



MORAVIAN MESSENGER

We celebrate Church Service Sunday on 23rd November

Duncan Wood writes about a fisherman who became the rock on which the Church is built.

It's funny how certain things crop up repeatedly in life. One of these, for me, is the name of St Peter. I studied theology at Peterhouse, Cambridge and now I'm a churchwarden at St Peter's Church in a Norfolk village.

One place that made a big impression on me in the Holy Land was the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu. It's the place in Jerusalem (or so tradition claims) where Peter three times denied that he was a follower of Jesus. Then a cock crowed, as Jesus had predicted, and Peter burst into tears at his weakness. I could sense Peter's distress there. It seemed gloomy.

By contrast, the Church of the Primacy of St Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee was a place of light, peace, and promise. The sunshine helped, but it was more than that. I could sense Christ's love for Peter. 'Who do you say I am?' asked Jesus. Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it.'

Solemn words, but also, I think, an example of the Lord's sense of humour. In Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, Peter's name



'Cephas' means 'Rock'; the Greek equivalent is 'Petros', the Latin 'Petrus', from which we derive words like petrified = 'turned to stone'. The joke, I think, is that Peter was a man of great enthusiasm, but one who was not (then) as steady as a rock. The solemnity of churches tends to obscure the fact that Jesus was a witty man who used humour to make serious points, much as, the playwright George Bernard Shaw did many centuries later.

But does this view do St Peter an injustice? Well, he did deny Christ three times but went on to be martyred himself. And that is the key. He was a man of both weakness and strength. He was a man who depended on God's grace to build up both himself and the church he led following the Lord's physical death. I think it is that frank dependence on grace that Jesus meant when he talked about the rock on which the church would be built. We are all incomplete as human beings unless we are filled up with grace.

The classical historian Michael Grant in his 1994 biography of St Peter suggests that Jesus was not calling Peter a rock so much

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Editorial

One of my most prized books of prayers is one dating from May 1940, the early days of the Second World War. 'Each Returning Day' was published by the BBC as a supplement for private prayers and for those who wanted to lead intercessions in public worship.

This year has rolled by with the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Very few combatants are still alive, but it is right to continue to honour their memory. They and so many other people, not least their families made huge sacrifices for us. That came home to me recently watching a programme on the role of the Royal National Lifeboat Association in rescuing soldiers, sailors and airmen during the Second World War.

The ramifications of the Second World War, and of course the First World War still continue in so many ways. There are the lines in maps that delineate the boundaries of countries that cause tensions and strife today. This includes the rise of the Soviet Bloc, its sudden demise and the attempt by President Putin to restore it in recent years. There is the memory of the concentration camps that attempted to annihilate an entire people and faith and the continuing taint of antisemitism in so many places. Then there is NATO with expansionist ideas but perhaps with less monetary commitment.

On the positive side the United Nations was formed in June 1945, and this year celebrated its 80th anniversary. Some would say that it has prevented a third world war and it gives a forum for international discussion even if it cannot enforce any decisions it makes. For us in the United Kingdom and Ireland we celebrate the formation of Chrisitan Aid, also celebrating 80 years this year. Chrisitan Aid was formed in 1945 to assist refugees and help those affected by the devastation of the war in Europe. Over time it's work has

expanded to take in areas of suffering across the world and to challenge us to consider issues of inequality, war and climate crisis.

We, in the UK and Ireland are so privileged to be living in a time of peace but with real world problems around us. As we honour the past our Remembrance Commemorations must also look forward to seeking peace and working for justice for all in the world around us.

My hope is that these prayer extracts from 'Each Returning Day' still speak to us this Remembrance Day:

LET US PRAY FOR PEACE; in the world and in our hearts. O almighty God who canst bring good out of evil and makest even the wrath of man to turn to thy praise; we beseech thee so to order and dispose of this war (all wars and strife now) that we may be brought through strife to a righteous and abiding peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord,

LET US PRAY THAT THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE MAY SPREAD. Grant us O god a vision of our land, a land of justice, a land of plenty where vice and poverty shall cease to fester, a land of brotherhood, where success shall be founded on service, a land of peace. Teach us to be courteous and considerate to all who serve us in shops and offices, in our journeys and in our homes. O God, set our hearts at liberty from the service of ourselves and let it be our meat and drink to serve others and to do thy will.

LET US PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY: and for all departed souls, grant that, following the good example of those who have served thee here and are now at rest, we may at the last enter with them into the fulness of thine unending joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



Letters to Editorial Team

The New Research Journey into the long shadow cast by slavery and colonialism outlined by Br Livingstone Thompson in the October Messenger is a huge project which will be costly in both time and effort for many people but with what practical result other than to cause further division and discord between those who consider themselves descendants of the two sides involved? Although he concludes with the questions 'Why now?' and 'Why it matters?' he fails to give a convincing reply to either.

History teaches us that history teaches us nothing. It is far too easy to look back on the failings of previous generations and pinpoint their faults. Would we have done any better had we been in their place? How reassuring hindsight tries to be, yet we will be judged not on our opinions of history but on what we ourselves have done about the current evils of our own times, in our own situation, in our own day.

In 1970 I was the first white Moravian Minister to be ordained by an African Bishop. A small but surely significant step in the above 'Research Journey'. I lived in Tanzania only a few years following Independence and when asked by an African student about the period of African slavery I told him that it was nothing to do with me since the same sort of people who had mistreated his people had been kicking my ancestors about in Yorkshire around the same time.

We must be true to our own age and follow the Lord's timing rather than our own. Regardless of race, time or place we are called to be the Brides of Christ rather than the Miss Havishams of Charles Dickens.

Br Richard Ingham
Fairfield

Moravians maybe interested to read about Richard Coles's last bestseller book 'A Death on Location'.

One of the characters is Neil Vanloo, who is a police inspector, and is in the earlier Richard Coles books.

On page 190 it says that Neil is born in Oldham. When asked why, he said that his ancestors had lived there, so why on earth had they moved to Oldham and from where. The answers were that they had come from Germany. 'It was a freedom of religion thing. Moravian Brethren, kicked out of Germany, needed somewhere to go'.

