

The Moravian Monthly

Official Newsletter of the Canadian, Eastern, and Western Districts
of the Moravian Church Northern Province.

January 2026

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NOTE ABOUT THE MORAVIAN MONTHLY

This edition of the Moravian Monthly is the final newsletter compiled by Sylvie Hauser, who has served as the Northern Province Communications Consultant since 2022 and is now concluding this role to continue her work with the Board of World Mission and begin seminary studies. We are deeply grateful to Shana Angel for compiling the Moravian Monthly moving forward. **In the future, please send contributions and questions about this newsletter to Shana at beppler.3@gmail.com.** Welcome, Shana!!



Provincewide Updates



Moravian Disaster Response (MDR) Updates

Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica – The Board of World Mission (BWM) has received a second, more detailed report from the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church, Jamaica and Cayman Islands Province (MCJCI) about the needs following Hurricane Melissa. The extent of the destruction is becoming clearer as assessments are conducted in more communities.

According to this latest report, 37 of the province's 64 Moravian congregations have been affected in some way, and nearly 50 church-owned properties—including churches, manses, and schools—have reportedly suffered some degree of damage. Of these, five buildings have been completely destroyed, 16 have lost their roofs entirely, 14 have partial roof damage, and 13 have minor damage. The Provincial Board currently estimates \$1.6 million USD in damage to church-owned properties. This amount does not include the additional funds needed for the church's broader community response.

The Provincial Board also stated it needs more financial help to keep paying salaries for pastors and staff, which is about \$25,000 each month. It also needs funds for relief and rebuilding supplies for congregations and families. The Board continues to work hard—mobilizing volunteers, sharing information, finding temporary housing, and securing new worship spaces for congregations whose buildings are no longer usable.

The devastation extends far beyond church properties. It is estimated that 150,000–200,000 homes across Jamaica have been damaged or destroyed, placing immense pressure on local communities and the national response.

Thanks to the generosity of many donors, the Board of World Mission has now sent \$40,000 to the MCJCI Disaster Response Fund to support the Provincial Board's immediate efforts. Additional support remains urgently needed.

Volunteer Interest Sign-Up

Plans are underway to repair and outfit Camp Hope (Jamaica) as a future hosting site for short-term mission teams. While this process is in the very early stages, we have already heard from many individuals, congregations, and groups eager to assist with relief and rebuilding efforts.

If you, your group, or your congregation would like to indicate interest in potentially participating in a future mission team, please visit MoravianMission.org/serve to complete a brief online form. This helps us prepare appropriately and communicate next steps when the time comes.

Donation Matching Challenge

In a remarkable expression of faithful partnership, the London Moravian Church in Cambridge, Wisconsin, has established a \$30,000 matching challenge for Hurricane Melissa relief. This small congregation has not drawn from its endowment fund in eight years, yet felt profoundly called to act in this moment. The leadership of the London Moravian Church has invited Moravians across North America to join them in meeting—and prayerfully exceeding—this matching opportunity. All gifts designated for MDR will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$30,000, doubling the impact of every contribution.

100% of donations to MDR go toward providing disaster relief. You can assist us with our disaster response efforts at MoravianMission.org/Give (scan QR code). Designate your gift to "MDR" to ensure funds are directed to the disaster relief efforts with the greatest need.

Please make checks payable to "Board of World Mission" and send to:

U.S. Donors: Board of World Mission, 1021 Center Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018

Canadian Donors: Moravian Church in Canada, 600 Acadia Drive SE, Calgary, AB T2J 0B8.

Interac e-Transfer donations may be sent to treasurer@moravian.ca. Include your name and address in the comments section to receive tax receipts.



A Bishop's Musings: December 2025

Bishop Doug Kleintop
bishopdkleintop@rcn.com

January is here, named after the two-faced Roman deity of beginnings and endings, depicted with one face looking forward and one face looking backward. As a Moravian Church we have a number of traditions that reflect those two views.

Some churches have a Watch Night Service on New Year's Eve to mark the end of one year and the beginning of another. In January many of our congregations will have an Annual Church Council Meeting at which time they will report the highlights of 2025. Some congregations will use this as an opportunity to set goals for 2026.

A tradition shared in most of our congregations will be selecting a Watchword for 2026, a passage of Scripture taken from the 2026 Moravian Daily Text Book. The Watchword is to be a spiritual guide to accompany us throughout the year.

I will admit that some years I have found the Watchword I randomly selected from a basket or an old offering plate to be more meaningful and helpful than other years.

