



Methodist Women in Britain 2011-2021

for women, for justice, for Christ

Newsletter Autumn 2021

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear All,

A happy Methodist New Year to you all! As we begin this year some women will be eager to embrace the future, others will tread more cautiously, and some will still feel vulnerable and anxious; yet we are all part of Methodist Women in Britain. We go forward cautiously, not knowing what the new year will bring, but we are ready to embrace the future, endeavouring to involve all. I am conscious that not all of us have found the last two years easy, but I have been heartened by the innovation and imagination of the districts in their use of Zoom, WhatsApp and Facebook to keep in touch and to host coffee morning chats, events and services. If you are hosting an event, please do ask for details to be put on the website so that others may join. Now that we are gradually beginning to move forward, you could invite friends round to join these Zoom meetings, to meet women from other districts and strengthen our

network of MWiB as well as meeting face to face.

There have been changes made to our Executive Committee. This September we say 'thank you' and 'well done' to Jude Simms, who has been our excellent Communications Officer for the last five years, and say 'welcome' to Irene Hayes, our new Communications Coordinator, and to Revd Amy Walters, our Website and Social Media Coordinator—a new role that will share some of the workload of the previous Communications role. We look forward to working with them. Shortly, we will be advertising the post of Vice President/President 2022–2026. If you know of anyone who you think could fill this position, please do have a quiet word with them.

As the 14th Assembly of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women in Gothenburg had to be postponed this year, the World Officers and others produced an excellent online event entitled 'A New Vision for a Sustainable Future', with news from around the world, and a focus on our response to climate change. This event was recorded, and will be available soon to watch online. The link will be on both the World Federation and MWiB websites (www.wfmucw.org / www.mwib.org.uk).

As I write, COP26 (to be held in Glasgow in November) and the evidence of climate change around the world have been very much in my mind, and our hearts go out to those communities affected by wildfires, flooding, droughts and tornadoes. Please remember them in your prayers. We remember too the people of Afghanistan who are facing an uncertain future, particularly girls and women whose freedom, livelihoods, and education are threatened.

We, as a movement, have much to look forward to. We do not know what the future holds for us this year, but whatever happens, we trust in God's guidance as we seek the way forward.

Blessings

Ruth

Ruth Parrott,
MWiB President 2021–2023



An Invitation to explore *A Methodist Way of Life*

A Methodist Way of Life is a way of living which reminds us of, and provides a compass for, Christian living. It is how we try to live our lives in response to God's love, made known to us in Jesus. Like the early Christians, and just as Methodists have done since the days of John Wesley, we seek to express what it means to follow Jesus in the regular, practical actions of worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism as we try to follow Jesus and live out the Christian faith.

Irene Hayes, MWiB's new Communications Coordinator, invites you to explore how *A Methodist Way of Life* might be used to connect Methodist Women in Britain. On Monday evenings, **7.00–8.00pm**, beginning **Monday 13th September**, Irene will be hosting an hour of friendship and sharing on Zoom. For more information, and for joining instructions, email: communications@mwib.org.uk We look forward to sharing and exploring together in this way.

A NEW VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

When we made the decision to postpone our 14th World Assembly for a year, we recognised that 2021 could feel like a long 'fallow' year of separation, isolation and waiting. It could also provide an opportunity to bring Federation women together virtually, and to gain experience of organising a global online event in case the pandemic prevented us from meeting physically in 2022. *

The aim of the two day event was to celebrate God's activity through the women of the Federation, and to focus on our response to the current climate crisis, which became ever more urgent as the months passed.

Work started early and the theme was chosen to reflect the biblical texts of Revelation 21: 1–5 and 22: 1–5 as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13: Climate Action.



World and Area Officers and Helen Kim Memorial Scholars were invited to contribute news items, biblical reflections, music and prayers. The goal was to include something from every geographical Area of our Federation and to involve as many young women as possible in this global event.