That is followed up on page 255, the conversation had moved onto Communion, and Neil says, 'We had the same philosophy in the Moravian Brethren. The love feast. Anyone could come for a cup of tea and a bun. It was one of the traditions the mother church at Herrnhut started. And we still do it today'.

Neither reference adds to the plot, maybe there is a connection because his dead partner's surname was Oldham, and he was born in Tameside hospital.

Br Stuart Brierley
Royton

Raising Faith Monthly

from the Youth and Children's Committee (YCC)

Our article this month comes from Sr Rachel Hamilton, member of the Youth and Children's Committee.

We hope this inspires you as it did us, your YCC Committee: Sr Katie Groves-Bond, Br Kieran Hopton, Sr Lol Wood, Sr Claire Maxwell, Sr Rachel Hamilton and Br James Woolford.



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Baking through the Bible: Resource Review



Over my years as a youth leader, I have had the opportunity to use a range of resources to facilitate discussions with the young people about Jesus and the scriptures. At the beginning, the Bible was my main resource for reflective talks, and I wanted to introduce a more interactive

learning experience. I

remember sharing this with Sr Joy Raynor who suggested I try baking with the young people and simultaneously sharing from scripture.

Initially, I was reluctant as baking (as my Home Economics teacher was all too aware) was not a particular talent shall we say! Nevertheless, fuelled by a desire for change and wanting the young people to truly enjoy and remember the lessons from scripture, I began researching for resources. I'm not sure exactly what words were typed into Google, but 'Bake through the Bible' came up on the screen - hooray! This sounded promising. The verse on the cover confirmed that this was a book worth ordering:

'Taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34v 8).

The resource did not disappoint although aimed at primary school age children, the ideas and baking suggestions could easily be adapted for younger teens as well.

As a year-long programme, it was perfect as the Biblical lessons ranged from God creating the world in Genesis to God's deliverance of His people out of Egypt and taking them to a new land to the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus and finally to the New Creation in Revelation- encompassing many key moments from the Old and New Testaments in between. I wasn't feeling quite as nervous about the baking as each page had accessible recipes and detailed step by step instructions so that even the most tentative (perhaps even reluctant) baker would feel capable of leading the activity and session.

We started the year with Creation cookies and integrated in how God had created the world while the young people were decorating their cookies. There are also very helpful 'while you cook' discussion questions that encouraged the young people to reflect on what they had heard. As the youth group ran once a fortnight, we couldn't fit in every baking suggestion in the book as there are enough recipes and activities for twenty sessions but if your group runs weekly, you could certainly fit them all in. We didn't always use the suggested recipes due to time constraints but modified them to our young peoples' needs and tried to make sure it was fun and accessible, while reinforcing the key Biblical message through the combination of baking and discussion. The year also included main events in the Christian calendar such as Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. The suggested baking activities can be tailored and simplified but the framework was excellent and fun for us all! Hopefully the picture will give you an idea of a Biblical story and inspire you to have a go with your young people!

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as a stone, i.e. the foundation stone of a new temple, echoing Isaiah 28.16, 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic.' Interestingly, this text is also quoted in the First Letter of St Peter in the New Testament, where the author applies the text to Jesus himself. Many scholars doubt that Peter himself wrote this letter,

but even so this view would have come from Peter's circle in the early church.

Grant, writing as a historian, considered that Jesus chose Peter as his chief disciple because of his devotion and faith. Of course, Peter's faith sometimes wavered, but Grant thought that this passage in John 6.67-69 about an earlier unhappy phase in Jesus' ministry might go a long way to explaining why Jesus regarded

Peter as a rock for the future: 'After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you want to go away as well?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.'

Br Duncan Wood

2025 MWA (Moravian Women's Association) Retreat

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Joy Johnson from Hall Green United Community Church (HGUCC) in Birmingham, and I attended the Moravian Women's Association Retreat held at the Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire for the first time.



© Sr Roberta Hoey

The retreat was mainly led by my current minister at HGUCC, the Rev Melanie Smith, and some of the members from the Moravian Women's Association. I have met Melanie several times at church, but never really on an informal basis as this. The retreat took place from Friday 5th September to Sunday 7th September 2025.

Norma Maynard was kind enough to pick me up from my home in the south of Birmingham, and she also picked up Melanie to take us to the conference. Norma's sister, Judith Morton, was also travelling with us.

Right from the moment Melanie got into the car, I realised I was in for a different kind of weekend. She was open, with very strong opinions, which I had never really seen from her before. We had some very passionate debates - ranging from roadworks to shopping in charity shops. It was refreshing to see this side of Melanie.

On arriving at the Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire, I had a feeling it was going to be a wonderful weekend. I certainly wasn't disappointed. From the beautiful grounds with amazing flower beds, to the warm reception and excellent facilities (mostly included in the cost we had already paid), and the wide variety of food to suit everyone's taste buds - it all made for a fantastic first impression.

On the first day, after registration and our evening meal, we quickly got into the swing of things with the evening get-together and evening devotion, where we were introduced to the theme of the weekend.

Several members of the Moravian Women's Association gave talks about their different experiences of attending over the years. As a first-time attendee, I was very impressed with the ease and confidence with which these women spoke.

The next morning, Saturday, after an early walk with some of the women around the lake and grounds of the centre, we were treated to a 'pick what you want' breakfast, which set me up well for the morning. After this, we moved on to morning devotions and the Bible study/workshop, which was mainly led by Melanie Smith.

Everyone mixed very well. The conversations were very open and flowed quite naturally. The age range at the retreat was varied, but this didn't seem to matter or be a hindrance at all. We then broke for lunch in the early afternoon, and afterwards we were given free time to explore the area before meeting up again for the evening sessions. I should also mention that we even managed to fit in a coffee-and-biscuits break before lunch - not that it was needed! Well, at least not for me, as I had barely recovered from breakfast.

The Saturday evening get-together and devotion, after the

evening meal, did not disappoint. Once again, the women threw themselves into the spirit of things, and you could be as open as you wished during the conversations. We also had a quiz, which everyone took part in. It was educational, fun, argumentative, and full of laughter. It also revealed some of the women's true personalities - which was good to see and yes you guess right, my team won!

