took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, under the theme *'For such a time as this.'* Attendees included Srs Jane Carter and Roberta Hoey, and Brn Joachim Kreusel and Jørgen Bøytler. While progress has been made, some regional leadership challenges persist, particularly in Ladakh and Nepal.

We pray for peace and reconciliation within the congregations and districts and for the Holy Spirit to bring new vision to the mission of the region.

The Provincial Board of SAMC:

- Br Shanti Pradhan (Nepal) - Chair
- Br Ebenezer Gangmei (Central) - Vice-Chair
- Br Nathaniel Gengmei (NEI)
- Br Darshan Lama (Central)
- Br Samson Thangpa (Ladakh)
- Br Joshua Pradhan (Nepal)
- Br Danish (Ladakh)
- Br Titus Gangmei (NEI) - Reserve

We pray for the emerging work amongst the women of the province. In November 2024, the Province held the inaugural South Asia Women's Conference, held in Rajpur. This event, led by keynote speaker Sr Julie Tomberlin of the Unity Women's Desk, brought together over forty women from across the Province in a spirit of fellowship, worship, and empowerment.

International Aid Cuts Impacting Ministry:

Major funding losses (especially from USAID) have disrupted:

- **Tanzania & South Africa:** HIV and vocational training programmes.
- **Western Tanzania:** Job creation and climate projects in Tabora have been closed suddenly.
- **Malawi:** Food insecurity grows as hospitals near Dzaleka refugee camp shut down.
- **Palestine (Star Mountain):** Inclusion and awareness programmes closed abruptly.

Local communities feel the deep impact of these indirect program cuts. Whilst they are not always Moravian-run, Moravian ministries often attempt to fill these critical gaps.

Palestine: Star Mountain

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre (Ramallah, West Bank) continues its mission of inclusion and support for people with disabilities amidst increasing hardship. Military checkpoints now severely delay students, what was once a 30-minute journey can take over two hours. Key programmes promoting disability rights and social inclusion have been cut following sudden losses in foreign aid. Widespread misunderstanding around humanitarian support in Palestine has led to additional funding withdrawals, placing immense strain on local communities and services.

Prayer for the Holy Lands:

God of justice and mercy,

We lift before you the people of Palestine, for families whose lives have been shattered by conflict, communities cut off from aid, from movement, from hope.

We pray for Gaza, where innocent lives are lost each day, where homes, hospitals, and schools lie in ruins. We pray for the West Bank, where checkpoints, closures, and fear shape daily life. We remember the staff, students, and families of Star Mountain, still faithfully serving under pressure, working for dignity, inclusion, and healing.

We pray for peace in Jerusalem, a city sacred to many, yet scarred by injustice and division. We pray for the peoples of both Palestine and Israel, for all who long for safety, dignity, and hope.

We pray especially for the peacemakers, those who bridge divides amid suspicion and sorrow.

Loving God, break the cycle of vengeance. Dismantle the systems that destroy. Plant seeds of justice deep in hardened hearts. Stir in us a deeper compassion, that we may stand with the suffering, speak truth with courage, and not look away.

Amen.

Moravian Church In-Service Training 2025

When my colleagues asked me whether I planned to attend In-Service training, I was reluctant - partly because of the time commitment and partly because it sounded a little daunting, like some sort of ministers' boot camp. But what I didn't realise was that they kept asking me if I was coming because it's thoroughly enjoyable! Looking back, I'm so glad I carved out the time and made my way over to Highgate House in Northampton. It's an experience I'm glad I didn't miss.

My journey started off well when I bumped into Br Peter Dornan while walking the security line, and once at Birmingham Airport I met with Sr Roberta Hoey and Br Livingstone Thompson to share transport to the conference centre. It turned out we were hours early, so we camped out in the café area and explored the site as our fellow attendees drifted in throughout the afternoon. I began to meet some of the lovely ministers and lay workers as we gathered around the fancy coffee machines (which many of us became very fond of during our stay), and I realised this was going to be a more pleasant experience than I'd imagined.

