



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

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# *The* TREE *— of* LIFE

## CHOSEN PEOPLE, CALLED TO PROCLAIM

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# President's letter

Dear Sisters,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our reason for being! Today I am thinking of our stated purpose as the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women: 'to know Christ and to make him known'. These words are written around our logo, the tree of life, the image that gives this newsletter its name and reminds us of Revelation 22:2.

At the beginning of a new quinquennium, we do well to remind ourselves of our purpose as we celebrate a new beginning in the life of this wonderful and inspiring movement of women who pray and work together for a better world.

Our launch pad for this work over the coming five years has been the 13th World Assembly in Houston, Texas, attended by around 830 women from the nine Areas of the world. Our theme 'Chosen People, Called to Proclaim', based on 1 Peter 2:9-10, was the focus of our worship, bible study, and workshops under the three general headings of Social Action, Worship, and Relationships. Those who attended these workshops will be returning to their homes equipped to help others proclaim the gospel with them. Please invite them to

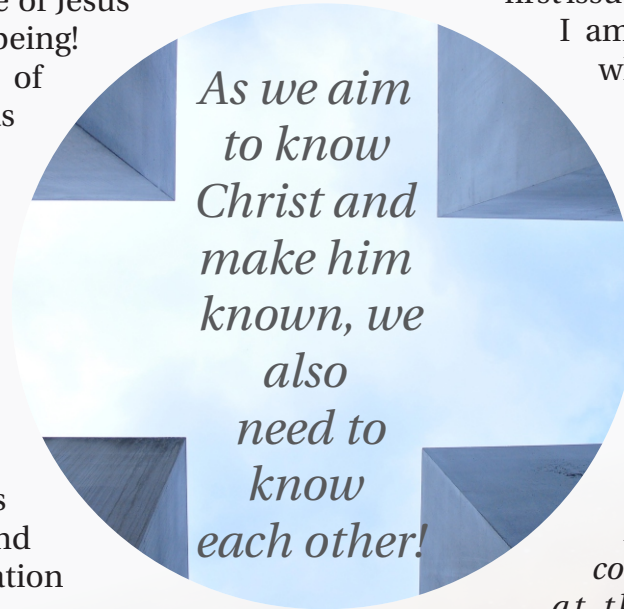
share what they have learned at the World Assembly, so that we can work together to build up the kingdom of God in every part of the world.

As we aim to know Christ and make him known, we also need to know each other! I am grateful to our new Tree of Life editor, Ligia Istrate, for giving us the opportunity to introduce our new World officers in this first issue.

I am so very grateful to those who have elected me to lead the WFM&UCW during the next five years. It is a daunting task, but with God's help and with the talented women God has chosen to work alongside me, all things are possible.

A prayer:

*Loving, faithful God, we commit ourselves to you afresh at the beginning of a new quinquennium. Guide and direct us, challenge and equip us, empower and inspire us, as we come to know you more and more in Christ our Lord. Amen.*



- Alison Judd



# Chosen People, Called to Proclaim

*Editor's note*


The theme for the 13th World Assembly of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, as you can see on the Federation's website, is 'Chosen People, Called to Proclaim', and it is based on the Good News translation of 1 Peter 2:9-10: "But you are the chosen race, the King's priests,

the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy."

I must say that these verses are amazing, deep in significance and encouragement, but not only that. These verses put you face to face with your identity in Christ: YOU (the one who received Jesus as her/his personal Saviour, you, the one who reads this message), you are a chosen race, a priest (not just any kind of priest, but a King's priest); you are holy, and together with every other Christian you constitute a holy nation and you ...you belong


t o G o d ! W h a t a n encouragement to know the position you have and to acknowledge the way God sees you. It is way above our power of comprehension! How do you feel when you think on all these things? Are you proud, are you happy, are you uncomfortable? Do you feel that all these things attract other people's judgments?

I perceive them as 'heavy things' because the message doesn't stop at the idea that YOU ARE, an affirmative sentence, but it continues with a verb: "CALLED to proclaim". What you are in Christ makes you act in a particular way, and your position, like any high office, comes with great responsibility. It's one thing to be in charge of a small shop, but another thing entirely to



*"But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God..."*





*He called us out of darkness  
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lead an entire nation; it's one thing to counsel a friend, and another to counsel the President. Having a great position in society also brings accountability, and in the same way, the high position given to us as a marvellous gift, comes with different 'tasks'. God calls us first to be holy and to renounce the sinful life because He is a Holy God and He called us out of darkness into light; and then we are called to proclaim Him.