On the final day, after my walk and breakfast, I thought I was ready for morning devotions. That was just a thought! I was not prepared to be pushed out of my comfort zone by the facilitator, Melanie Smith. We were asked to stop and think as though we were refugees - displaced, running from our homeland, and facing unimaginable challenges. Sometimes, loved ones would be dying around us, and we would be forced to make awful decisions we would never normally consider. It was a very heavy session, but also very necessary. It opened my eyes and reminded me that my own family's history was not so far removed from today's refugee experiences, though perhaps not as extreme. This session truly woke me up to think before I pass judgment in the future about refugees. It made me ask myself: what would I do if I were faced with the same challenges?

I was very glad for the coffee break afterwards - in fact, on this occasion, I could have done with something a bit stronger to calm my nerves and mind!

We then went on to the final workshop/Bible study before lunch and departure. Melanie once again had us put our thinking caps on. We had a really good discussion about the future, imagining what the Moravian Church could look like in seven years' time, and what model of operation it might adopt. One thing is for sure - I definitely want to be around in 2032 to see it! With God's help, I hope I will be.

I also hope to be around for next year's Moravian Women's Association Retreat in Ireland, and that I will be fit and healthy enough to attend.

One thing I am taking away from this retreat weekend is that Moravians love to eat and drink, and they certainly know how to make an outsider feel welcome. In fact, if I don't get an invite for next year, I will be gate-crashing - because I had such a good time this year.

Although there were no TV in the room, which at first, I was a bit disappointed. However, I had a lot of time to read, listen to music and quiet time and reflection.

Long may the Moravians Women Association Retreat continue! Blessings to you all!

Sr Joy Johnson

Hall Green



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Greenbelt Festival 2025

- Somewhere to believe in

This summer was the first time after a few years that we returned as a family to the Greenbelt Festival. We were excited to return to Broughton House, especially as our two children, Phoebe and Zachary, were very little the last time they had been there. Greenbelt Festival is described as a place where artistry meets activism with faith central to that identity. This year was the first experience where we knew as parents that our time wouldn't be (majorly) spent listening to talks, but would be more focused on the children's activities, with the occasional catch up with friends and deep, soul-filling conversations. Despite this radical difference in our approach to Greenbelt, it really did finish off our summer together with joy, love and hope, and re-energised both myself and Steve in our Christian faith.

A highlight for me this year at Greenbelt included Holy Communion that occurs on the Sunday. At this service, you gather around a central stage with thousands of others. Together you worship God through music, poetry, and the wisdom of the Bible. This year, it was led by one of the first female priests to be ordained in the Church of England. She had spent the last few months campaigning against Gaza and was, on her return home, expecting to be arrested. She reminded us of our call as Christians to always look out for the least and to follow Jesus in his confidence in speaking out in places where we see wrong happening towards those who are most vulnerable. It was a really powerful testimony, which, when matched with a variety of traditional and modern music, became a really powerful service to be a part of, and has left a

long-lasting impression on myself and Steve as to how to create organic, authentic worship spaces.

The Greenbelt volunteers are incredible. They come ahead of the festival to set everything up and stay afterwards to also take it all down, as well as helping throughout the actual festival! Once you go with children, you realise how important those volunteers are: to be the spare hands that wrap knitting around cardboard or help your child build that den that involves carrying over large poles of bamboo. Activities we really enjoyed as a family were making dens, having a go at circus skills, and lots of activities in the 'Make and Create Tent' which included making clocks and mirrors out of records. We, also, learnt about looking after the bees through a really interactive and engaging puppet show and song - linking together God's care for creation with our own responsibility.

The gymnastics group were called 'Henge'. They led an incredible routine of moving the 'stones', balancing on each other, jumping off each other and creating completely different shapes and movements all set to music. It truly was an all-age activity of drama, movement, and skill and our two left us to sit on the front row with friends.

Most evenings at Greenbelt, we took our children down in the trolley, well wrapped up with their little pocket money purchased finger-lights, to enjoy some of the music. This allowed their parents to enjoy a good beer or two at the Jesus Arms with the friends that we were camping alongside.

Amidst all the family activities, I heard a

couple of talks over the weekend - one that has stuck with me was an interview with Patrick Grant from The Sewing Bee. He talked about our calling and responsibility to look at how clothing was made, where it was made, how it was produced, and who was involved in that labour. He gave a really interesting insight into the fact that most clothing produced and sold in the United Kingdom, even if it appears plastic-free, would still involve the hem being sewn with a thread which includes some plastic material. His talk has really inspired me to think carefully about what I buy when I'm not purchasing second hand. He gave strong encouragement to go and return to tailor shops, where possible, as tailors typically do know the origin of their cloth.

Finally, a big plus of Greenbelt for me are the conversations that you do not expect to have. For me, these range from people I'd never met before (who at events we sat next to each other and just started chatting) to people I've met and known for over a decade but haven't perhaps seen for a long time. It was this opportunity to connect and talk together about our faith, work, and (and in some cases) ministries which was wonderful. I truly recommend Greenbelt as a safe space to explore how your faith is lived out in the world, as well as an opportunity to meet other deeply curious faith seekers who are trying their best to live authentically in a world where operating from a place of faith is perhaps not always recognised or understood by most people.

Sr Claire Maxwell

Minister of Horton and Lower Wyke Moravian Congregations

Project 32 Update: What is happening with Natural Church Development (NCD)?

Over the last 18 months, the majority of the Moravian churches in the British Province have been going through the Natural Church Development Process. We wanted to get an update on what is happening, and what differences, if any, it is making.

There are six phases to the annual cycle:

1. **Perceive** - what is going on.
2. **Test** - through a survey.
3. **Understand** - discern what barriers to spiritual health need removed.
4. **Plan** - what we'll do to remove barriers.
5. **Do** - execute the plan, remove barriers.
6. **Experience** - watch what changes.

Each church had one or more NCD Champions trained, and they worked with the local minister to carry out the survey, analyse it, formulate a plan and carry it out. There were four tranches of training, over 2024/2025. While the last churches trained are early in the process, we can now share and learn from those who started in the first three tranches. These reports are written by the **Champions**.

