



Methodist Women in Britain

For women, for justice, for Christ

Summer Newsletter 2023

Greetings!

As spring moves to summer, so your co -chairs, Ruth for the North and Maggie for the South, are getting settled in to our new way of working. Things seem to be going smoothly so far.

It was lovely to see and talk to so many of you at our Swanwick Conference. We certainly sang our hearts out, thanks to Pam Rhodes, Jenny Pathmarajah and Signs for Worship. "Voices in Harmony" certainly proved to be a very popular event. If you were unable to join us and would like a taste, the sessions are available to view on our YouTube Channel. Next year's conference is from April 19th to 21st at Swanwick Conference Centre if you want to save the date and we are delighted to announce that Rev Jenny Pathmarajah and Becca Byass, from All We Can, will be our keynote speakers.

The Easter Offering service is also on YouTube with members of the Executive taking part. Plans are now in progress for next year's Easter Offering Service on the theme "Let Justice Roll".

We are hoping to plan events in different parts of the country. Our first will be a 'Creative Day' in Stamford on July 15th, with an opportunity to enjoy a town walk, weaving and photography. Booking information is on the website for this exciting event. The World Federation Day Event on October 14th, will be held in Congleton, Cheshire, so save the date and we hope to see you there.

The first of our webinars "Bodies of Faith" took place on May 11th led by Barbara Easton. Barbara led her two guest speakers through their experiences of illness, wellness and well-being which was both challenging and inspiring. Look out for future webinars in this series.

We have been invited to the Asian Theological Conference on Sat June 3rd. There is further information on the MWIB website for this special opportunity.

We will also be at the Mary Bosanquet Lecture with Paula Gooder as speaker on June 27th at the Connexional Conference in Birmingham. This is expected to be a very popular event so pre booking is essential. Further information is available on the website.

For those of you who follow MWIB on Facebook it is good to see that many grass roots activities are taking place around the country and many local groups are meeting and planning events. We aim to support these activities and other events as much as possible to demonstrate that although the pandemic undoubtedly impacted on the work of MWIB we are now in a position of growth and renewed networking. The two-way communication between the grassroots through Ambassadors to Trustees to the Executive and back again is already starting to work well so we can go forward in confidence.

Please, do invite us to your events, either to speak or to just be!

Enjoy the summer

Blessings

Maggie and Ruth

Voices from Harmony, our annual conference was well attended and enjoyed by all present. All the main sessions are available to view on our YouTube channel.



Pam Rhodes 'Hymns & Her'



Ladies from Bolton & Rochdale District & Rev Jenny Pathmarajah



Circle dancing was a popular late night activity



Zoom view of Signs for Worship

Travels with our Helen Kim Memorial Scholar, Madeleine Reed

It's May now, as I write, which seems startling to me; it has been both moments and lifetimes since August, when I began my role as Helen Kim Memorial Scholar for Britain. Already, I have done so much.

The biggest thing that has happened for me in my role was, of course, the trip to Brazil in the spring. I had never flown before, never been out of Britain and never been among people who couldn't speak English – then I received the invitation from the World Federation Executives and my life was changed.

Because the World Assembly was on Zoom last year, the World Exec couldn't discuss everything they needed to in their meetings, so they arranged a second Exec Meeting in a beautiful place called Foz do Iguazu on the border from Brazil to Argentina. They also opened their arms in invitation to the HKM Scholars from around the world.

I was blessed to be able to travel from Heathrow with Heidi, the Scholar from Ireland, and we made fast friends in the airport. The flight – the first flight of my life – was something like eleven hours long, overnight, with two changes at Madrid and Sao Paulo. Thanks be to God – it turns out I love flying!

I was there for four days, although some of the other women stayed longer. When I arrived, we all greeted each other like sisters with hugs and laughter. We exchanged gifts with one another, each having brought something from our own country (I hope nobody minds that I represented Britain with Mint Humbugs), we planned and lead devotions for the Execs together and then all women present, Scholar and Exec alike piled onto a coach and went off to spend the afternoon at the magnificent Iguazu Falls. On my final day, a group of us pooled our resources to pay for a minibus to take us across the border to Argentina for lunch – I was disappointed that I didn't get my passport stamped there, but I'd forgotten my sadness by the time we arrived at the restaurant. Finally, another long overnight flight and many tears shed at our parting.



Helen Kim Memorial Scholars
pictured at the Iguazu Falls.

A couple of months later and another kind invitation had me catching the National Express back to Heathrow for another flight! My second flight – but my first alone. I flew to Cork Airport in Ireland where the Scholar for Ireland, Heidi, met me and drove me to Killarney for the annual Methodist Women in Ireland conference – this was the weekend after our wonderful Swanwick conference and it followed a similar outline. Our keynote speaker was the minister of Killarney Methodist Church, Alison Gallagher, and the theme was ‘Nurturing ourselves, each other and the wider church family’. Heidi and I were running a workshop on nurturing the wider church family; we made little ‘Kingdom of God’ passports and took our attendees on a trip around the world, visiting each of the World Federation areas and stamping their passports as we went. There were some wonderful discussions on justice, community and the practical expressions of love that we are all called to do. The women there were also – unsurprisingly – absolutely lovely and so utterly welcoming.