It made me wonder, "what if I chose my own Watchword for 2026, not randomly, but intentionally; what verse would I choose." After thinking about it for a time I decided I would choose Romans 12:12, "Rejoice in Hope, Be Patient in Suffering, Persevere in Prayer."

This passage reminds me to, "Rejoice in Hope," to celebrate the possibilities and potential in life; and to look beyond the uncertainty and negativity which too often clouds our attitudes.

This passage prompts me to "Be Patient in Suffering," recognizing that although difficulties and challenges are a part of life, they do not define us nor defeat us. Patience, allowing time to give us perspective, to show us options, and to allow God to open our hearts and minds with wisdom and insight often makes a huge difference for us.

This passage challenges me to "Persevere in Prayer," reminding me how important it is for me to be in daily communion with God, not only sharing my gratitude and concerns, but listening to that "still small voice" that speaks volumes to my heart and soul.

As we begin 2026, what passage of Scripture would you intentionally choose to be your Watchword for the year? If you are having trouble deciding, feel free to use Romans 12:12.

May God bless you and be with you throughout this new year.

At the Interprovincial Bishops' Conference in 2022 the idea of Bishops contributing monthly articles to the Moravian Magazine was suggested. That suggestion evolved to "A Bishop's Musings" for the Northern Province Moravian Monthly. The contributing Bishop's email address is included for any responses which we welcome.

Racial Justice Team Calendar: January 2026

Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month Resources

The Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team invites you to scan the QR code below for liturgies and other resources for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 19, 2026, and for Black History Month in February.

In addition, the Moravian Team for Reconciliation (Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural) in the Southern Province has shared an opportunity for Black History Month from the Rolling Hills Moravian Church in Longwood, Florida. The series is, "Honoring Black History by Standing Boldly in the Face of Oppression, Victimization, and Dehumanization." It is a four-week series that will be held on February 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026 from 7pm-8:30pm ET. All sessions will be on Zoom. Anyone interested may join the sessions on Zoom: Meeting ID 746 168 029; Passcode 682512.

JANUARY

19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
20 National Day of Racial Healing
27 Int'l. Holocaust Remembrance Day



Ecumenical News

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18-25, 2026. Resources, developed by the World Council of Churches, are available by scanning the QR code. Please consider using some of this material as you lift up the call of Jesus 'that all may be one' in our shared witness of the Gospel. Scan the QR Code for the link



LAM Commission Meets

The Lutheran Anglican Moravian (LAM) Commission met in early December in Edmonton, Alberta to continue its work toward living more completely into our full communion agreement. Blair Couch, Matt Gillard, and Betsy Miller represented the Moravian Church. Donna Gordon, an active member of the team, was unable to attend. Mark Guevarra, Assistant to the Canadian District President, attended an evening meal and fellowship time. He writes, "On a cold wintery night, it was inspiring to gather with our full communion partners for a Moravian style intercessory prayer; naming and lifting up our personal prayers, the needs of the church, the world, and our communities. Following prayer, we shared a delicious meal at one big table, as well as our faith journeys, with new friends. In this thin space, truly the Spirit of God was present among us."

Always a rich experience, we shared in a worship service in the Indigenous tradition of smudging, which provides an opportunity for spiritual cleansing. We worked toward ways to encourage our siblings in the Labrador Province to engage more fully with their indigenous brothers and sisters across Canada.

One specific outcome of our time together was a letter to the heads of all three communions encouraging greater participation in CLAY – the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering – with an emphasis on inviting Moravian youth from across Canada to attend.



Learn About Churches for Middle East Peace “Let Children Live” Campaign

To learn about the campaign visit <https://cmep.org/let-children-live/> a YouTube link for the vigil can be found by scanning the QR code. For more information regarding CMEP, contact Rev. Sue Koenig at suekoenig@mcnp.org, CMEP Board representative for the Moravian Church in North America.



Moravian Music Foundation Updates

Music on the Mountain – March 13–15, 2026 at Laurel Ridge: Relax, Refresh, and Remind Yourself of God’s Grace Through Music. Bring the whole family to Music on the Mountain! A Harmonious Retreat for band and choir, and children’s music and activities. March 13–15, 2026. Higgins Lodge, Laurel Ridge Camp, Conference & Retreat Center, Laurel Springs, NC. An opportunity to make music together, to worship, to learn, and to enjoy fellowship in a casual mountain setting with cozy accommodations (2 nights) and delicious meals. Learn more and register at MoravianMusic.org (scan QR code).