We gathered for worship led by Br Joachim Kruesel, which I found to be inspiring and energising. In it, Joachim highlighted the Inclusivity Statement, reminding the group of this document that had been accepted at a recent Synod, which highlights the many ways we seek to be welcoming, accepting, and loving to all who enter the church's doors. The statement resonated with me and with the approach of my denomination in the States, and I instantly felt at home in the Moravian Church of the British Province.

Following a delicious dinner (the food was exceptional at Highgate), we joined for something that apparently isn't normally done - though it should be! - an hour of games, led by Br James Woolford and Sr Lorraine Shorten. This might have been scheduled in for my benefit so I could learn everyone's names, and I will now forever associate Claire with Clouds and Jane with Juniper berries. We all got out of our comfort zones as we flapped a parachute together, and I daresay even people who'd known each other for decades learned some new things about each other in some of our icebreakers.

The next morning, our plenary was a Neurodiversity training led by the very impressive Jude Morrow. Self-identifying as neurodivergent, Jude walked us through the basics of neurodiversity and neurodivergence, particularly in relation to faith communities. Neurodiversity represents the range of differences in brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as a normal variation in human brain function. He reported that 2.3% of all communities are autistic, 2% are ADHD, and 16% have some sort of neurological difference, amounting to about 20% of any given population being neurodivergent in some way.

With this percentage in mind, Jude encouraged us as leaders in the church to be aware of how we might create an atmosphere of welcome in our worship spaces, paying attention to small things that make a big difference, like lighting, noise levels, and signage. Crucially, as families will often turn to clergy and lay leaders when seeking help related to neurodivergence, Jude gave us important guidance: listen (provide a non judgmental presence), love (affirm their inherent dignity), link (connect families with resources), and light (bring scriptural hope to remind them of God's unconditional love). As he movingly reminded us, God doesn't make mistakes, and neurodivergent people are image bearers, 'fearfully and wonderfully made.'

The following plenaries were also extremely helpful and led to interesting conversations. Sr Joy Raynor led us through a thoughtful training on safeguarding for small groups; Br Michael Newman shared an illuminating Bible study based on the book 'Moravian Treasures'; and Br. Philip Cooper led us in a calming evening prayer.

On our second full day, Br Peter Dornan talked us through findings from Project 32; the Provincial Board hosted conversations on the way forward for the British Province; and Br Edwin Quildan closed the day with a worship about faith and change. The last morning, we pulled together any remaining thoughts, and although I had to depart a little early to catch my plane, Sr Sue Groves closed with the Cup of the Covenant.

So, what's my biggest takeaway from the In-Service training? The more I get to know the Moravian Church in the British Province, the more grateful I am for it. Here, I see a church seeking to care faithfully for its congregations, to live out the gospel in their communities through service and love, and to honour its past while following God's lead into the future. My greatest hope for the Moravian Church, especially in light of Project 32, is that we would find creative and clear ways to share what we stand for - the inclusive, welcoming, compassionate love of Jesus expressed with gentleness, tolerance, and joy. It is my hope that more people might discover, as I have, that the Moravian Church is a place where they can find a sense of belonging - a church home.

Next time I'm invited to an In-Service training, I won't hem and haw - I'll look forward to the opportunity to connect with colleagues in ministry, to delve into rich and thought-provoking training, and to discern together how God might be leading us into the future.

Sr Kiran Young Wimberly
Minister in the Irish District

'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Elisabeth Hollindrake

Sr Elisabeth is a member at Horton Moravian Church in Bradford. She worked for many years as a teacher in a largely Muslim school where the pupils have a Punjabi, Pakistani heritage. Over the years she has developed much understanding of the interface between Islam and Christianity and has many Muslim friends.

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

I have a degree in Archaeology from Sheffield University. I moved to Bradford in 1984 to take up my first teaching post.

