

Fulneck Moravian Church Magazine

June 2023



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Minister's Letter

This last month I've been thinking a great deal about growth and the challenges that we all face. The word growth is a word that can mean a large number of things depending on your context and situation. This month also featured Ascension Day when we remember the final act of Jesus before he was raised up to the heavens where He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus chose to use His final earthly moments to issue the Great Commission to tell people all around the world about what had happened, what Jesus had taught and what it meant for them all. As we look around at our churches, and not just Moravian Churches, sometimes this Great Commission feels like Mission Impossible.

Enter, Project 32. You will have heard Project 32 mentioned before and I have no doubt, you will hear a lot more about it going forward. On 17 May Br Stephen Maxwell, who is the chair of the Project 32 implementation committee, gave a talk at the Yorkshire District Mission Evening about the project and why it was set up, what it has done and what it is hoping to do going forward. In a nutshell, it is a systematic review of all the structures in the church, analysing and assessing what works and what could work better. Its ultimate goal is to get the church in a position where real sustainable growth is happening, growth both spiritually and of course numerically. We are called to reach others and tell them about the great things God has done for them, and we need to make sure the structures are in place to enable the body of Christ to move freely and without injury.

I am, in my very make up, a fighter. I've had to be. From surviving severe bullying throughout my education, to battling with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, I have developed a stubbornness that makes me at best determined, at worst, stubborn. **I will not give up on this church.** Of course, there are times when it might seem tempting. When the easy path is calling, and you'd give anything for a quiet life. When heads can drop as we look around our increasingly empty pews and reminisce about the days gone by, we can find ourselves feeling that the future is impossible. But, as Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Our history tells us that from small seeds can grow enormous oaks. The name of Project 32 was chosen quite deliberately from our history. A ten year project because it took ten years from our church to go from a handful of surviving members seeking refuge in the land of Zinzendorf, to starting the missions that would enable us to grow into the worldwide church that we are today. Whilst numbers may be falling in this province, worldwide the Moravian Church continues to grow and reach new people and tell them of the love that God has for them.

Take hope, Brothers and Sisters, not from my words but from the knowledge that God has a plan for us all and the mission is not impossible for God. That doesn't mean that we can just sit back and let it happen.

In Essentials: Unity; In Non-Essentials: Liberty; In All Things: Love

We have to work to make it happen and be open to the change that is required to enable us to reach out and bring the Good News to the people in our community that desperately need to know that they are loved, they are forgiven, they are equals in the sight of God and us all, and finally that they are welcome in the House of the Lord.

I'm going to finish this month by using a hymn verse that is taken from hymn 319 in the New Moravian Hymn Book. It is a hymn of hope and of challenge, which is the balance we must all strike going forward together.

*As a green bud in the springtime
Is a sign of life renewed,
So may we be signs of oneness
'Mid earth's peoples, many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens
When a storm is past and gone,
May our lives reflect the radiance
Of God's new and glorious dawn.*

R. Duck.

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Fulneck News and Notices

CALLING ALL SISTERS

Due to various circumstances the Moravian Women's Association (MWA) at Fulneck is unable to continue in its present form.

I support our national MWA principles, which are:

- to socialise with each other;
- to discuss news items and worldwide issues;
- to share and reflect on a devotional aspect;
- to raise money for our Moravian projects and non-Moravian projects, looking beyond our own communities to the needs of the wider world.



Having given much thought to this I have had discussions with leaders of the MWA, who assure me that Fulneck is not alone in facing a transitional period. Various options have been adopted elsewhere that may help Fulneck to find a way forward.

I am aware that we all have busy lives; the options offer the opportunity of a more flexible approach that keeps us strongly affiliated to the national group.

To consider which options may work for us, I invite you to join me for a short meeting after communion on Sunday 4 June. I look forward to agreeing a positive way forward for the MWA at Fulneck.

Sr Myra Dickinson

HOLY HABITS

Missional discipleship as a way of life.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and **had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.** Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and **ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God** and having the goodwill of all the people. **And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.** Acts 2: 42-47

The internet can be so useful and gives us so many resources we can access anytime, anywhere. I use it a lot. It can give you access to several different versions of the Bible so you can see how the same passage can have a slightly different meaning. When we were holding the Bible Book Club – watch this space for dates and times for it to restart – I would often read the book in one version I had at home then choose a different one on Bible Gateway. It really helped me to understand some difficult messages.

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) online has so many useful resources including the notes we use in the Bible Book Club. I could give you a long list of other sites but I've no doubt some of you will have your favourite ones. Can you share them in another newsletter?

The Great 50 Days is a traditional name for the period from Easter Day to Pentecost. It's not a time we emphasise in the modern church but 50 Christians in the North East took one of the resurrection to Pentecost Bible passages and wrote a short reflection and prayer prompt. These were published as a devotional resource for individuals and groups. They have a Facebook page called The Great 50 Days where you can read these reflections. They are very thought provoking. Here's the one for Day 3.

Come follow me

Mark 1:16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Jesus is eager to get on with his mission – and he knows he needs some people to work with him. Why did Jesus want them to follow him? He obviously had a purpose for their lives, and we see through the rest of Mark 1 that they went on to share in the work of Jesus and to reach others with the Good News of the kingdom.