America 250: As we enter the 250th Anniversary Year (1776–2026) of America's declared independence, you may be interested in presenting the earliest string chamber music composed in America, written in Salem, NC, by Moravian pastor, administrator, and composer, Johann Friedrich Peter (1746–1813) in 1789. The quintets would have been composed for the Salem Collegium Musicum, but actually survive in the Philharmonic Society of Bethlehem (PA) Collection. Peter left no copy in Salem upon his departure in 1790. Six String Quintets | sheet music / score and parts | \$35 for each set of two quintets. MMF also publishes the first string chamber music composed by an American. The Three String Trios by John Antes, Moravian pastor, missionary, composer, and instrument maker, are available from MMF for \$35 per set at MoravianMusic.org.

CDs on Sale: It's a great time to purchase CDs for holiday gifting and MMF is discounting most of its recordings! Choose your favorites at MoravianMusic.org.



**Moravian
Music
Foundation**



Plan Faithfully for the Future

Looking ahead can feel overwhelming, but thoughtful preparation can bring peace of mind and lasting impact. The Moravian Ministries Foundation in America is here to help you plan in ways that reflect your faith and values. MMFA offers free resources and personal support to help you:

- Establish gifts that provide income now and benefit ministry later
- Maximize tax advantages for you and your loved ones
- Transfer stock or retirement assets as charitable gifts
- Create a plan that reflects your values and faith

Want to support your church?

Moravian Ministries Foundation can help!

Make a tax-free gift Make a gift that pays you back

Avoid taxation on your IRA Make a gift that costs nothing in your lifetime

MMFA.com | 336.725.2589 | 119 Brookstown Avenue, Suite 305, Winston-Salem, NC 27101

To learn more, visit MMFA.com and reach out to Chris Spaugh, MMFA President & CEO: cspaugh@mmfa.com.

Birthdays

- 1 Belfield Castello
- 2 Gregory Behrend
- 4 Karen Krauss
- 4 Michael Poole
- 5 Andrew Meckstroth
- 6 Holley Weavil
- 7 Robert Volpe Jr.
- 8 Carol Acheson
- 10 Lawrence Christianson
- 11 Sherwin Alleyne
- 11 Jodi Heim
- 11 Diane Joseph
- 12 David Jones
- 12 Robert Smith
- 12 Margaret Wellert
- 14 Dave Bennett
- 15 Dean Easton

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 18 Gordon Sommers
- 19 Benjamin Lippert
- 20 Joan Engelbrecht
- 20 Ruth Ricketts
- 22 Jacquelyn Bell
- 22 William Andrews
- 23 Richard Thierolf
- 23 Matthew Knapp
- 24 Terry Weavil
- 24 Betty Castello
- 27 Elizabeth Miller
- 27 Renae Weaknecht
- 28 Gail Andrews
- 30 Robert Grey
- 30 Faith Fliegel

Ordination Anniversaries

- 1 Wellesley Ferguson (36 years)
- 2 Gary Marsh (43 years)
- 6 Eileen Edwards (19 years)
- 6 Carol Dague (35 years)
- 14 Mikayla Sauerbrey (2 years)
- 18 Terry Weevil (50 years)
- 21 Jesmina Hebert Meade (2 years)
- 22 R. Burke Johnson (59 years)
- 29 Desna Henry Goulbourne (31 years)
- 29 Richard Thierolf (48 years)

Churches Celebrating Anniversaries

- 1 Chaska, MN (168 years)
- 1 Sharon, Tuscarawas, OH (211 years)
- 1 United, New York, NY (58 years)
- 1 Waconia, MN (111 years)

- 19 Rio Terrace, Edmonton, Alberta (62 years)
- 20 Wisconsin Rapids, WI (137 years)
- 30 Sturgeon Bay, WI (162 years)
- 31 St. Paul's, Upper Marlboro, MD (55 years)

Prayer Concerns

Please pray for the following churches who are in the call process or without pastors:

- Battle Hill, Union, New Jersey
- Canaan, Davenport, North Dakota
- Central, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
- Chaska, Minnesota
- Christ, Calgary, Alberta
- Christian Faith, Deforest, Wisconsin
- Daggett, Michigan
- Ephraim, Wisconsin
- Faith of the Nation's Capital, Washington, DC
- First, Dover, Ohio
- First, New York, New York
- Great Kills, Staten Island, New York
- Heimtal, Edmonton, Alberta
- Lebanon, Pennsylvania
- Lititz, Pennsylvania
- Sharon, New Philadelphia, Ohio
- Shepherd of the Prairie, Fargo, North Dakota
- Tremont Terrace, Bronx, New York
- Veedum, Pittsville, Wisconsin

Clergy Updates

Presbyterial Consecration

Sister Rebecca Sisley, presently serving as pastor of First Moravian Church, Riverside, will be consecrated a Presbyter on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. ET. The Rt. Rev. Christian Giesler will officiate at the service, which will be held at First Moravian Church, Riverside. Further information regarding the service will be shared as it becomes available.