Fairfield Moravian Church

Survey completed: September 2024

Membership: 'as is' 68

Maximum factor: Inspiring Worship Service

Minimum factor: Holistic Small Groups

We are addressing our minimum factor to increase our spirituality in small groups, specifically in three ways.

1. Memory Singers

A different attendee each session chooses their favourite hymn and shares how it speaks to them with those present, before it is sung by all. This practice is proving popular and reflective.

2. Prayer Group

From January 2026 Br Peter Gubi will lead a prayer group meeting, before the weekly coffee morning.

3. Triplets

In June 2025, following appropriate training, we established a trial series of monthly meetings of Triplet groups. Held in a leader's home, each meeting lasts an hour and opens with refreshments and the Watchwords, followed by a Biblical passage, a related secular reading and five discussion questions, taken from

'The Upper Room' Bible Reading Fellowship booklet. Sessions end with a prayer. Confidentiality is key and what is shared stays in the room. Each member (two plus the leader) signs a contract to this effect. Currently there are five Triplet groups, and we hope to establish more Triplets in time. Feedback to date has been positive and the general consensus is that these groups are enjoyable and exactly the right size for those participating to be completely open with each other in sharing their faith. We feel that God is making us aware of how each individual relates to God and how we all have our interpretations of that concept. We seem happy to share honestly, simply and to allow our vulnerability to be exposed in the Triplets in a way that might feel more difficult in a larger church setting. It is a privilege to learn of each other's faith and its application within the context of daily life. Three seems to be a comfortable number to allow God to work within us in this situation.

Br Melvyn and Sr Anne Wood

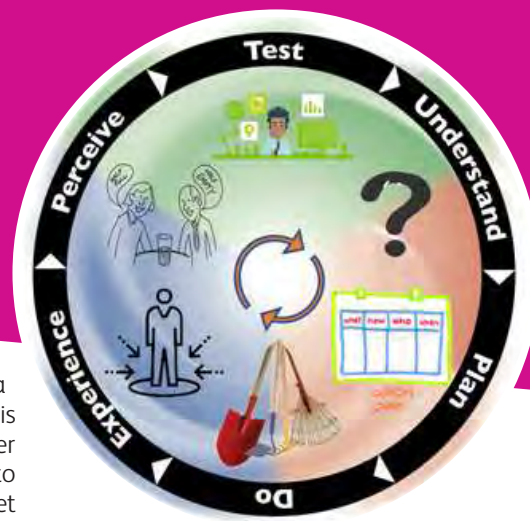
23rd August 2025

Leominster Moravian Church

Our church is currently in interregnum with nine members. After completing the NCD survey, our maximum factor was **Inspiring Worship** and our minimum factor was **Need-Oriented Evangelism**. Our survey was completed in November 2024. After analysis, discussion and prayer, we agreed we needed to review the Holy Habits of prayer, Bible study, and Making New Disciples.

In addition, we regularly join in the Moravian liturgy out loud, use Watchwords in our services and meetings and keep our preachers from various denominations in touch with these, yet are very happy with extempore prayer and preaching. Two or three members read the Bible out loud in the services and MWA but not yet facing the congregation. I do all of the above, careful not to take over. New preachers and visitors have been invited to equip and challenge us in these areas, including evangelists.

Further to this, we are part of Churches Together in Leominster and join their activities whenever possible, taking our turn with meetings and services, and asking and offering help. Recently, the



Priory and the Methodists have celebrated anniversaries, and we share Baptist meals.

As a result, the Diocesan Youth Hub have met in our hall, God's Acre have made contact and I have personally enriched my own spiritual growth, adding to using the discipleship questionnaires provided by NCD (available from <https://ncd.life/en> - look up 'character').

Sr Dilys Howard

23rd August 2025

Fetter Lane Moravian Church

Survey completed: September 2024

Membership: 13

Maximum factor: Gift-based Ministry

Minimum factor: Loving relationships and Need-oriented Evangelism

The Fetter Lane congregation, with a membership of 13, completed their NCD survey in September 2004. The results showed that our maximum factor was Gift-Based Ministry, and our minimum factors were Loving Relationships and Need-Oriented Evangelism. To improve relationships, we organised some bring-and-share lunches as well as a service to celebrate each other's gifts. These were both appreciated, and we plan to have more lunches in the autumn. To improve evangelism, we have improved our publicity for special services and events and have built on our existing children's activities by organising a summer holiday club in August which about 30 children attended over three days. We have some very enthusiastic members in our congregation, and the NCD survey has given us a welcome nudge towards trying new things or doing things differently.

Rev Michael Newman

26th August 2025

Next month we will add a few more stories of what God is doing in Ockbrook, Gomersal, Hornsey, Kilwarlin and more. Keep praying engaging and sharing what God is doing.



Sr Kathryn is a retired Moravian minister living and still active in the Yorkshire District. Before becoming a minister, Kathryn was a teacher who served for a time in Labrador.

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

Mum was left a widow at the age of 26 with three of us under four years old. Life was not easy, but we had the support of our half-sister, Cora, and support from neighbours and the members at church. Church was always the centre of our lives often going three times each Sunday and it was our social life as well. I was educated at Heckmondwike Grammar School and from there went to Bishop Lonsdale College of Education to train to teach. I am married to Roy, and we have two sons, three grandsons and one granddaughter.

How and when did you come to faith?

I don't remember not having faith and could not pinpoint when that began. I was confirmed by Rev Ronald Lloyd, was a Sunday school teacher and District youth leader and leader at Summer School.

Tell us a bit about your work as a teacher in Yorkshire and in Labrador

I taught in Derby for one year, then went to Labrador and when I returned, I taught in Mirfield for the remainder of my career. Most of my teaching career was spent teaching French in a middle school. When the middle schools were reorganised, I taught in a primary school. I was able to take early retirement when I was 50 which gave me the opportunity to work full time in the ministry. I had gone out to Labrador as the result of a Bishop's letter for Church Service Sunday. It was read out by Br Ivor Packer at Ockbrook which appealed for teachers to go to Labrador. I applied and was accepted. In Labrador I taught general subjects but in my second year I was asked to teach British history from the stone age to the end of the second world war! I attended the church in Happy Valley and also taught in the Sunday School there.