I've been married to Martin for 38 years and we still live in the same 'starter' home! We have two children, Art and Nyx. Both of whom are Trans/Non-Binary and have changed their names. I'm incredibly proud of them for living their lives true to who they are.

How and when did you come to faith?

I was born in a small Kentish village where I attended the church. My faith was nurtured by my lovely Godmother, Auntie Nan. We moved away when my dad died and there was a large hiatus in my faith journey.

When Art was five, they wanted to join Girls Brigade with their new school friends; we met the Aunties who ran Horton's GB and the rest is history. My faith has grown and changed over the years especially though the different roles of service that I have been involved in as part of Horton Congregation. These have included youth work, volunteering at the ecumenical homeless project and being a member of the local Interfaith forum.

Tell us a bit about your life and work in Bradford

I worked for 30 years in an inner-city school where the community was at the heart of my work. I have fond memories of taking the families into the Yorkshire Dales for walking trips on summer Saturdays.

Now I'm part of a friendly, dedicated team of exam invigilators at the Secondary school near our church. When I retired from my Primary school post my family was 'adopted' by two mums, sisters called Shamim and Taslim. Together we are one large, mixed faith family of four generations. We celebrate marriages and births; we mourn the deaths of loved ones in accordance with our different faiths but always together and with respect. Eid is always celebrated at Shamim's and Taslim loves to entertain us all on Christmas day. We all feel so blessed.

What do you struggle with in your personal faith and what gives you strength and comfort?

Sometimes I don't think I'm good enough to call myself a Christian. My comfort is that these depths of despair always pass, I've learned to wait for healing, which can come from surprising sources.

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

No, never with God. It's people who make me cross and frustrated!

Why are so many people turning their backs on the Church and how can the Church be more relevant to people?

I don't think they are. I'm encouraged by the rise of faith in Gen Z. We need to see what is attracting them and learn from it.

As for the Moravian Church, I believe the statement of welcome and inclusivity, which was agreed at 2022 Synod, is vital for our existence and growth. It needs to be shouted about and acted on by every member of every congregation, however uncomfortable this makes us feel.

There are many marginalised groups in our society, I feel our outreach should seek these people and let them know that our Moravian congregations are safe places where all and accepted, nurtured and ideally thrive in the love of God.

What can we learn from coming together with those of different faith and cultural backgrounds?

It is obvious from the people that I volunteer with at the Interfaith forum that faith is a part of who they are and how they live their lives, it is not an add on. It is vital that we listen to, and respect, people of other faiths. We can try to understand those things that are different, but also acknowledge that, as people of faith, we have so much in common.

When different faith groups and culture groups come together in our modern world, I think the main source of problems is ignorance, misunderstandings, misinformation and fear of difference. By getting to know people who are different from us we begin to understand them, to see them as individuals and the perceived threat disappears.

As Christians we believe that we were made in God's image. When I look around I see a great diversity of people because of this my view of God is not of a one dimensional 'He'; instead, I see God as a multifaceted 'They'.

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

I'm an avid reader of a wide range of books, crime, history, award winning novels and classics. I often read in the bath and so don't lend me a book if you don't want it back a bit wrinkly and smelling of Radox!

I also love gardening, knitting, eating chocolate and drinking tea.

The place where you feel closest to God?

When I'm singing hymns, I love blasting out the old-fashioned favourites.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

I won't have a gravestone. I have asked for my ashes to be scattered in the wonderfully named hamlet of Yokenthwaite in the Yorkshire Dales.

Fulneck School Reunion

After 272 years educating children and young adults, Fulneck School closed its doors at 12 noon on 8th July 2025. A couple of weeks earlier, its former pupils gathered for a final reunion in School.

The event was ably masterminded by the School's Alumni Committee, in particular, Alumni Chair, Marie Christopher-Davey. The School's closure was particularly poignant for Marie - members of her family have attended Fulneck School over a 60-year period.

© Br Dave Robbins

Commenting on its closure, Marie said: 'This place has meant so much to so many. A place where laughter echoed through corridors, where lifetime friendships were born over shared lunches and late-night study sessions, where young minds were shaped not just by lessons, but by love, care, and community.'