A member of the Connexional team of the Methodist Church in Britain recommended P H Productions as a company that had provided technical support for the Methodist Conference in 2020. I approached them and a contract was signed. They provided excellent support throughout, editing items that we uploaded to their drop box, training both myself and the team of interpreters we engaged for seven languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese Mandarin, Korean and Cambodian). Many of these were professional interpreters, well used to working with the World Methodist Council, but few had much experience of working online for such an event as ours. An almost full script and access to unscripted videos were made available to all interpreters before the event began. This aid to preparation was much appreciated, as some contributors spoke rather fast!

Registration was organised by Rachel Allison, who was already experienced in using Eventbrite. She also recruited a small team of other Helen Kim Memorial Scholars to monitor the chat box and 'Q and A' messages that flowed as soon as the Zoom Webinar event began. Around 900 registered as attendees, but some watched in groups viewing one screen. Those who were due to speak live, interpret or monitor the chat box were invited to join via a special link for panellists. P H Productions ran a training session for these individuals the day before the Webinar.

The programme for the event was posted on our website and Facebook and twitter a few days beforehand. An evaluation form was sent out via Eventbrite afterwards and the recordings of both days uploaded to our brand new Youtube.com/WFMUCW. Important news from our World Officers was announced on Day One. Speakers on Day Two included Jo Swinney from A Rocha International; Liz Lee from United Methodist Women; Mollie, Irene and Jessica, Climate ambassadors with 'Climate Justice for All'; and Hilary Evans from Methodist Women in Britain. The technicians ensured the live speakers, PowerPoint slides and videos all occurred in the correct order and the programme proceeded smoothly. One technician was assigned to support the interpreters throughout the event, helping teams of two for each language to work effectively.

A copyright licence was obtained for use of hymns and the appropriate acknowledgements included in PowerPoint slides. Interpreters were invited to send in their invoices promptly and were generous in their charges, recognising we are a non-profit organisation run by volunteers with a limited budget. We were extremely grateful to the British Methodist Church for their grant towards our costs for providing interpretation. I extend my heartfelt thanks to ALL who contributed to this ground-breaking event.



Every blessing,

Alison

World President, WFMUCW

You can watch the event on YouTube: Day 1— <https://youtu.be/GRhMn7k2yK0> Day 2— https://youtu.be/38K_dliuubg

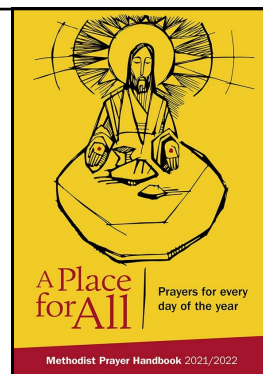
* See page 5 for an announcement about the 14th World Assembly, due to meet in August 2022

METHODIST PRAYER HANDBOOK 2021/2022

The theme for this year's Prayer Handbook is 'A Place for All', with prayers and reflections written by the Methodist community around the world.

As the Church strives to be God's people in a world changed by a global pandemic, these prayers encourage us, with God's help, to recognise and repent of our exclusivity, and to be reconciling, open to all, and ready to listen to all voices equally.

Order at: www.methodistpublishing.org.uk



Meet a Mission Partner

Our Woman in Kenya

Mission Partner Dr Claire Smithson shares something of her work at the Maua Methodist Hospital in Eastern Kenya.

I have worked in Maua Methodist Hospital since 1989. I have had many different responsibilities over the years but currently I'm the doctor in the HIV/AIDs and Palliative Care Clinic, and I'm involved in training clinicians from all over Kenya. I am also the Director of Pharmacy and Director of Laboratory services.

I felt very proud of my team as they responded to the needs of a 15-year-old HIV positive girl. After her mother died when she was 12, Florence (not her real name) has cared for her two younger siblings, aged 6 and 3 years. Florence became pregnant when her step-father raped her.