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

I had often felt the call to ministry and there was a shortage of ministers so I spoke to Roy about how I felt called to ministry and he assured me that he would support me. So I applied and

'What I Believe'

- Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Kathryn Woolford

was accepted for training as a non-stipendiary minister. The boys were very young at the time (Paul was seven and James only four when I started my training) but they accepted that there were times when I would be away in Manchester. I trained at Northern College on a part time basis which was very challenging but thought provoking and interesting. I have served the Heckmondwike, Wellhouse and Gomersal congregations in the Yorkshire District; University Road, Ballinderry and Kilwarlin congregations in the Irish District and Ockbrook in the Midlands District. All brought their own challenges but also joys.

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

The greatest joy has been preaching but also being there for people to celebrate joys and to support them through struggles. The biggest struggle has been the effect on members of the family and the changes it brought for them. I have been very fortunate that Roy has always supported me in my ministry, changing jobs as we moved around the country but always managing to find a job which he enjoyed. Without his support I could not have done all the I have done.

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

I don't believe I have ever been angry with God, but I may have questioned some of the things he has called me to do.

Are you afraid to die or can you look beyond death? Do you believe in a resurrection?

I am not afraid to die but, like many people, apprehensive about how I shall get from here to there. I do believe in a resurrection but am not sure how that will be.

Why are so many people turning their backs on the Church?

I believe that people are not turning their backs on Christianity as there is evidence that many young people are seeking faith but they are turning their backs on the establishment of the church, so we need to look at what it really means to be church in the 21st century.

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

I am not a great film watcher, but I thoroughly enjoy reading - nothing too heavy, mainly historical novels. I love musical theatre and going to see musical theatre shows.

The place where you feel closest to God?

I feel closest to God in church or in the countryside with nature all around.

What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

I am a Moravian through and through so just my name, age and date of death will be sufficient.

Heritage Days Reports

Fairfield, Greater Manchester

On the afternoon of Sunday 14th September, we opened our doors to welcome visitors and friends to our Heritage event.

The weather forecast was bad, and we were not overly optimistic of a good turnout, nevertheless we put on our best welcoming smiles and opened our doors. It would seem, not for the first time, that we underestimated the draw of such a beautiful and historic place as a Moravian settlement, when many visitors old and new came to enjoy the afternoon. Many of them even braved the inclement weather to go on the tour of the settlement and visited our college afterwards for refreshments looking rather windblown and bedraggled. Special thanks here to the

tour guides for turning out, some of them more than once, to ensure our visitors had an interesting and informed visit.

Once again, the Heritage event seemed very popular with our visitors some of whom assured us of return visits in the future.

Although the main purpose of this event is not as a fund raiser it was pleasing to note our efforts raised £1,131.60, all in all a great team effort from our hardworking congregation.

Sr Margery Sutcliffe



© Sr Margery Sutcliffe

Heritage Day in Gracehill, Northern Ireland

Hats off to our superb volunteers, who all did a most

wonderful job around the village on Heritage Day again this year! It is a busy day, and their work and enthusiasm are much appreciated and as always there was a great buzz. It is definitely a team effort with people management required in all the different areas.

The Church was open for talks, guided walks took place round the Square, the hall was the venue for tea, buns and stalls and there were tours round the Single Brethren House. Now that the Old Shop is restored (part shop, part holiday accommodation) it is great to be able to welcome visitors, and it has been a popular addition over the last number of years.

Here's to next year's plans!

Sr Sally Ann Johnston

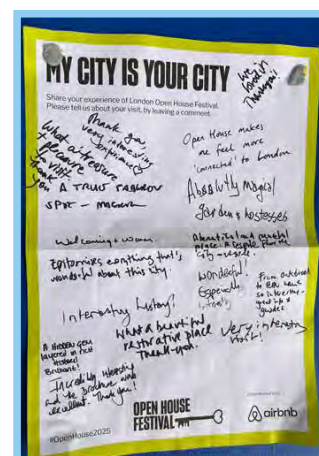


© Sr Sally Ann Johnston

Open House at Fetter Lane, London

In spite of sometimes torrential rain - well, maybe not that bad - we still welcomed nearly 200 visitors over the Open House weekend in September. As well as touring the grounds, visitors also took time to see to the Chapel that was built in the 18th century and Studio 1 which was part of Sir Thomas More's stable block. Our regular book sale group set up shop to raise funds for Mary's Meals, so even with the wet weather, there was ample shelter and good company, not to mention a chance to explain 'What is a Moravian?' We had some very positive and constructive feedback from the visitors, all helping us to plan for next year's event and to think about ways that we can improve our community outreach.

Sr Cynthia Dize



© Fetter Lane Moravian Church

Heritage Day 2025: Fulneck, Yorkshire

From a 'heritage' perspective, 2025 has been particularly auspicious for the Moravian Church - or more correctly - its settlements worldwide. As has already been documented in 'The Messenger', three Moravian settlements - Gracehill (UK), Christiansfeld (Denmark) and Bethlehem (USA) have all been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status.

Heritage Day 2025 at Fulneck marked these achievements. One of our members, Mary Holmes, visited Christiansfeld during the summer. Her photographic record of the visit formed one of the key displays in Church. It enabled visitors to gain a clearer picture of how each Moravian settlement is built so its occupants can live in harmony and encourage tolerance, quality, education and spirituality.

The second section of the exhibition highlighted the development and building of Fulneck. The 18th century Moravians used Hernhutt as their template. The displays included many details of Georgian plaster work decoration, features found in Fulneck Church. Beautiful plaster work ceiling roses were highlighted along with the Church's much admired and highly prized Snetzler organ.

For the more sporty, the museum has had a summer-long

© Sr Mary Holmes



exhibition covering the life and achievements of one of Fulneck's most famous sons - the international cricketer, Sir Len Hutton. For families

there was an outdoor trail sponsored by Leeds Civic Trust. And, of course, there was the highly popular refreshment hub in the Boys Brigade building.

Whilst the weather on the day was a little disappointing - grey and overcast - Heritage Day again proved to be a popular event attracting visitors from as far afield as Vancouver.