Call Accepted

Byrnese Craig, who received the Master of Divinity degree in May of 2025 from Moravian Theological Seminary, has accepted a call to specialized ministry in order to pursue the development of Manna, an emerging ministry of the Moravian Church Northern Province. She began her work on December 14th. (A separate announcement will be shared regarding this exciting new ministry at a later date). Prior to her call, she served as the appointed licensed lay pastor to MorningStar Moravian Church in Coopersburg, PA from February 2024 – December 2024. Additionally, Byrnese has recently worked with Emmaus Moravian Church sharing her gifts of ministry. In addition to this new call, Sister Byrnese is serving in a part-time role with the Eastern District as the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Assessment Coordinator. In this position, she will be exploring the ongoing ministries and needs in the district and assisting with strategic planning. Please hold Byrnese and her family in your prayers as she transitions to these new ministry roles.

The Eastern District

Moravian Church in America

Northern Province



Trinity Moravian Church: Partnership With Good Intentions Foundation

Written by Rev. Jesmina Hebert Meade, Pastor of Trinity Moravian Church
Story shared by Bonnie Robertson, Eastern District Executive Board Member, Penn-Mar



Trinity Moravian Church rests in the center of a vibrant tapestry, a neighborhood comprised of Hispanic, Caribbean, African, African American, and a small White American population. From the moment I arrived in New Carrollton, MD, I appreciated the rich diversity and recognized the many needs it brought. At a quarterly meeting of local religious leaders in New Carrollton, a survey revealed that although some families appeared financially stable, 80 percent of the population faced food insecurity. Passionate about outreach, Trinity member Phelecia Nembhard (now New Carrollton's Mayor and an elder of Trinity) connected me in mid-2024 with DeJanee and Jeffrey Fennell, founders of the Good Intentions Foundation, Inc., whose mission is to transform lives by meeting essentials needs and help alleviate potential needs, which perfectly aligned with ours, "Ministering Christ's love through service, community, and hope.". By August 2024, we had signed our partnership agreement.

In early September 2024, we launched our first clothing distribution outreach. There, I met an immigrant family who had journeyed from afar for the free clothes and had recently crossed the Mexican border seeking asylum in this nation. Serving them felt deeply fulfilling and exemplified our church's mission. Being Bilingual in Spanish and English opened doors within the Hispanic community, allowing me to naturally weave Spanish into the Bilingual services I launched in the Spring 2024.

In November, I requested Good Intentions to join Trinity in providing hot Thanksgiving meals. Together with family members, church volunteers, and foundation staff, we prepared and served a delicious feast. Nothing compares to sharing a table with someone who walked in off the street, fulfilling Jesus' words, "For I was hungry, and you fed me; I was naked, and you clothed me" (Matthew 25:35-40). This passage calls us to see Christ in the needy and to demonstrate our faith through compassionate action. Then, in January 2025, we distributed winter jackets and coats, offering warmth for the cold months ahead and wrapping our neighbors in Christ's love and care.

In the summer months of 2025, along with our partners, we gave away farm-fresh watermelons and corn to local families. Over the year, this partnership led to meaningful connections, particularly with the Fennell siblings. The outreach program has blessed Trinity with new members, and we remain faithful and hopeful that the Lord will continue using our congregation as vessels of God's divine love, grace, and hope throughout our neighborhood.

Prayer & Lay Leadership: A Three-Part Educational Webinar Series



Join us for a three-part series of 90-minute live webinars via Zoom exploring how prayer shapes personal faith and congregational life. Each session offers a unique perspective—its theology, creativity, and role in leadership—led by gifted Moravian educators.

Join one, two, or all three sessions—each stands alone while contributing to a richer understanding of prayer.

Who Should Attend: Lay leaders, worship assistants, educators, musicians, and anyone seeking to deepen their understanding and practice of prayer.

Hosted by: The Eastern District Executive Board

**Scan the QR Code
to register now!**



Session 1: The Heart of Prayer

Led by the Rev. Dr. Jennika Eckhaus and Theresa Fisher

Date: January 28, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an engaging webinar that explores the foundations of prayer and its various expressions. Together we'll look at different types of prayer and examine how each can deepen our spiritual lives. Participants will learn simple, practical ways to begin or enrich their own prayer practice. Whether you're new to prayer or seeking renewal, this session offers guidance, reflection, and space to connect with God in meaningful ways.