In June Florence was admitted when she went into labour. She had nothing that the other expectant mothers have—no clothes except what she stood up in, no slippers (flip flops), no soap, no towel, no baby clothes, not even a *leso* (a cloth used to wrap around the waist, or to wrap around the upper body to carry a baby in).

However, a donor had ensured that she would not be charged for the admission and delivery costs, and on admission the Clinical Officer, two of the pharmacy staff, and the wife of one of them clubbed together to buy Florence what she needed during her admission, and to clothe the baby. They showed such compassion for one patient.

Florence had a Caesarean section on 21st June and delivered a 3kg (6½lb) baby girl. Both are doing well.

We might not be able to solve the problems of the world, but we can do what we can, where we can, with what we have. These staff demonstrated that working in a Christian hospital is so different from working in a government one, by showing Christian love in such a practical way. This is one of the reasons that mission hospitals are still here.

Dr Claire,

Mission Partner,
Maua Methodist Hospital, Kenya



Dr Claire [centre] and colleagues working in the pharmacy at the Maua Methodist Hospital, Kenya

We have also received an email from Dr Claire's colleague Barbara, who says:

Covid has affected our hospital very much, like so many other mission hospitals. Our staff took a pay cut last July and it still has not been reversed because of lack of income. People fear to come to the hospital. We have had extra expenses with buying PPE, masks for all staff, etc. Staff are stressed. But there is a good side, and we praise God for His blessings.

Please hold Dr Claire, Barbara, and all the staff and patients at the Maua Hospital in your prayers, along with all our Mission Partners, often working in difficult situations. The Methodist Prayer Handbook is useful for guiding your prayers for the Methodist Church around the world—see details at the top of this page.

RESOURCING AND ENABLING WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

News of two projects supported by MWiB gifts and grants

Hope for Girls and Women in Tanzania

The 'Hope for Girls and Women' project in Tanzania runs two safehouses for women and girls escaping FGM, forced marriage, sexual abuse and domestic violence. There are weekly counselling sessions, and reconciliation work is done with the girls and their families, enabling some of them to return home. The project works with communities to prevent gender-based violence in all forms, and also provides advocacy for victims in order to bring perpetrators to justice.

The two houses are currently home to over 100 girls who receive food (much of which they grow in their own garden), clothing, and health care, as well as education and training opportunities. There are 32 girls in primary school, 33 in secondary education, and 37 undertaking vocational and skills training in tailoring, agriculture, soap and batik making, food processing, hotel management, hospitality, tour guiding, and entrepreneurship.

In 2020, the project received an Empowerment Gift from MWiB of £1,500, which was put to practical use in the safehouses, buying mattresses, mosquito nets, shoes and clothes, and hygiene and sanitary products.

*Top: girls at the Hope Mugumu safehouse
Bottom: women on the skills training programme*



Cream Teas and Easter Egg Rolls

Earlier this year, Tresparrett Methodist Church near Camelford, Cornwall, received a Social and Community Action Grant from MWiB for the equipping of a new kitchen at the church. The grant of £1,000 bought a cooker, hob, fridge and dishwasher, shown in the photographs below.

The congregation at Tresparrett is now looking forward to reopening the church following lockdown, and to welcoming the congregation, the local community, and visitors to the area back onto the premises. The new kitchen will enable them to serve breakfasts and lunches, to hold coffee mornings and cream teas, and to run events for families and children, including Messy Church, a Christingle service, and their annual Easter Egg Roll.



MWiB offers a range of grants for projects in the UK and overseas, as well as bursaries for training and conference opportunities.

*For more information visit the Resourcing & Enabling page on our website:
www.mwib.org.uk
or email:
finance@mwib.org.uk*

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS: Wednesday 8th September and Wednesday 17th November 2021

FORUM MEETING: Friday 8th–Sunday 10th October 2021

If you have any issues to raise or questions to ask, please speak to your District Forum Rep.