The reunion was a sold-out event, and the three hundred tickets available were quickly taken. On the day, a long queue snaked along the north terrace as eager former pupils waited to be registered for their final visit to a place once so familiar.

Amongst the 300, one former Boys' School pupil had travelled from Hong Kong to attend, and a former Girls' School pupil, from the States. The oldest pupil in attendance was Bruce Smith who started his life at Fulneck in the 1930s.

Sadly, during the final week before the reunion, badly timed health issues prevented the Reverend Professor Peter Gubi from attending. Similarly, Glyn Jones, who was due to play the organ was also taken ill and forced to hand in his apologies.

The Alumni team had arranged for escorted tours of the School throughout the afternoon. Along the way many memories were exchanged as former pupils recalled 'how things were in their time at School'. On completion of the 'tour' a splendid afternoon tea was available, a whole host of archive material on display, Fulneck Museum was open and a cricket match was in progress on the playing fields.

A wonderful afternoon, blessed with brilliant weather, was laced with so much sadness and emotion. It concluded with a Valedictory Service held in Fulneck Church, led by Trevor Kernohan. Trevor, during a 40-year career at Fulneck School was both a teacher and Principal.

The congregation sang the Girls' School hymn, 'Our lamb has conquered', and the Boys' School hymn, 'Saviour, Lord of all creation'. In between, Leigh-Taylor Arundale, the final Senior Head Girl of the School led the singing of 'Jerusalem'. Six former pupils, covering the decades from 1940 onwards shared their memories of School.

Marie Christopher-Davey concluded a beautiful and moving service with the following words: 'Let us not mourn what we are losing but celebrate what we were lucky enough to have. Fulneck School was a gift. And though its time has come to an end, its spirit will echo through time. In its last inspection, the inspector called Fulneck 'a thimble full of diamonds'. And whilst that thimble is now closing, those diamonds will continue to sparkle with brilliance. So, let us say not just say farewell - but thank you. Thank you, Fulneck, for the love, the friendships, for memories and for the legacy.'

Br Dave Robbins
Fulneck

Sr Sarah Groves Retires from Active Congregational Ministry

Sr Sarah Groves retired from active congregational ministry in July. However, while stepping back from her current role, Sr Sarah has graciously agreed to continue serving the Church as a Bates Trustee and as President of the Irish Council of Churches. She will also remain the provincial liaison to the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Gracehill.

Sr Sarah was ordained as a Deacon at Synod in July 1990, consecrated as a Presbyter in Brockweir in October 1994, and consecrated as Bishop in Gracehill in November 2018.

Her service to the Church, however, began long before her ordination. She was previously a Lay Preacher and assistant minister in both Brockweir and Leominster.

Among her many and varied roles within the Church, Sr Sarah served as Provincial Youth Secretary and was a part-time member of the Provincial Board from 2010 to 2016.

In each of these roles, Sr Sarah has consistently demonstrated her lifelong dedication to the Moravian Church and faithful service. For this, and so much more, the Province and the wider Church extend their sincere appreciation.

Sr Sarah married her husband, Br Christopher, in July 1980, and together they formed a formidable team. They were blessed with their children, Howard and Deborah, and later by an expanding family. We note with sadness and thanksgiving the passing of Br Christopher in 2023.

As a Bishop of the Unity, one could say that Sr Sarah may never fully retire. Yet, it is both right and fitting that she now has time to reflect on her ministry thus far and prepare for what lies ahead. For all that is behind her and all that is yet to come, the whole Province thanks her for her service and witness, and would like to wish her every blessing in her (semi-) retirement.

Br David Howarth
On behalf of the Provincial Board

Heritage Days

heritage open days

Gracehill Heritage Open Day
Saturday 13th September 2025
12.30- 5.00pm

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

heritage open days

FAIRFIELD MORAVIAN CHURCH, SETTLEMENT & MUSEUM, DROYLSDEN

Sunday 14 September 2025 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 the changes to the architecture of 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

heritage open days

A Celebration of Moravian Architecture

Saturday 13 September

Fulneck Settlement

10.30am-4pm

Come along and have a guided tour of the Settlement.