Myra Dickinson must be thanked for the huge amount of research and organisation she puts in to ensure the day is a success. Myra reported much positive feedback: 'One visitor told me how impressed they were by Fulneck's amazing architecture. For another it was simply a trip down memory lane. As ever, Heritage Day was very much a Fulneck team effort. My thanks go to everyone who made the day run smoothly and successfully.'

Bt David Robbins

CONGREGATION NEWS

Gracehill, Northern Ireland

With trees and flowers blossoming around the village and warm weather lingering into the evening, spring and summer in Gracehill were vibrant seasons, alive with family, all-age and wider community activities.

Our Girls' and Boys' Brigade displays were well-attended and thoroughly enjoyed by extended families and friends. The young people presented a commendable array of fun, inclusive and challenging team games, fitness and drill activities, bible-based expositions and the ever-popular parents versus children general Christian knowledge contests. It was a delight to observe their enthusiasm, creativity and growing confidence in new skills, with a depth of knowledge firmly embedded in Christian values.

Fun and fellowship were also at the heart of our first film evening since COVID-19, held in Cennick Hall in late March. Organised by the MWA (Moravian Women's Association), the universally appealing classic 'Babe' was savoured with a mixture of laughter, obligatory tears and copious quantities of fresh popcorn and other cinema treats. Such was the success of the evening that similar events have been promised by the MWA for later in the year ...

On a larger scale, Gracehill's annual village fair is by now well-renowned as a great day of community spirit, attracting visitors from all over the province. Blessed with glorious weather, this year's event did not disappoint, and the village was a veritable hive of excitement, activity and entertainment. We enjoyed a children's fancy dress parade, live music, line-dancing, a sizzling BBQ, a plethora of exciting games with special prizes and stalls ranging from bric-a-brac to all kinds of sweet treats and homemade 'goodies' to the perpetually queued ice-cream vendors!

As the school year closed in June, our young folks had the opportunity to participate in diverse summer church events, beginning with a highly successful Children's Church fundraising coffee morning. Friends and family appreciated the children's proactive service at craft, cake, tombola and raffle stalls, accompanied by some musical performances. As a well-deserved end-of-year treat for the commitment of both children and leaders, they enjoyed a fabulous day trip to Rosepark Farm,



© Sr Ruth Johnson

Ballymoney, with its unique Lagoon Beach, enchanted forest, freestyle farming and petting zones. A picnic was shared in the indoor barn and the day ended in style (despite a slight drizzle!) with rides on the quirky quad train.

There was no doubt amongst our children that their annual church service would be a celebration and time of thanksgiving for Sr Sarah's tireless encouragement, prayerful kindness and enthusiastic involvement in all their activities during her almost fourteen years of ministry in Gracehill. It was indeed an exuberant morning as the children presented music, bible readings and reflections, a special 'SARAH' poem and a most amusing, yet inspirational interview with Sr Sarah being prompted to spontaneously share some hitherto unknown 'secrets' and personal anecdotes.

There was surely no better way to conclude our summertime children's activities in August than the eagerly anticipated Holiday Bible Club. This year, through a variety of lively, engaging and inclusive craft activities, guided play, music and interactive bible storytelling sessions, we explored the dynamics of RESPECT: for God's Creation, for our neighbours, and for the local environment. Given the wonderful weather, the children were also able to participate in invigorating, often hilarious team games in the village square.

Undoubtedly, summertime in Gracehill has been a period of physical refreshment, spiritual blessing and a great sense of community spirit when many lasting memories were created. As autumn approaches, it is with thanks and openness that we look forward to God's continued grace and gifting of the Holy Spirit: 'From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised' (Psalm 113: 13).

Sr Ruth Johnson

Ockbrook, Derbyshire

Derby City Mission is close to the heart of our Church here in Ockbrook, and we collect regular donations of food and toiletries and a couple of us volunteer on a regular basis in the City Based Cafe.

It was therefore with great pleasure that we welcomed Terry Langley who joined the team at Derby City Mission 2022, supporting those who are struggling with life challenges. He is always keen to get stuck in, serving the people of Derby in the night-time economy.

His talk was based on reaching out into communities in the name of Jesus Christ, which tied in nicely with our own Church NCD Mission of trying to reach our local community and get them involved with our Church and our Lord Jesus Christ in the name of Love. He gave every member of the congregation a pebble to hold and feel it, get warm and liken it to the feeling

of Jesus in our lives, and not to be afraid to have a conversation with friends or strangers of the importance of Christ in our lives, and even pass on our pebble to that person so they might remember and take strength from the message. It was a thought provoking and inspirational talk. Terry was very honest and clear in what he said, and we hope he will honour us again sometime in the future.

Last Saturday, 5th October, Ockbrook Moravian Church held an Italian evening, serving a delicious selection of Italian food. Gail and Kathy cooked the food, and Greg organised the music and Quiz. We served 58 people, and many came back for seconds, especially the desserts. It was a fun evening full of laughter and wonderful fellowship. We were so blessed by the support of the congregation and friends of the church and raised £979.

Srs Rose Turner and Jackie Flint (NCD Champions), and Kathy Singleton



© Sr A Davey

Wellhouse, Yorkshire

We have enjoyed a fairly busy year so far. In addition to our normal of services and meetings, we held a quiz night in March, which was well attended, and I think enjoyed by all (well most). At our Church Anniversary in April, we welcomed Br Bob Hopcroft to lead the worship - it was good to see Bob and Wendy back with us. In the evening of the same day, we hosted the Yorkshire District Singers for the Palm Sunday service of reading and song. In May we hosted a Christian Aid Lunch for the Mirfield Churches. It was a much more enjoyable way to support the cause than by door-to-door collections. On the Friday of that week Brn Cooper and Evans collected at the Coop in Mirfield as part of the Christian Aid collections in Mirfield.

In June we commenced a free monthly Coffee Morning to be held on the first Wednesday. It started off with a few people but has grown over the months, and it is good to see some new faces from around the local area.

Also in June, Br Evans along with a local URC minister conducted the funeral of Sr Carol Hudston, wife of Br David Hudston a former minister of the congregation. It was held at the local URC Church, where David had served. Carol's ashes have been interred on God's Acre at Wellhouse.