This image of calling and proclaiming it is not a new one. We see this pattern again and again in the Old Testament. The Jews are the chosen people among all people in the Bible, and God revealed Himself in mighty ways to this nation, but at the same time, their responsibility was to be holy – for example, “...say to the community of Israel, 'Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy'.” (Leviticus 19:2; see also Leviticus 11:45, 20:7-8, 21:8, and Deuteronomy 23:14) – and their other task was to make God known through

both worship and the way they lived their lives.

In Christ, we too are considered the chosen ones, and the same responsibility that fell on the Jewish People falls on us. Romans 8:29–30 (NIV) says, “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified.” God called you not because you are the best, but because He knew what you can become. He called you to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ and to behave in a different way because you have a wonderful position. How would you expect the Queen of England to behave? What would you expect a High Priest to do? How would a princess react? Have all these in mind. Your new status asks different things from you than before. Beside this, you are called to proclaim how great God is, the

wonders He does. You belong to Him and He gave you this position. How thankful would you be to a person who gave you everything – life and position, a great name, and many other blessings? How much would you love a person that made everything for you? So, you are not asked to behave in a new way because you are obliged, but because of love. People respond to love, and that response should be to give love. You do not love God for your own sake, but you love Him because He loved you first (1 John 4:9).

He chose you and gave you a great position because of the love He has for you, and the love you have for Him will guide you to be holy and to proclaim what He has done. Those are the two faces of the same coin.

Be a queen/king, starting today!

*-Ligia Istrate*



# 13th World Assembly



The 13th World Assembly took place in Houston, Texas, from 29th August to 3rd September 2016. Prior the World Assembly for two days, and for one day after, the Executive met to discuss leadership issues, and the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship programme, that gathered young women all around the world, was also going on (more information in the next issue). The Assembly started with opening worship in the

evening, and on the second day, August 30th, there was morning singing and worship led by the North American women. After worship, the Area meetings were held in different venues in the hotel. Before and after lunch were the Area reports and cultural presentations from the nine Areas – North America, Latin America, West Africa, Southern & East Africa, Europe: Britain & Ireland, Europe: Continental, South Asia, East Asia, and South Pacific – all hosted by Gretta Makhwenkwe and Lauren Ong. The day ended with the first business session after dinner. The market, which sold all kinds of things from around the world, started this day as well.

August 31st, the third day of the World Assembly, started with morning singing, and worship led by women from the Caribbean. This was followed by the presentation of the report from the United

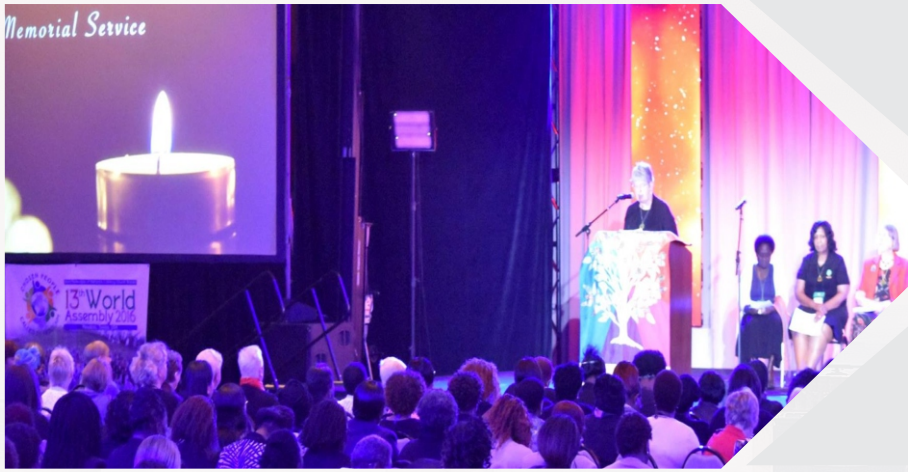
Nations Representatives Dr. Brenda Smith, Ivonne Pereira Diaz, Matilda Johnson, and Chloe Jones; they were introduced by World Vice President Regula Stotz. There were fifteen different workshops on offer, with participants choosing three, one per day. The workshops were: Friendship Evangelism, Trafficking, Hospitality, Missions/Volunteering, Basic Needs, Art/Prayer Flags, Prayer, Mentoring, Children's Ministry, Creative Liturgy, Drama/Storytelling, Healing Ministry, Environmental Justice, Visitation, and Violence. The day's Bible Study was led by Rev. Ouk-Yean Kim Jueng, and the day ended with the second business session.