Visit the exhibition in church and the museum. Free entry

• Children's Activity • Refreshments

www.fulneck.org.uk postcode LS28 8NT

heritage open days

Open House London at Fetter Lane, Chelsea

Since 2017, Fetter Lane Moravian Church has been taking part in Open House London, and this year it will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 13th and 14th September from 1pm to 5pm.

We expect to welcome around 200 visitors over the weekend; including people interested in the long history of the Close since the days of Sir Thomas More until us today: the Moravians. As always, members of the congregation will be on hand, able to expand on the information given in our informative booklet and to talk about the spiritual focus of the Close today.

A quiz is available for the children as well free refreshments. You can find us at: 381 Kings Road, London, SW10 0LP. All are welcome in this place!

Baildon, Yorkshire

© Sr Ruth France

There has been a lot of unusual activity in our Burial ground recently! Part of our grounds, once known as the Minister's Garden, has been transformed into Wilder Wood Forest School! It is a wonderful setting for pre-schoolers and primary age alike to experience constructive outdoor play, getting back to nature with no electronic device in sight. As I live next door I can assure you that the looks on the children's faces, plus those of the parents and leaders, is testament to how successful this new venture is and how much they all enjoy it.

It's all change again here in terms of Ministers. We are saying goodbye to our minister Br James Woolford and his lovely family, Annette, Edward and Charlotte as they relocate over the Pennines to serve in Lancashire. We are so sorry to see them leave, one congregation member described him as 'just the right fit for us' and we have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated his services. James's last service with us will be in mid-July. Our new minister Sr Patsy Holdsworth will be making the reverse trip over the Pennines starting in August and we look forward to welcoming her to Baildon and her home county of Yorkshire!

I was one of the 300+ who attended the Alumni valedictory service of Fulneck School on Saturday 28th June. I have been a pupil, member of staff and parent of the school in its various guises and feel its closure, greatly. It was a hot sultry day, gaggles of year groups went on tours of our old stomping grounds and enjoyed afternoon tea (or strawberry mocktails) on the terrace before meeting in church for an emotional final service. Br Trevor Kernohan led proceedings, a difficult job for a Committee member, ex teacher and former principal of Fulneck, which he fulfilled excellently and then former pupils from year groups post 1940 spoke of their memories. Sr Beth McOwat began, I spoke about my memories of the 1970s, and later we heard from author Amit Dhand who spoke about what he owed Fulneck School. Br David Robbins did a marvellous job filling in for alumni who were due to attend but ill health prevented plus sharing his own memories with us. Then another alumus, Rt Rev John McOwat led us in special prayers of thanksgiving for Fulneck School.

It was a day we never wanted to happen or attend but thanks go to Marie Christopher Davey, chair of the alumni for giving us all an opportunity to say goodbye to such a very special place, Fulneck School.

Sr Ruth France

Horton, Yorkshire

As I write this I'm reminded of a verse from *'All Things Bright and Beautiful': 'The cold wind in the winter, The pleasant summer sun, The ripe fruits in the garden, He made them every one'*. Let's be thankful for all types of weather, even as we currently 'melt' in 30-degree heat, as the last time I wrote an article we had just had six inches of snow and it was freezing cold!

2025 has been a very busy year so far and a big focus has been on family friendly church services led by Sr Claire. An article last month by Br Woolford gave details of the 'Come alive in 25' project and we were fortunate that Sr Claire was very involved in this, and we were able to link it to our monthly coffee morning in June with the focus on the under 5s with family friendly activities during the morning. Leaflet drops were arranged prior to the event and visits to schools were made and over 3,000 people were reached. We had new families coming along to the morning and we hope to welcome them in the future. We also hope that more people are aware of who and where we are and that we have planted 'seeds' for future growth.

