

Fulneck Moravian Church Magazine

August 2023



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Minister's Letter

Last month I wrote about the highs the lows the things I've learnt over the ten years of my ministry. Anniversaries are always times of reflection, but I've always been someone who preferred to look forward more than looking backwards and so, as promised last month, in this newsletter I'll be looking forward at the ways we can all work together to ensure the church is around for many more years to come.

I am a born and raised Moravian and my Moravian heritage has always been important. You may be surprised to hear me say that I believe that the future of the church lies in our past and that we must reclaim what makes us uniquely Moravian.

Defining what is and what isn't Moravian is a very complex thing to undertake. We are and have always been a people that were open to ideas and differing theologies. We never subscribed to the a creed nor to the notion that you must believe a certain theology in order to join us. As such, our theological identity is a bit more mixed but that is one of our main strengths and not a weakness. Whilst some church find strength in a message that is more one of black and white, in and out, good and bad, but true strength comes from embracing the grey in life. The bit in the middle of the margins. The place where we can all come together not **in spite** of our differences, but **because of** our differences.

With that being said, there is something unique to our history and heritage which is where I believe we find the key going forward. Our history is full of brave people being willing to embrace change and not conform to what is

expected. The true tradition of the Moravian church is to have no tradition but to be great innovators who are brave enough to risk their own comfort for the sake of spreading the gospel.

That was what drove the brothers together in the first place. It was what drove the notion to not conform to the structures of other churches and organisations by doing away with a hierarchy of humanity, instead placing their lives in the hands of Christ the chief Elder. That is what kept them going despite centuries of persecution when it would be far easier to give up and join another denomination. It was what drove our ancestors to find refuge in a foreign land. It is what inspired Dober to answer the call of God to spread the word of God in the West Indies despite the warnings of the hardship he would face. It is this courage, this willingness to adapt that has ensured our survival in the past and I believe it is this same Spirit that is required to not only survive into the future but to **thrive** into the future.

This is part of the reason why I struggle with the notion of keeping things safe and the same as they have always been. What some people think of as keeping to tradition is profoundly different from the tradition of the church. The world has always been an ever-changing place and the pace of change has only increased over this century. It is important then that we adapt to find a way to best serve those we are called to reach. St Paul, the great missionary, said:

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

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

In other word, St Paul was adaptable and would change with the times and the people he was trying to reach. I realise that for many people change is scary and uncomfortable, however, we are not called to a life of safety and comfort, we are called to a life of service and one that has at the core of all we do, the command to reach other people and bring them to the love that is freely available to all people. Yes, we need to have a foundation in God that is rock steady and able to resist the challenges we face but we must have the flexibility to adapt to the context we find ourselves in.

It is important, of course, not to throw the baby out with the bath water so to speak. I'm not advocating changing everything all at once or even at all. But, we have to be brave enough to accept change. That's the Moravian way. Having that bravery, that strength of faith, and the openness to all people that have been the foundation of our history is the way to secure our future and to ensure that our church heritage is preserved for future generations to come. The future truly is in the past.

HOLY HABITS
Missional discipleship as a way of life.

Holy Habits is an initiative to nurture Christian discipleship. It is based on Acts chapter 2:42-47; within these passages ten HABITS are identified for the Apostles.

Eating Together is one of the holy habits but I am not really sure in which order we here at Fulneck are meant to follow but I am reliably informed that Eating Together comes high on the list which fills me with joy.

In the Caribbean where I was born, Moravians are well known for their hospitality. When I joined the membership at Fulneck I wondered whether that hospitality would be found. I need not have given it a thought. After morning worship every last Sunday in the month, we meet in the BB Hall for cakes and coffee.

However, at the Big Lunch in May, to celebrate the coronation of King Charles the third, the sisters and brothers pulled out all the hospitality stops and the tables which were laid out on the street just above the church were heavily laden with homemade delicious goodies of all sizes and descriptions for all to share.

It was an opportunity for us to deepen friendship, welcome strangers and share our love. When we physically come together to eat as Christians it is a sign of our spiritual fellowship with one another.

Our Lord during his ministry on earth shared meals with his disciples on several occasions. In John 21:9-14 He held a BBQ on the beach where he cooked fish on an open fire and invited the disciples to “come and dine.”

Eating Together was a large part of his teaching. This is clearly demonstrated when he fed 5000 in Matthew 14:16-21 and 4000 in Matthew 15:29-31. The most famous illustration of Jesus eating together is one that is familiar to all of us. In Matthew 26:9-14 during the Last Supper, Jesus was setting an example of praying together, eating together, serving and breaking of bread together. He was setting a pattern for his disciples to follow and for us to continue. He wants us to emulate him.

In Rev 3:20 we read “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and I will sup with him and he with me.” This passage tells me that our Lord never eats alone.

So my brothers and sisters let us continue to come together to continue this joyful holy habit.

Sister Gloria



Love

Life

Labour

Saturday 16 September

Fulneck Settlement

10.30am-4pm

Free entry

**Come along and have a guided tour
of the Settlement**

Visit the exhibition in church and the museum

Childrens' Activity

Refreshments



www.fulneck.org.uk

postcode LS28 8NT



**You can also visit the Classic
Car Rally,
for a small entrance fee.**

Calendar

July

Saturday 29 July	14.00	Soul Sisters 'Henman Hill' Wimbledon event—all are welcome
Sunday 30 July	10.30	Morning Service. Led by Br James Woolford. Refreshments in the BB Hall.

August

Wed 2 Aug	14.00	Craft Group at Sr Vi's house
Thurs 3 Aug	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sunday 6 Aug	14.00	Lovefeast and Holy Communion. Led by Br James Woolford.
Thurs 10 Aug	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sunday 13 Aug	10.30	Morning Service. Led by Br James Woolford.
Thurs 17 Aug	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sunday 20 Aug	10.30	Morning Service. Led by Br Stephen Gledhill
Tues 22 Aug	19.15	Church Committee
Wed 23 Aug	14.00	Craft Group at Sr Vi's house
Thurs 24 Aug	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sunday 27 Aug	10.30	Morning Service. Led by Br Trevor Kernohan Refreshments in the BB Hall.

September

Sunday 3 Sept	14.30	Lovefeast and Holy Communion. Led by Br James Woolford.
Tues 5 Sept	19.15	Church Committee

*Looking ahead ... Saturday 14 October there will be an Autumn Fayre.
Watch out for more details.*

Please submit material for the next edition to myself by **Thursday 21 September**. Thanks, Mary