Day four, September 1st, was 'Thursday in Black', which meant all the participants were encouraged to wear black to protest against violence against women. After the morning singing, reports were

given by Archivist Emmy Lou John, Tree of Life Editor Dorothy Kumar, and Webmaster Nicholas Connan. The memorial service to remember fellow sisters in each Area was led by







Alison Judd, with Emmy Lou John as the preacher. The second workshop began after the morning break, and after lunch the second Bible Study was led by Rev. Lauren Matthews. The day ended with the third and final business session.

September 2nd, the fifth day, began again with morning singing, and worship was led by the UN Representatives. After worship, the results of elections of World Officers was announced, and the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars were introduced by Lynne Scott and gave their presentation. This was followed by the third workshop, and the final Bible Study was led by Rev. Rev. Grace Imathiu. In the evening, the service of installation and Holy Communion was led by Ann Connan and Rev. Margarita Todorova, and Bishop Hannah Faal-Heim was the preacher. The final day, September 3rd, began with the usual morning singing, and worship was led by the Local Arrangements Committee. The participants then departed for their choice of one of five outings on offer: the NASA Space Centre, George Ranch Historical Park,

Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, the Museum District, and Galleria Shopping Mall. After a wonderful outing, the 13th World Assembly ended with thanks and closing worship.

*-Kyeo Re Lee*

\* for more details and pictures please visit <http://wfmucw.org>

## The New Executive (part 1)

First of all we, the women in the Federation, want to say a BIG THANK YOU to all those who share their time and gifts in enabling the Federation to work so well: thank you Ann Connan for everything that you have done for women all around the world; thank you Regula Stotz; thank you Carla Boyce-Smith; thank you Dorothy Sampath Kumar; thank you Margarita Todorova, Lauren Ong-Tam, Sarojini Nagendran, Lynne Scott, Gretta Makhwenkwe and all the others!

And thank you Alison Judd, Leu Pupulu, Ivonne Lorena Pereira Diaz, Judith Siaba, Matilda Johnson, Brenda Smith and all the others for the work you have done and are still doing!

## World President: Alison Judd



Alison writes: I would like to introduce myself as your new World

President. I grew up in a Christian family and attended a Methodist Church with my mother from an early age, teaching in Sunday School as a teenager and being confirmed as a member on 15th January 1967. While at university, I held back from church activities, but felt prompted to apply for Voluntary Service Overseas. I was accepted and sent to teach at Wesley Methodist School in Oturkpo, Nigeria. Here I experienced the faith of students and colleagues who all prayed for me so that on my return to the UK, I was ready to respond positively to the call of Christ



and offer my life to him. I have been married to Les, a Methodist Minister, since 1974 and have shared in his ministry in varied situations. In North Dakota, USA, I was given the opportunity to teach at the United Methodist Women's Area Summer School for two consecutive years (1975 and 1976). In the UK, I engaged fully in the life of the local church and circuits, particularly amongst women and children. As Mission Partners in the Caribbean, we shared in circuit ministry and learned to trust more deeply in our faithful, generous God. Les and I have two children, now adults, and we are so thankful that both are committed Christians. I have been awed by how God has prepared me for service in mission and ministry, enabling me through different and unexpected opportunities at various stages of life. Twenty years ago, the verse Acts 1:8 became very important to me. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Since then, I have indeed been enabled to witness to God at work 'here, there and everywhere'. I embarked on Local Preacher training in 1995 and became involved in the Women's Network movement of the British Methodist Church

(MCB). As Connexional President, I was able to visit South India and Sri Lanka, attending the Annual Conference of MCSL in 2005 as the official representative of MCB. This had a significant effect on me (and on my husband, who had accompanied me) so that two years later we responded to a call to serve as Mission Partners. We were appointed to serve MCCA in January 2008. During our 18 months in Bethel Methodist Circuit, Barbados, I was delighted to be able to join other women from the MCCA, USA and Latin America in their Area Seminar in Panama in 2009. In my spare time, I enjoy walking, playing tennis, reading, cooking, visiting the cinema and theatre, and doing puzzles. I also enjoy holidays with my husband and family.