As well as our Sunday services we continue with Bible study meetings, Gin church, Ladies Fellowship, and our annual Sisters Festival. Sr Maureen led a special service for World Day of Prayer and it was lovely to welcome two ladies who were born in the Cook Islands, which was the theme of the service.

We continue with our social events of fashion shows, quizzes, games and lots of refreshments and last month an interesting afternoon tea was held with an auction of Bible related food which raised money towards the MWA projects. We are so grateful for all the support, donations, help, leadership and fellowship on these occasions.

Finally, a huge well done to Sr Claire for taking part in the London Marathon for GOSH. As a congregation we are so proud of her for running, for her faith which kept her going and for raising money for a very worthy cause.

Sr Linda Barraclough

NOTICES

Serving the Church

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

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

If you are interested, please contact joachim.kreusel@moravian.org.uk We look forward to speaking with you and pray that you are willing and able to listen to God's voice calling you on in your Christian walk as you seek to follow more and more deeply Jesus.

From the Church Service Committee

Sr Lorraine Shorten (Chair of CSC and minister for Bath Weston and Bath Coronation Avenue congregations)

Golden Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Br David and Sr Marilyn Newman on their Golden Wedding Anniversary on Saturday 2nd August. The retired minister and former Provincial Board member and his wife were married in 1975 at Church Lane Meeting House, Stafford, with Br Desmond Quaite as the presiding minister.

© Br David Newman

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

23rd March 2025	Arthur Colin Kitson	Gracehill
6th July 2025	Florence Lily Kitson	Gracehill

Received into Membership

30th June 2025	Jackie Flint	Ockbrook
6th July 2025	Rebecca Barr	Gracehill
6th July 2025	Pamela Irwin	Gracehill
6th July 2025	Samantha McCormick	Gracehill
6th July 2025	Jayne Montgomery	Gracehill

Confirmations

30th June 2025	Rose Turner	Ockbrook

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Retirement

Sr Sarah Groves will retire from stipendiary ministry after her final service at Gracehill on 20th July 2025. We extend our sincere appreciation for her 35 years of dedicated ordained service within the Province and convey our best wishes for her retirement.

Calls

Sr Patsy Holdsworth has received and accepted a Call to serve the Baildon congregation, effective from 1st August 2025.

Sr Patsy is returning to full-time ministry following an extended period of medical leave. As part of her transition, this will be a phased return to full-time service over the coming months, supported by Br Joachim Kreusel.

Please keep Sr Holdsworth and the Baildon congregation in your prayers as they begin to discern new opportunities for service and witness together.

Following the retirement of Sr Sarah Groves, Br David Howarth has received and accepted a call to serve the Gracehill congregation. The Call will take effect from Sunday 16th November 2025 and will be in addition to his continuing service as a stipendiary Provincial Board member. Br Howarth will be based in Gracehill, working alongside Sr Kiran Young-Wimberley, and will normally lead two services per month.

Following completion of his time on the Provincial Board in summer 2026, Br Howarth will transition to full-time ministry at Gracehill.

Please keep Br Howarth and the Gracehill congregation in your prayers during this time of transition.

Yours in Christ's service.

Fulneck School

Fulneck School closed its doors on Tuesday 8th July, marking the end of an important chapter.

This isn't just the closure of a school - it's the closing of a community that has shaped countless lives. Students, staff, families, and friends: your memories and experiences are woven into the very fabric of this place.

Though the school may be gone, its legacy of compassion, resilience, and commitment to education will continue to echo through the generations.