The dining room at the hotel had large windows facing the mountains. County Kerry is home to the largest mountain range in Ireland and there it was, just beyond the golf course – a strange mix of tame and wild which was a good metaphor, I thought, for how we view and interact with God, trying in vain to tame and manage Him, always overshadowed by His utter wildness (as C S Lewis wrote, ‘He’s not a *tame* lion, you know’).

On the drive back from Killarney to Cork, the sun shone wonderfully down on the mountain roads. During the five minutes of rain we got just before the sun set, we were treated to a complete double rainbow arching over our heads and, as we drove into Cork in the dark, the city lights twinkled below us like an ocean of stars. It was all rather wonderful.

This is a brief overview of all the excitement that God has brought to me, and also the reason why my parents are now calling me a jetsetter.

Madeleine Reed

HKMS



Madeleine & Heidi at Torc Waterfall , Kerry and reading a Psalm at Killarney Methodist Church.



Gifts and Grants: Methodist Women in Britain give out gifts and grants to various projects in this country and overseas each year. It's good to receive feedback on these projects.

Received SCA Grant of £600 March 2022

TAKE & MAKE PROJECT Kirkham Methodist Church Lancashire District



The Take & Make free food table continues to run every week on a Thursday afternoon. We now have a core of regulars who visit every week and really appreciate the extra food which helps to supplement their strained budgets.

The food and other items come from the twice weekly pickup from Aldi @ Mill Farm through the charity Neighbourly, and the collection from Wesleys at Church Road. It means that we never know from one week to the next just what items we will be given. In the run up to Christmas we got boxes and boxes of mince pies from Aldi. They were obviously last year's stock which was coming up to its sell by date, but they were very popular with our clients. We get lots of broken chocolate eggs, bunnies and other speciality chocolate items; it is still chocolate and still very edible and always goes very quickly!

Through the free food table, we've built up some strong relationships with people who live around the church. Many now come into our warm hub, which has also proved very popular. We open the Church Welcome Hub and offer free hot drinks, free Wi-Fi and lots of chitchat. The warm croissant, which we offer if we have a glut on the food table, are very popular. As were the warm mince pies at Christmas!

This started as a 'Warm Welcome' initiative, following many people's concerns about the cost of running their home heating over the winter period. However, I believe that this should continue as the community engagement is invaluable. Last week we received a visit from Anna, our local Community Police Support Officer, and Jane, the Co-op community Champion. Both were very impressed and were keen to support us in whatever way they could.

Our Take & Make project was set up with the support of Wesleys at Church Road and is a great way for Kirkham Methodist Church to give something to the community, and that aspect is regularly commented on by those visiting the free food table, and people obviously appreciate what we are offering. It has also been great seeing a number of the 'clients' joining us for some of our church services.



Gillian Womersley
Take & Make Leader

A very successful craftivism event was held in November in the Huddersfield circuit. We would like to thank MWiB for your generous grant of £200 which enabled us to finance it.



Craftivism has been described as “the gentle art of protest” (craftivist-collective.com). Headed up by Sarah Corbett, I particularly like their strap-line, “Changing the world one stitch at a time”. Essentially, craftivism is a non-violent way of protesting, seeking to advance social justice issues through craft projects, notably involving knitting, sewing, crochet etc. To find out more, the Circuit Social Justice Group organised a Craftivism Workshop in November which was led by Anna Bland from Leeds Sanctuary, and held at Lindley Methodist Church. It was well attended, with people from churches around the Circuit and a few from the local community too.

In the first session, Anna introduced us to the concept of craftivism, drawing on her own experience and sharing stories from her work with the Leeds Craftivists group. Her passion was evident, as she highlighted its benefits, describing craftivism as inclusive, empowering and good for well-being. We were encouraged to reflect and share our thoughts in small groups. One of the clearly defining factors is that craftivism begins with the social justice message and it is from that which the campaign is developed and shared through craft.

So how do we put craftivism into practice? Anna illustrated this through sharing the Leeds Craftivists’ Cost of Living Campaign. A campaign to lobby the government to prioritise a more sustainable future for everybody through investing in more renewable energy. Long term this would avoid the rising living costs currently being seen across the UK and lead to a fairer greener society. This was explored through a video presentation and discussion, which gave food for thought for our practical session to come after lunch – a time to respond through craft.

We were invited to take part in the Cost of Living campaign through creating a blanket square by knitting, sewing, crocheting and/or using fabric pens to share our message. Each of the 8” squares would be stitched together at a later stage, along with many other contributions from the Leeds Craftivist group. The intention, to create a blanket to give to the Prime Minister as a way of delivering our protest messages. If you weren’t so craft orientated, there was also an option to write a letter to your local MP sharing concerns related to this campaign. There are plans for this blanket to go ‘on tour’ before being presented to the Prime Minister, so hopefully an opportunity to view this collaboration here in our Circuit in the not too distant future.

