

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

As I write this I have just returned from February Forum at Hinsley Hall in Leeds, when representatives from each district across the Connexion came together for a full weekend of MWiB business. We agreed the accounts of the past year and heard of events taking place in the coming year to inspire our two-fold aim of encouraging creative spirituality and furthering global social justice. Details of some of these events and resources can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. They range from pilgrimage training, led by Jill Baker, to the opportunity to take part in an exciting Creativity Day in Liverpool, to the Easter Offering service, encouraging us to Shine like Stars as we hear stories of the Methodist Church across the world and support our sisters and brothers in other places with our giving to the World Mission Fund. Carolyn Lawrence has written an article about the service and its origins, which will appear in a March edition of the Methodist Recorder.



Forum meeting at Hinsley Hall, Leeds

Many of you will also have been involved in local Women's World Day of Prayer services, and we are delighted that Dr Liz Burroughs has been appointed as Chair of the National Committee. Consequently we have recently appointed Irene Hayes as Liz's successor on the MWiB Forum, and we look forward to working with her over the next few years.



↑ Anne, Regula and Pamela
↓ Fatima and Anne



If you follow the President's blog on the MWiB website you will know that at the beginning of this year I returned to parts of the Methodist Church in Germany, this time accompanied by Pamela Stenson from the Darlington District*. Over two weeks we visited groups in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Chemnitz and Stuttgart, and witnessed how the German Church is welcoming and working alongside refugees and migrant communities. We took part in a Leadership Training Seminar for International and Migrant Congregations in Europe and were privileged to meet with Christians from many countries, including Regula Stotz from Switzerland, former Vice President of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. I had met her for the first time only last summer at the World Assembly in Houston. We shared many moments together over meals and in discussion groups, and she and I took turns to translate from English into French for Fatima, a delegate from Algeria.

Do keep in touch with all that is going on through these mailings and through the website. Let us go on building bridges in our communities and across our world!

Yours in Christ

Anne

** A précis of Pamela's report is on page two; the full report is available, and Pamela is willing to speak at groups or meetings as appropriate; you can contact her via: admin@mwib.org.uk*

After flying out from Heathrow, President Anne Browse and I arrived late in the evening at the Lindenkirche in North Berlin. We were warmly welcomed at morning worship the following day, and were asked to introduce ourselves to the congregation, who were delighted that we both spoke to them in German. They were interested in what we were doing there in Berlin, then Hamburg, Leipzig and Chemnitz—namely, following up on Anne's previous visits to Germany in 2014 and Greece in 2015, to experience for ourselves some of the Methodist Church in Germany's mission outreach to refugee families and asylum-seekers.

We visited the Kindertreff in Delbrücke, where we were very quickly accepted as new helpers by the children and young people as we played and chatted with them, the older ones keen to practise their English and to hear about London (or Manchester or Liverpool if they were football fans). We met families from Syria, Pakistan and Romania, and while many were fluent in German because they were attending school in Berlin, most young people told us that they spoke their native language at home with parents and siblings. The majority of helpers were volunteers, and the Church is open most school-day afternoons for the children to get help with homework and to be fed a hot meal cooked from ingredients donated via the Berliner Tafel scheme, serving a definite need in one of the most difficult areas of Berlin.

One young man told me that he was working at the project as part of his integration into Germany. Living in basic accommodation provided by the authorities, he currently has no status and is unable to do paid work. He is obviously intelligent and diligent and keen to move on with his life, but this could take weeks, months or even years. Another young man said that although he can travel throughout continental Europe, his current identity documents do not enable him to come to the UK, even though his parents are in Scotland now.

The Lindencafe at the Lindenkirche, Berlins opens on Tuesday afternoons for the refugees living nearby. The majority of children were warmly-dressed, but I noticed one young boy, around ten years old, who came wearing only Croc-type footwear and no socks, in snow and ice and temperatures of around -6C. There was snow on the ground throughout our whole trip, and temperatures rarely rose above freezing (in Chemnitz it was reported to have dropped to -19C overnight), and although we remained snug in our warm clothing with plenty of hot drinks to keep us warm, it constantly reminded us of the severe conditions facing migrants as they travel across Europe in such difficult conditions without adequate protection from the winter weather.

In Hamburg we had lunch at the Methodist Church in Hamm, whose café provides supervised employment for disabled workers. The Church hosts an ecumenical project providing activities for children, and they run cookery courses for migrants where for just 1Euro per week they are taught to cook a nutritious meal, which they eat together, and then they are given all the ingredients to take home to repeat the recipe. The InselArche project in Wilhelmsburg, an area of Hamburg where around 80% of the 50,000 inhabitants are migrants, is currently working to expand their Children's Programme to enable more young people to attend after school for food and various activities. They performed a song about Friendship for us, and we later walked around the local area and saw the container-village that houses many migrant families.

In Leipzig we joined a Frauenkreis (Women's Circle) meeting at the Bethesdakirche. The group included their Pastorin, my good friend Christin who I met at the World Federation European Seminar in Potsdam in 1989. We were expecting coffee and cake and were surprised to be offered a glass of Sekt (German sparkling wine) as it was Christin's birthday! We spoke about MWiB and why we were in Germany; naturally there were lots of questions and we too were interested in their stories and background.