Here we've got Simon, Andrew, James, John and Jesus telling them to stop what they're doing and follow him instead. I've often thought of these four fishermen to be around the same age as Jesus, but it's likely they were much younger, perhaps even just in their late teens, whereas Jesus was around 30. When you think about it, it's a big ask - give up your job, your home, your comfort, maybe even family and friends to follow Jesus. There must have been something remarkably compelling about Jesus to cause these fishermen to down nets and follow him into an uncertain future. They didn't ask where Jesus was going first, what Jesus was going to do or what that would mean for them...they just followed. Sometimes Jesus still asks us to give things up to follow – maybe ambition or a particular lifestyle. But more often, Jesus asks us to offer those things to him; our jobs, our homes, our comfort, our money. It doesn't necessarily mean we physically leave them behind like these early disciples. It might mean that Jesus wants us to follow him in the job we are already doing, as taxi drivers, shop workers, cleaners, teachers or admin workers etc.

Pause to think...What would following Jesus look like for you today?

Although we are past The Great 50 Days the readings and reflections are relevant to us all the time and they could offer a new way of reflecting on these passages.

Dear Lord

We thank you for all you have done for us,
For teaching us now
And when you first gave your word to the people.
May you teach us now and evermore.
Amen

Dear Lord

We're sorry for the times we don't follow your ways
As recorded in your word, the Bible.
We're sorry for the times when we don't follow the teachings of Jesus
And instead choose to neglect your ways.
Please forgive us for our sins
And let us try again to live as your son Jesus taught us.
Amen

Memorial Day

June 17: Renewal of the Brethren's Church. Beginning of the building of Herrnhut by the immigrants from Moravia in 1722.

Today VIA EXULANTIS – the refugee road— takes brave pilgrims from Suchdol, near Fulnek, in the Czech Republic to Herrnhut. If you walk the whole way you gain a certificate, and probably sore feet!

More information about this will be in the Heritage Day exhibition in September ... so watch this space.

The Carnival is over...



For this year anyway! What a fantastic day we had representing Fulneck at Pudsey Carnival. The weather was warm and sunny and the crowds came. It was the first time we'd had a presence there so we weren't sure how people would respond to us. We needn't have worried. Most people we spoke to, and told them about what's happening for the rest of the year, were interested and took away one of our new leaflets. Br James did his best to mention Fulneck as much as he could whilst compering throughout the day so between us we definitely put Fulneck on the map! We also raised £50 from our gift stall.

Brenda joined the team with her marmalade and chutney and raised valuable funds for Abi Eblal, a small village in war torn Ethiopia that we've supported for several years.

It would be remiss if I didn't mention the Holy Habits that were involved!

There was certainly fellowship amongst those of us on the stall as well as the craft group that continues to meet on alternate Wednesdays. There was definitely lots of sharing resources-Abi Eblal will be able to do so much with the money raised and we shouldn't forget how we shared our talents in making things and talking to people. I certainly was saying a lot of prayers as Saturday drew near and finally we are hoping we have started making more disciples.

Will we be there next year? You'll have to wait and see!!

Sr Allison Turner

GENERAL NOTICES

LOWER WYKE

Reflections. Wednesday 14 June: 12.30pm: Church

For about one hour you can sit, relax and think. Reflect upon what you've done, not done and what God is asking you to do. Or, you may just listen to readings, poems, music.

District Mission evening part 2

Thursday 15 June 7.30pm: Sunday School building

Don't worry if you missed part 1! This evening will be led by Sr Claire Maxwell. She will be giving a presentation on Pioneer Ministry (*I thought she said pie un ear!*) and how she worked this when in London. If part 1 – Project 32 (P32), led by Br. Steve Maxwell, was anything to go by, bring your Marathon chocolate bar to help you run through the evening! (Sorry have to get update but SNICKER Bar does have the same effect!)

Br Ian Haggas

Calendar

May

Sunday 28 10.30 Pentecost Sunday morning worship. Br James Woolford.
 Collection will be taken for Christian Aid.
 Coffee in the BB Hall following the service.

Tues 30 19.15 Church Committee.

June

Thurs 1 09.45 Morning Prayers

Sunday 4 14.30 Lovefeast and Holy Communion. Br James Woolford.

Thurs 8 09.45 Morning Prayers

Sunday 11 10.30 Morning Worship. Br James Woolford.

Wed 14 14.00 Craft Group at Sr Vi's house.

Thurs 15 09.45 Morning Prayers

Sunday 18 10.30 Father's Day Morning Worship. Led by Br Bob Hopcroft.

Thurs 22 09.45 Morning Prayers

Sunday 25 10.30 Morning Worship. Led by Br James Woolford.
 Coffee in the BB Hall following the service.

Thurs 29 09.45 Morning Prayers

July

Sunday 2 14.30 Lovefeast and Holy Communion. Led by Br Trevor Auty.

Please submit material for the July/August edition to myself by **22 June** at the latest. Thanks, Mary