Go and bear fruit—fruit that will last

We have recently received the following statement from World Secretary Mataiva Robertson:



“The World Executive met recently to discuss the 14th World Assembly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. As you can appreciate, the impact of Covid-19 including travel restrictions and quarantine requirements vary from country to country across the globe. Some are beginning to open up their borders, while others have got a long way to go yet before they can start to even think about opening up for international travel.

“We believe that for us to hold such an event would create huge risk both for our own members and for the local community in Sweden. It would also likely attract unwanted publicity that wouldn't reflect well on us, especially as a Christian organization.

“Therefore the decision to hold the 14th World Assembly in August 2022 will remain, but it will be a virtual online assembly and not in person in Sweden as initially planned. This decision was not easy to make, but after much discussion and prayer, we firmly believe it is the right thing to do. We must stand together as one; it would not be fair to hold such a key event where only a few could attend whilst many of our sisters would be unable to join through no fault of their own.

“Planning is underway on how best to undertake online elements and aspects of the assembly such as the installation service, business meetings, Helen Kim programme etc.

“The World Officers will provide regular updates via our website www.wfmucw.org, Facebook and Twitter. Thank you for your patience as we navigate through this together. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me on world.secretary@wfmucw.org”

We will also keep you up to date with information on the MWiB website, Facebook and Twitter.

Could you, or someone you know,
be the Methodist Church's next

Youth President

working with the Connexional Team to:

- ⇒ enable, encourage and enthuse children and young people to get involved in every aspect of Church life;
- ⇒ represent 3Generate, the Children's and Youth Assembly of the Methodist Church;
- ⇒ listen to the voices of children and young people from across the Methodist Church in Britain, and reflect them into the life of the Church;
- ⇒ influence the decision-making of senior staff by sharing the opinions and priorities of children and young people.

This is a unique and exciting opportunity for a young person aged 18–23 to travel and work around Britain and overseas (subject to any government pandemic guidelines), supporting children and young people from all backgrounds.

The work is challenging and varied and you will have experience of public speaking, debating, team and independent working, independent travel, report writing, listening and facilitation, worship leading, and more.

Deadline for applications: 10th September 2021

Find out more at: <http://bit.ly/YouthPresident>

Please forward to others who might be interested.



Methodist
relief and
development

RESOURCES FOR HARVEST 2021

**Standing alongside communities
is where change starts.
Taking the next steps with them
transforms lives.**

For communities grappling with the devastating impact of Covid-19 and climate change, the next steps are possible—but not always easy.

**You can be a part of the change
in communities around the world.**

Why not inspire your worship and your small groups
with some of the amazing

The Next Steps

Harvest resources available from All We Can?

There are worship resources, ideas for youth and children's groups, school materials, prayer ideas, posters, videos and giving envelopes.

You can download and/or order Harvest resources
online now at: www.allwecan.org.uk



Forthcoming Events



World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women

Just Living: Being Faithful with God's Resources



World Federation Day Event
based on SDG 12:
Responsible consumption and production

Unfortunately this event has
been **postponed** once again.
Further details will be circulated
when the event has been rearranged

14th World Assembly Go and bear fruit—fruit that will last

Göteborg, Sweden: August 2022

See previous page
for an announcement
from the World Secretary.

Look out for dates,
event information and
booking details
in future mailings.



EPWORTH OLD RECTORY

A talk 'From Susanna's Kitchen'



Women, Preachers and Politics

An online event
with Dr Jill Barber

Monday 27th September 2021
Online at 2.00pm

For further details and joining
instructions, go to the 'Events'
page of the EOR website:
www.epwortholdrectory.co.uk
or telephone: 01427 872268

*The event is free but donations to the work of the
Rectory can be made via the EOR website.*



*** EXHIBITION OPEN NOW ***
at the Old Rectory:

for women, for justice, for Christ

an exhibition telling the story of the first
ten years of Methodist Women in Britain

20th May—31st October 2021

Advance booking is essential to ensure every-
one's safety and well-being. To book your visit,
email: info@epwortholdrectory.org.uk
or telephone: 01427 872 269

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