We then travelled on to Chemnitz, where we stayed with Barry and Gillian Sloan, founders of the Inspire programme. Together with their team of six people, they have transformed a building in the Brühl District to provide a focal point in their local community for all who might otherwise struggle to find a welcome. At the Friedenskirche we shared a meal and fellowship with a group of Methodist women, who told us about their work with children and young people that was expanding to meet the needs of incoming migrant families.

Finally we travelled to Stuttgart to attend a Leadership Training Seminar for the Leaders of Migrant and International Congregations in Europe. The highlight was a trip to Reutlingen, visiting the United Methodist School of Theology where we learned about the history of the town and the impact of 500 years since the Reformation triggered by Martin Luther in 1517, before being taken on a walking tour by students. To end the day we were invited for an evening meal in the Erlöserkirche (Redeemer Church), another Methodist Church involved in opening up their premises to the local migrant community within a multi-faith setting.

I left Germany with my heart and mind full of all that we'd experienced in such a short time. Of course, there's much more to tell and I'm willing to share more about our trip with MWiB groups and Churches.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks on more than one occasion (Mark 10:36, 51). Surely our question in response must be "What can we do for others?"



Meet a Mission Partner Our Woman in Zambia

Ida Waddell describes a typically busy day at work:

My Day

As Health Secretary, my work is very varied with frequent visits to Health Institutions.

Recently at Mbereshi Mission Hospital, my day started with a walk round the hospital looking at the renovations to the maternity ward; then into a Board meeting to hear about challenges and successes. Next I spent some time with two Scottish volunteers.

After lunch I addressed the staff, explaining the Church's expectations of staff who are seconded from the Ministry of Health to our institutions. I listened to many problems and discussed how they might be solved.

I had an early night, as I felt tired. I had just fallen asleep, when I awoke to a knock on the door. The guard was calling me to the operating theatre. On arrival, there were two C-sections pending—and the anaesthetist was sick. My help was needed!

I changed and set up. The only monitor was a digital BP machine, shared O2 and suction with the baby, not what I am used to. I offered up a silent prayer, gave the anaesthesia and the patient slept! The two C-sections went smoothly; two healthy babies were delivered safely.

I breathed a sigh of relief and thanked God.



Ida (left) breakfasting with a visitor at the beginning of another busy day as Health Secretary

WRITING COMPETITION 2017



STEPPING OUT

is the second annual writing competition inspired by the life, writing and work of Revd Julie Hulme.

You are invited to submit a meditative or reflective piece of writing on the theme of 'Stepping Out' in prose or poetry, maximum 500 words. This must be an original piece of work, not previously published either electronically or in print.

The competition is open to British residents, male and female, aged 16 or over, other than relatives of the organisers or judges. You may submit up to three entries.

The closing date is midnight on **Wednesday 19th April 2017**.

There will be a prize of £150 for the winner and a runner-up prize of £50. The winner and runner-up will be announced on Friday 29th June at a fringe event of the Methodist Conference in Birmingham.

Competition rules and guidelines:

Entries should be sent by email attachment to: writingcompetition@mwib.org.uk or by post to: Writing Competition, PO Box 9298, Loughborough LE11 9FY. You should include, your name, address, telephone number and the title of the piece in the body of the email or covering letter. **DO NOT** put your name or any identifying details on the entry itself.

Entries must be typed. Please print clearly on A4 paper, using black ink and using one side of each sheet of paper. Double spacing is preferred.

Copyright will remain the property of the writer, although it would be our intention to publish the material on the MWiB and Imagining Abundance websites. See website for further information: www.mwib.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

LEAVING THE FAMILIAR

A Creativity day organised jointly by
MWiB and *shoreline conversations*

Saturday 20th May, 10.00am–3.30pm
Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool L1 3BT



Morning sessions at different venues around the City Centre, followed by lunch together. In the afternoon, the opportunity to consolidate the experiences of the morning, with sessions on slavery and refugees, spiritual conversation, photographs, creative writing, and Street Wisdom.

Children and young people are welcome to join their parents for the morning activities. A crèche may be provided in the afternoon, but booking is essential.

There is no set charge for the day, but realistic donations to help defray costs would be appreciated. Please note that there will be no collection for other causes during the closing reflections.

Further information about the day, including workshops, facilities and travel directions, and a downloadable booking form are available on the website: www.mwib.org.uk or by emailing: creativity@mwib.org.uk



World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women

World Federation Day 2018

Mind the Gap: Gender Equality in the 21st Century

Saturday 28th October 2017
10.00am – 4.00pm

Side Door Methodist Church, Lacey Road,
Grimsby, Lincolnshire DN34 5BH

The morning session will include worship, Bible study, and a keynote presentation, followed by a hot lunch. In the afternoon, there will be the opportunity to visit various 'stations' offering information, activities, and resources on different aspects of gender equality.

There is no set charge for the day, but realistic donations (suggested amount £10 per person) to cover expenses would be appreciated.

Booking form available at the end of March;
download from: www.mwib.org.uk
or email: communications@mwib.org.uk
or telephone: 0300 030 9873

Joint Area Seminar

Thursday 7th–Sunday 10th June 2018
in Belfast, Northern Ireland

Save the date! More details to follow.

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