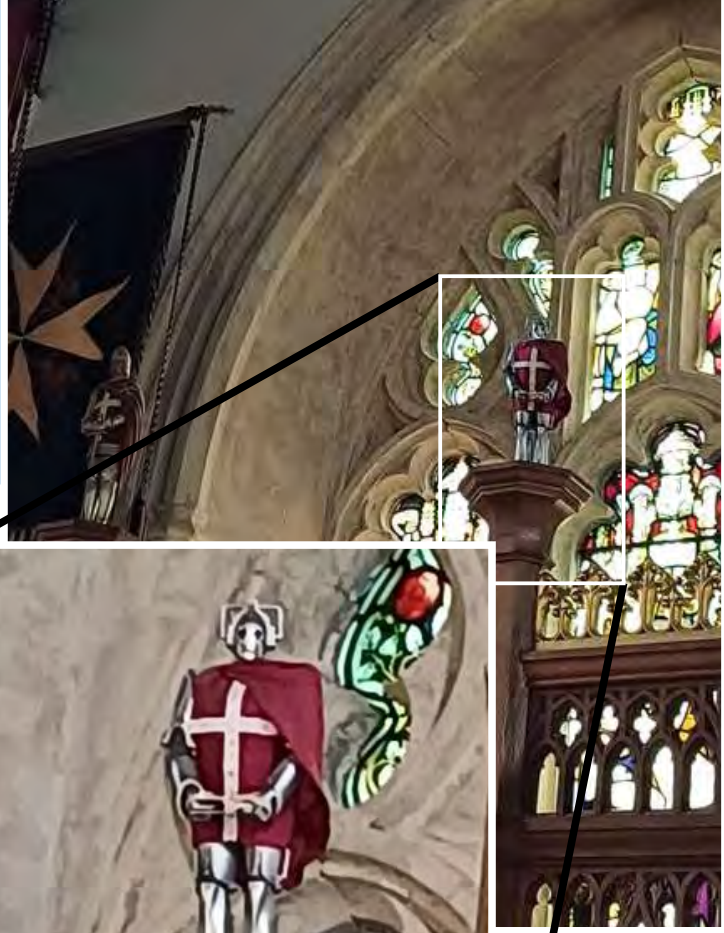
Provincial Diary for August

12-13	Provincial Board Meeting	Church House

DATES TO REMEMBER

9	Raksha Bandhan - Hindu
13	Manifestation of the of the Spirit at Herrnhut in 1727
21	The beginning of the Moravian Missions in 1732
23	UNESCO International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition ***(https://www.unesco.org/en/days/slave-trade-remembrance)***
26	Ganesh Chaturthi - Hindu

Favourite memorials: Cyberman in Cardiff



© Br David Slater

St John the Baptist Church in Cardiff is a beautiful historic Church in the centre of the city. It dates from the 12th century and is one of the last remaining medieval buildings in Cardiff city. It has a glorious 'Father Henry Willis' organ and is the priory church for Wales of the Order of Saint John and in the Knights. One Sunday morning attending for worship, I was pointed to one of the strangest things I have ever seen in a Church. The right-hand side chapel is dedicated to the Wales Priory of the Order of St John and is edged with two fine wooden screens. Atop of each screen are three knights of St John. Or at least that is what you think at first. However, one of them is clearly a cyberman. Whoever put this glorious small joke into the Church was a genius. It does not diminish the Church's historic fabric but rewards the observant viewer with a gentle smile and recognition that current culture can sit alongside history as long as neither takes themselves too seriously.

© Sr Sarah Groves

© Sr Sarah Groves

It is unclear who commissioned and installed the secret cyberman, but it genuinely reflects the modern history of the city. Cardiff was the setting for 77 episodes of Doctor Who and for the entire Torchwood episodes. For those not in the know, Torchwood was a cult spin off from Dr Who. Episodes for both series were filmed in Cardiff Bay, Cardiff Castle, Cardiff Museum, Cardiff city centre and Southerndown Beach. In Cardiff Bay there is also a permanent memorial 'Shrine to Ianto Jones' celebrating the life of a much loved Torchwood character who 'died' in the series in 2009 trying to save the earth's children.

A visit to St John the Baptist is recommended, not only for the cyberman, organ and history but also for its welcoming liberal and inclusive worship. That morning was a blessing to me!

Sr Sarah Groves

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Editorial Team, Church House, 5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ
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