In September we held a service to remember Loved Ones. We welcomed back some family members who over the past months have lost a loved one and each lit a candle, and some brought an article to remember the one who was gone. On 19th September we held a Memorial Service for the late Eileen Robinson, sister to Howard, Leslie and Colin, two of our past Moravian ministers. Eileen passed way in June but because of the distance the family had to travel it was decided to delay the service and get-together until September. Also in September, we



© Br Jason Evans

hosted the annual Dance Class Presentation Service. It was the best attended so far: we had 122 in the congregation, with family relatives there to support the young people. On the last Sunday of the month, we held our Harvest Thanksgiving Service with all the gifts of tinned and packet foods along with warm clothing and sleeping bags going to the Bradford Soup Run. The service was led by Rev Hugh Baker, the local Anglican vicar, and it was an enjoyable service.

Throughout the year we have enjoyed hearing of the Diamond Wedding Celebrations of two of our members Br and Sr Evans: it was 60 years on the 27th March that the celebrations started with a meal out for family and friends at Gomersal Park Hotel. Then followed the family holiday to Ibiza, a trip back to North Wales, another on the Welsh Highland Railway, and a trip to London, with afternoon Tea in Harrods, followed by an open top bus and a trip down the Thames.

We thank God for the strength to carry on working for his Kingdom.
Br Kenneth G Evans

Horton, Yorkshire

Summer is now behind us, and the leaves are turning on the trees. This week in church we will be celebrating our 'Harvest Festival', with our donations being offered to the local food bank. Harvest includes weather and here in Yorkshire, due to the very dry year so far, we were the first county to have water restrictions imposed and this will continue despite the recent wet weather so that the reservoirs are replenished.

Sr Claire Maxwell led another excellent 'Family Focused Service' on the story of Creation. The story was told with the aid of picture boards depicting the seven days of creation. Children and adults alike enjoyed listening to the story followed by a discussion about the individual days and then we all took part in a variety of activities related to the story, including building a boat from cardboard!

We are already looking towards Christmas as we are holding a Christmas Tree Festival over the weekend of 21st-23rd November. Sr Claire is in contact with schools and businesses and we hope to involve the local community as well as friends and family. If you are in the area and would like more information please do get in touch, it would be lovely to welcome you to Horton.

Sr Linda Barraclough



© Sr Diana Hughes

Lower Wyke, Yorkshire

Here in Lower Wyke, when 13th September dawned, the Heritage exhibition was prepared and so were the activities for the Family Fun Day. For the last few years, we have discovered that running the two events side by side has proved successful as visitors flow between one and the other. We enjoyed a convivial day, despite heavy showers and returned home weary, but with smiles on our faces.

Sr Diana Hughes

Winter wishes at Dukinfield, Cheshire

The Outreach team at Dukinfield are looking ahead to the Winter to support the community.

Bedding for 40 single beds has been collected and passed to Tameside Social Services to be given to families to help children get a good night's sleep during the cold winter months. Packs include a duvet, pillow, pillowcase and duvet covers.

Also, Dukinfield has the return of the 12 weeks of Christmas food appeal that went so well last year.

Run in conjunction with the 5th / 7th Scouts, this inventive scheme asks children and grownups to bring one item each week so that food hampers can be made up to help during the Christmas season for local families.

Simple store cupboard stock that is easily picked up alongside general shopping includes: dried pasta, milk, biscuits, tinned ham and tuna, cereal etc ... This is the Bible in action as it says in Hebrews 13:16.

Do not forget to do good and to help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please God.

Sr Penny Weir

Gracehill celebrates Bishop Sarah Groves

After leading her final service at Gracehill Moravian Church in July 2025, Bishop Sarah Groves was honoured with an evening of fellowship, gratitude and celebration on Friday 26th September, in Cennick Hall, marking nearly fourteen years of dedicated ministry.

Heartfelt tributes were paid by Br Mark Kernohan, Chair of the Irish District, Rev Dr Livingstone Thompson from the Provincial Board and Councillor Jackson Minford, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim. They highlighted Sarah's great leadership and her natural gift for fostering connection and collaboration. The mayor prompted laughter as he recalled her firm stance when he tried to put up voting posters outside the church - a reminder that her tenacity is matched only by her generosity of spirit, compassion and sincere friendship. These tributes set the tone for an evening that was both reverent and joyful, celebrating not only what Sarah accomplished but the warmth and inspiration she brought to everyone around her.

Given Sarah's lifelong love of song and melody, it was inevitable that musical performances provided some of the most memorable moments of the evening. Gracehill choir sang two deeply moving pieces: 'Sarah Farewell', specially composed by Sr Cherith Knipe, our organist; and one of Sarah's personal



favourites, 'Yet Not I'. The instrumental pieces, 'The Green Glens of Antrim' and 'The Blue Hills of Antrim' by Sr Emma Dempsey on violin and Sr Cherith on harp perfectly blended a personal appreciation of natural Northern Irish landscapes with a sense of shared celebration and pride.

If the tributes and musical renditions created a poignant and stirring atmosphere, the entertainment brought a flourish of pure fun and laughter in the form of a comedy sketch written by Br Raymond Kitson - a gentle parody of 'The Vicar of Dibley' reset in a wonderfully eccentric Moravian village named Gracehill. The cast's good-natured wit infused every familiar quirk with warmth, reminding the audience that in Sarah's ministry, there was always a significant space for humour, heart and humanity.

As the laughter finally subsided and the lights dimmed, the mood shifted from comedy to nostalgia for a 'This Is Your Life' style presentation. The PowerPoint presentation journeyed through Sarah's fourteen years in Gracehill - the faces, places and moments that have shaped her ministry, with plenty of amusing anecdotes, alongside cherished occasions and treasured family memories.

Bringing the evening to a close, a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a special gift were presented on behalf of the congregation. With characteristic good humour and humility, Bishop Sarah expressed her thanks to everyone for an evening that she later described as 'an unforgettable roller-coaster of emotions with laughter, thankfulness and tears'. With visible emotion, she referred to her years at Gracehill as 'a joy and a privilege' and reminded those gathered that her ministry is one chapter in the much larger story of God's work in this place - a story written over generations and still unfolding. Her words left those present with a sense not only of immense gratitude for the past but also of confidence and hope in the exciting future God continues to shape for Gracehill!