I feel the Craftivism Workshop was successful in its objectives, and from talking to people afterwards have a sense that many of us came away feeling inspired and equipped. We may not be able to change the world in one go, but maybe we can strive towards social justice “one stitch at a time”. This is not the end, only the beginning – watch this space!

With grateful thanks to Anna Bland for leading the Craftivism Workshop and to MWiB who funded this event.

Suzanne Bridges Children’s Work and Circuit Project Enabler (Huddersfield Methodist Circuit)



I know it has been a long time since MWiB gave us a **Pastoral Care Grant of £200**, but we saved it and put it towards a meal out for Central Methodist Church Women’s Fellowship to celebrate the King’s Coronation. The photo below was taken at that lunch, so thank you very much for believing in us. Our Fellowship is growing and we now have more than 30 ladies meeting for worship every Tuesday. We have already sent a home made card to the King to congratulate him.

We have lots of lovely things to look forward to during the rest of this year and our Fellowship is such a happy place. We have just sent off £600 to Operation Smile as part of our Lenten giving, but it is so encouraging when someone outside our chapel recognises that it is the love of our Lord we are trying to promote.

Thank you all again for your support. Jan Bloxwich. Class President.



As you can see a grant from MWiB can support a variety of different projects and activities so it always worth encouraging local groups and churches to apply.

Details of how to apply from our Finance Officer or see our website for forms.

Upcoming Events

Mary Bosanquet inaugural lecture

(postponed from 2022)



Tuesday 27th June at 7.30 p.m.
At HILTON BIRMINGHAM METROPOLE
The NEC, Pendigo Way, Birmingham B40 1PP

Reading Between the Lines: finding women in the stories of the Bible even when it looks like they are not there

With **Canon Dr Paula Gooder**
Theologian, Lecturer in biblical studies,
Author, Anglican lay reader and
Chancellor of St. Paul's Cathedral

Free Fringe event
Light refreshments. To book:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mary-bosanquet-lecture-canon-dr-paula-gooder-tickets-626551060087>



Creativity Day on Saturday 15th July, 10am-4pm at the Methodist Church, 11 Barn Hill, Stamford, PE9 2AE.

TAKE A FRESH VIEW

Creation of a collage Photography Weaving Historic Walk in Stamford

and worship!

This event is open to everyone, men included, so why not come and have a day out in beautiful, historic Stamford!

Hot meals available for a charge if prebooked, or bring a packed lunch.

No charge but donations towards expenses gratefully accepted.

Please book your place by emailing:

finance.mwib@gmail.com

**with Creativity Day as the subject of your email
or book by phone: 0300 030 9873**

Please book by Monday 10th July

Bodies of Faith Webinar Series

The first of this occasional series took place in May. Hosted by Barbara Easton 'In Sickness and In Health' featured two women reflecting on their longstanding experience of healthcare – one as a giver, and one a receiver. Dr Laura Hipple, a Methodist from the North West, has been working as a doctor in the NHS for about 40 years, specialising in women's health and medical training. Rev Charity Hamilton is currently a circuit minister on Teesside. She also spends long periods in acute hospital settings as a patient. Between them they began to spark our thinking about what it means to live out faith in a woman's body, in sickness and health.



Dr Laura Hipple
&
Rev Charity Hamilton



An inspirational and thought provoking evening, this webinar was recorded and will soon be available for use in local groups to enable these conversations to be opened up and explored in a safe and supportive environment. Look out on our website for further details.

Going forward other topics may be around menstruation, menopause and mental health. We want to open up discussion about how our experience as disciples is impacted by our experience as women – specifically, our physical experience of living out the faith amid all the joys, challenges, and issues that come with having the body of a woman. We don't really talk about this aspect of our Christian lives in church and some of the issues have been taboo throughout society over many generations. We want to create a space in which this can maybe be gently opened up and explored.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 14th October 2023 World Federation Day in Congleton, Cheshire

Friday 19th—Sunday 21st April 2024 Swanwick Conference, Derbyshire

With Rev Jenny Pathmarajah & Becca Byass (All We Can) 'The Power of Language'

Thursday 13th-Monday 17th June 2024 In Porto, Portugal

World Federation European Area Conference 'Grounded in Love'

Contact us:

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Visit us: Website: www.mwib.org.uk

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Registered Charity No: 1156626 Methodist Women in Britain

You can help develop our digital strategy:

Ruth our new digital media coordinator would be really grateful if you could complete the following survey accessed at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/P88V8Z2>

It takes 3 minutes to complete and would really help us to review and develop our digital strategy.

If you use Facebook look out for Ruth's posts and conversation starters and join in the discussion

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Next Trustee meeting: 6th-8th October 2023 Swanwick

Please use communications.mwib@gmail.com initially to make contact with your area trustee and let them know what's happening in your local MWiB group.