Session 2: Preparing Meaningful Devotions

Led by Becky Lepore & the Rev. Mikayla Sauerbrey

Date: February 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Have you ever been asked to offer devotions at the start of a gathering? Do you lead a group and hope to offer spiritual grounding and guidance for your time together? Learn practical approaches and resources for creating meaningful moments of prayer and connection that begin meetings in a positive way—engaging both the senses and the spirit.

Session 3: Prayers for Worship

Led by the Rev. Dr. Riddick Weber

DATE CHANGE: March 16, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Have you wondered about the difference between a pastoral prayer, an intercessory prayer, and an invocation? What words might you use to craft an offertory prayer during worship? Join this session to explore the different types and purposes of prayer within the worship service. Consider practical ways to create and offer prayers that help people connect with God and one another in the worship setting.

Senior High Winter Retreat at Camp Hope

Get ready to escape everyday life and dive deep into faith at our annual Senior High Winter Retreat!

This incredible Christian-oriented weekend is designed specifically for students in grades 9 through 12 looking for connection, spiritual growth, and unforgettable winter fun. Join us from January 16 to January 18 at Camp Hope for inspiring worship sessions, engaging small group discussions, and plenty of time for activities. It's the perfect opportunity to unplug from the noise, strengthen your relationship with Christ, and build lasting friendships. Don't miss out on this life-changing experience. Scan the QR Code to register!



Moravian Music Foundation Eastern District Opportunities

Monday Morning Music: a musical moment with Kyle Johnston at the keyboard – Mondays, 10am

Start your week off with your favorite hymns! Join Kyle Johnston every Monday morning as he plays through a variety of hymns from multiple sources. Hear old favorites, discover new favorites, and relax to the sound of classic hymns at home, in your office, or on your commute. Recordings are available now on the MMF YouTube Channel.

Monthly (South Side) Shape-Note Sing (Lehigh Valley Shape-Note Singers) 6:00–8:00 (Every 4th Tuesday)

Come join Kyle Johnston and the Lehigh Valley Shape Note Singers in learning to sing an authentic, historic American style of singing. Singers of all ages and skill levels are welcome. Godfrey Daniels in Bethlehem.

The Western District

*Moravian Church in America,
Northern Province*



Western District Congregational Highlights

The Ebenezer Moravian Church in Watertown, WI has helped to form a community group called “Building a Welcoming Watertown.” The group’s goal is to foster connections within their community, encourage respectful discussion, and discern ways to make their city a more safe, affordable, and welcoming place to live for everyone. They have worked on housing, social justice, food insecurity, and more. You can learn more about them and gain ideas for ministry within your own community by visiting them on Facebook at “Building a Welcoming Watertown.”

Western District Clergy Retreat

The Western District Clergy Retreat, for both ordained and lay, Moravian and non-Moravian, active and retired, pastoral leaders will be held at Mt. Morris Camp and Retreat Center (www.mt-morris.org) on January 12-15, 2026. Our program leader will be the Rev. Dr. Craig Atwood, Professor Emeritus of Moravian Theology at Moravian Seminary. Our retreat coordinator is Rev. Joel Russell, pastor of the Bethel and Goshen Moravian Churches in North Dakota. Registration information will be sent out this month. If you have any questions, please contact Joel at joelchap@aol.com.

Young Adult Retreat

March 13-15 at Mt. Morris Camp and Retreat Center. Age 18-30. Now is the perfect time to register for YAR 2026! It’s coming up fast so reserve your spot now and bask in the happy expectation of Joy’s cookies, camp songs, and time with distant friends. Pastor Jodi Heim will be our program leader and our District President Jason Andersen will be our chaplain. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/yexb4x3d>. Retreat coordinators are Taylor Ferrey and Kyra Tessman.

WDEB Lay Member Election

Thank you for your patience and participation in our e-mail ballot for the vacant lay member position on the Western District Executive Board. We are pleased to report that we have an election.

44 of 48 ballots were returned. A majority of returned ballots are required for an election, thus 23 was the number of votes needed. Brother Charlie Ganz received 26 votes and Brother Lowell Hewitt received 18 votes. Brother Charlie Ganz is duly elected to the remaining term on the District Board that will conclude at Western District Synod in 2028.

Congratulations to Brother Ganz and thank you to both Brother Hewitt and Brother Ganz for allowing your name to stand for election so that we could prayerfully discern this important matter.

Please hold Brother Ganz and the District Board in your prayers as he catches up on the work of the District Board over these past 18 months, and as we learn to work as this newly formed leadership team.

Mid-Winter Youth Retreat

Please also note that registration forms have been sent to churches and can also be found at
www.wdcamping.com