Sr Ruth Johnston

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

Provincial Diary for November

1	Western District Conference	Tytherton
4-5	Provincial Board Meeting	Church House
19	Finance and Property Committee Meeting	Church House
25	Youth and Children's Committee	Online

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

7th Sept 2025	Skakira Dyer	Hornsey
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Marriages

15th Aug 2025	Rebekah Quildan & Andre Grant	Hornsey
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DATES TO REMEMBER

- 1 All Saints' Day
- 5 Bonfire / Guy Fawkes Day
- 9 Remembrance Sunday
- 9-16 Inter Faith Week (www.interfaithweek.org)
- 13 Realisation of the Headship of Christ in 1741
- 10-14 Anti-Bullying Week (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- 16 World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (www.roadpeace.org)
- 19 International Men's Day
- 23 Church Service Sunday
- 30 First Sunday of Advent
- St Andrew's Day

Winds of change?

*Serene, motionless, silhouetted against the velvet sunset sky,
The custodians of the Clyde stand
Surveying deserted quays and the silent river below,
Where men and boys once sweated and toiled,
Bending, moulding, welding sheets of resilient steel,
Into tall, majestic liners, tankers and tugs.*

*Sparks flew as metal bonded to metal.
Shouts, bangs and laughter filled the air,
Through which the cranes glided,
And down below all was hustle and bustle,
Ships steamed by hooting at tugs chugging to and fro,
While trains rolled in with their loads of steel
And lorries threaded their way along the crowded quay.*

*That quay is now deserted, a home for screaming gulls,
Greedy strutting pigeons and memories of bygone days.
Open to all weathers, like the rusting cranes, the quays gleam
in the sun.
Rain lashes the steel towers washing the concrete below.
Only the wind moves the chains now - gently to and fro.
The Lord will send winds of change to abandoned places
Transforming them once more into vibrant scenes.
When will that wind come?*

This is a corrected version submitted by Sr Claire Summers

Call for Papers:

Exploring Moravian History and World Heritage

The Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage Inaugural Conference

Location: Moravian University, Bethlehem, PA

Dates: 12th-14th November 2026

The newly established Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage invites submissions for its inaugural conference exploring the preservation, interpretation, and global significance of the history, impact, and cultural heritage of the Moravians, with special attention to innovative digital humanities approaches that enhance these efforts.

Conference Theme

In light of the recent (2024) inscription of 'Moravian Church Settlements' as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (comprising Bethlehem, Pa., Gracehill, Northern Ireland, Christiansfeld, Denmark, and Herrnhut, Germany), this conference will bring together researchers and practitioners to discuss and explore the history and heritage of the Moravians in a global context.

We are now accepting proposals for papers, panels, workshops, or lectures/recitals on any topic related to Moravian history, music, networks, economics, education, and culture. Special attention will be given to papers that address the global dimensions of Moravian heritage, preservation challenges, community connections, and the emerging digital methodologies that support these endeavours.

Primary Focus Areas

- Cultural significance and preservation of Moravian settlements across five continents
- Indigenous and cross-cultural encounters in Moravian heritage contexts
- Moravian town planning ideals and practical adaptations
- Moravian culture, music, arts, and literature
- Moravian social innovation and egalitarian practices
- Digital humanities and Moravian heritage sites
- Moravian transnational networks past and present

- Sustainable tourism and Moravian heritage sites
- Public interpretation of Moravian 'outstanding universal values'

Special Sessions on Digital Humanities Intersections

The conference will feature dedicated sessions exploring how digital humanities methodologies enhance world heritage preservation efforts, including:

- **Digital Documentation:** 3D scanning, photogrammetry and digital preservation of Moravian architectural heritage
- **Spatial Technologies:** GIS mapping of global Moravian missionary and trade networks
- **Digital Archives:** Innovative approaches to digitising, preserving and making accessible Moravian manuscript collections
- **Virtual Access:** Creating digital experiences of Moravian heritage sites for global audiences
- **Computational Analysis:** Text mining and network analysis of Moravian historical sources

Submission Guidelines

We welcome proposals for:

- Individual papers (20 minutes)
- Pre-organised panels (3-4 papers, 90 minutes)
- Lecture/recitals (30 minutes)
- Heritage preservation case studies (30 minutes)
- Digital humanities project demonstrations (30 minutes)
- Workshops (90 minutes)
- Posters

For presentation of papers, lectures, case studies and demonstrations, please submit an abstract of 300-500 words and a brief biographical note (150 words) by 15th December 2025. Panel proposals should include a panel abstract (300 words) plus individual abstracts for each presentation.

Provincial Men's Fellowship Rally 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Please note the date of the next Provincial Men's Fellowship Rally: Saturday 27th June 2026 at Ockbrook Moravian Church at 12:30pm.

Further information to follow.

Br Edwin Quildan

For workshops, please submit an outline of the objectives and expected outcomes for participants. You will also need to indicate the optimal number of participants for the workshop. Please indicate any specific technological needs.

Submissions and inquiries should be sent to worldheritage@moravian.edu

Important Dates

- Submission deadline: 15th December 2025
- Notification of acceptance: 15th February 2026
- Requests for assistance with travel costs deadline: 1st March 2026
- Conference registration deadline: 15th September 2026
- Conference dates: 12th-14th November 2026

About the Institute

The Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage at Moravian University (<https://www.moravian.edu/institute-moravian-worldheritage>) advances the understanding of Moravian history and cultural preservation through rigorous academic research, education, and public engagement. By leveraging the unique World Heritage designation of Moravian Church Settlements - Bethlehem, the Institute fosters a deeper connection between the past and present, promoting cultural preservation, partnerships with other sites, and interdisciplinary learning that resonates locally and globally.

Previous conferences:

<https://www.moravianconferences.org>

Land Acknowledgement

Moravian University is located in Lenapehoking, the traditional homeland of the Lenape, which includes Delaware, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, and southern New York. We honour the Native inhabitants of this land and their historic and everlasting relationships with it.

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