### President Emerita: Ann Connan



Ann lives in Melbourne, Australia. She is a primary school teacher with qualifications in Children's Ministry. She is married to Rev. John Connan, and together they have four adult children and five grandchildren. Ann served for 12 years as a

missionary with the Methodist Church in Tonga, and established the first school for disabled children there. For 20 years she co-pastored with John in the Uniting Church in Australia, and for two years in Los Angeles. Ann has also trained volunteers from across the state of Victoria as teachers of Christian Education in Government primary schools. In her retirement she runs two Kids' Clubs at her local church, and sings with the Melbourne Singers.

### World Vice-President: Matilda Johnson



Matilda is a Chartered Librarian and Fellow of the Institute of Library and Information

Professionals (CILIP) UK, the current Director General of The Gambia National Library Service Authority (GNLSA), and a member of the Education Advisory Council in The Gambia. Matilda is the Circuit Steward of Wesley Cathedral and the Assistant Secretary of Conference of the Methodist Church The Gambia. In her tenure as Secretary of the Wesley Women's Auxiliary, she advocated for the formation of the Methodist



Women's Federation The Gambia (MWFTG), which comprises all Methodist Women's Auxiliaries and Women's groups. She was successful in obtaining a grant to establish a Women's Desk Officer to coordinate and oversee gender and youth activities within the Methodist Church in The Gambia. Matilda is the Convener of the Education and Scholarships Subcommittee of The Gambia Christian Council, Chairperson of the Albion Methodist Lower Basic School, and a member of the Education Committee of the Methodist Church. She is committed to women's work, youth and outreach services. In addition, Matilda has served on UN Electoral Commissions in South Africa, East Timor and Kosovo as an International United Nations Volunteer (UNV).

**World Secretary:  
Itamua Mataiva  
Dorothy Robertson**



Mataiva is of Samoan descent and was born and raised in New Zealand. She is married to Taotua Joshua

Robertson and they live in New Plymouth. Mataiva is a member of the Methodist

Church of New Zealand and attends Fitzroy Methodist Church of Sinoti Samoa. Her passion for Social Justice was affirmed when she attended her very first World Assembly (11th Assembly, South Korea, 2006) as a Helen Kim Memorial Scholar. Since then her desire to serve in the World Federation has grown considerably. In 2008 Mataiva attended the Human Rights and Dignity seminar held at the Bossey Institute, Switzerland, which fuelled the flame within her to be a catalyst for change amongst the communities she engages with. At the 12th World Assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2011, Mataiva attended as the New Zealand Unit President, and this year at the 13th World Assembly in Houston, she was one of the Helen Kim Programme Coordinators. Mataiva considers it a huge privilege to be able to give back to an organization that has invested so much in her, and she looks forward to the opportunity to serve and share fellowship with all the Federation's women.

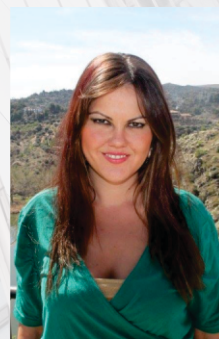
**World Treasurer:  
Leu Pupulu**



Originally from Samoa, Leu has lived in New Zealand for more than twenty-

seven years. She is a qualified accountant and married to a Methodist Presbyterian. They have two adult children and five grandchildren. Leu is a humble individual and is honoured to be re-elected to serve another term in office. She thanks everyone for their continued support and she prays God will bless her with good health and wisdom to serve the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women the best she can for the next quinquennium. In her own words, Leu says "*Ia Viia lava Iesu e fa'avavau Amene!*" / "To Jesus be the glory forever Amen"

**The Tree of Life Editor:  
Ligia Istrate**



Ligia is a Doctor of History (2013) and author of the book *Birth of the Jewish People: A Divine*

*Promise*, as well as other academic articles. She has received many diplomas and won many contests in the academic field. Ligia is also



the coordinator of United Methodist Women Romania. She is very interested in encouraging and empowering Romanian women and has spoken at many women's conferences. She is also one of the authors of the book Chest of Jewels: Daily Devotions for Women, which received great feedback and is one of very few Romanian publications for women. In recent years she has been very active in church life, being part of the native group that founded the Methodist Church in Romania, first in Cluj-Napoca (2011) and then together with her husband (who is a pastor)

founded the second Methodist church in an urban area, in Sibiu in 2014. In the church she is responsible for the women's ministry, the couples' meetings, and hospitality. She has travelled in many countries, both for academic purposes and for women's conferences. She loves what she does and also loves to read and explore new countries. What makes her smile? Her daughter and her friends.



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ROMANIA



*Photo of the New Executive*





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