



# Methodist Women in Britain

Summer newsletter 2024

## CoChairs letter

Greetings!

As I write this, our Garden Party and summer seem a long way away. The ground is sodden, there is a cool breeze, but, today, the sun is shining and we have been able to walk through the fields!

Our Swanwick Annual Conference was a great success; and yes, the weather was kind to us! It was lovely to renew friendships and to make new ones. Rev Jenny Pathmarajah and Becca Byass, from All We Can, were our Keynote Speakers and they fed us spiritually, entertained us, educated us in New Testament Greek and encouraged us to write our own versions of the Lord's Prayer (A selection of which will be on our website as will the link to the YouTube videos of the conference). We laughed and we cried! Many thanks to the Swanwick Task Group who organised the conference and to all who helped in any way. Our next year's conference will be on 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025, when the Keynote Speaker will be Rev Sonia Hicks, a past President of the Methodist Conference. You can access our YouTube channel and view the conference at [www.mwib.org.uk](http://www.mwib.org.uk)

We hope you will all have had an opportunity to go to an Easter Offering Service. This year, the service is entitled 'Let Justice Roll' and is linked to the 'Walking with Micah' project. We hope to work with Rachel Lampard in the future on the subject of Poverty.

I'm looking forward to our Garden Party at Epworth Old Rectory to hear stories of Methodist Women collected by Dr Ruth Slatter and Dr Hannah Worthen, to view the MWiB Exhibition and the house and enjoy an afternoon tea.

At our February Trustees meeting, we said good bye and thank you to Nina Rawlins, who has been our Finance Officer for the last six years. She has done a great job, and we will be sad to see her go; she has been a valued member of our Exec Team but now she deserves to put her feet up! We welcome our new Finance Officer, Sheila Hall, who has been shadowing Nina. We wish them both well .

We are sure that you will be pleased to know that we have successfully managed to send £500 to a feeding program for people not included in the UN feeding program run by Samah Ghayad. The situation is desperate. We have previously sent an Empowerment Gift to Samah for a Centre for Deaf Women and Girls in Gaza. Please pray for them and for Samah as she tries to get her family out of Gaza into Egypt, to safety.



Pictures from Samah



We have also finally been able to send £3,500 to Bolivia for Tabitha House, a refuge for women, children and migrants, so that they can, at last, complete the kitchen!

The Bolivian women are busy sewing clothes and baking to raise money for Tabitha House, but they are finding difficulty in finding customers because the economy is not in a good state so it is a slow



**Pictures from Bolivia**

Our Mary Bosanquet Lecture will take place at The Pearl Suite, Leeds Armouries, on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June, at 7.30pm when Chine MacDonald will be the speaker. We do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend, as this is an opportunity to promote women theologians. Do spread the word around, particularly if you are living in the District, or in neighbouring Districts.

We look forward to seeing you at our events. We hope you have a good summer and find some time to rest, relax and recharge the batteries. ***Blessings Ruth and Maggie***



**Methodist Women  
in Britain**



<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/casting-down-the-mighty-women-and-the-mission-of-god-chine-mcdonald-tickets-891085118577>

## **The Mary Bosanquet Lecture 2024**



### ***Casting down the mighty: Women and the mission of God***

**Chine McDonald**

*Director of Theos, the religion and society think tank, Chine was previously Head of Public Engagement at Christian Aid. With two decades of experience in journalism, media and communications Chine is a regular writer, broadcaster, panel host and media commentator.*

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 7.30pm – Pearl Suite, The Armouries, Leeds LS10 1LT**

Admission is Free; Booking required. Light refreshments served from 6.45pm

*Chine McDonald is Director of Theos, the religion and society think tank. She was previously Head of Public Engagement at Christian Aid. She has two decades of experience in journalism, media and communications across faith, media and international development organisations. She also speaks and writes regularly on issues of race, faith and gender, and is the author of 'God is not a white man: and other revelations' (Hodder & Stoughton, May 2021) which was runner-up for the Michael Ramsey Prize for theological writing. Chine is a regular writer, broadcaster, panel host and media commentator and has written for the Financial Times, the Guardian, The Independent, The Big Issue, Prospect, The Mirror and contributes to TV and radio programmes such as regularly presenting the BBC's Thought for the Day on Radio 4's Today programme and appearing on BBC Sunday Morning Live. She regularly speaks in and hosts panels including previously at the Cheltenham Science Festival and the Cheltenham Literary Festival. She is vice-chair of Greenbelt Festival and a trustee of Christian Aid. Chine studied Theology and Religious Studies at Cambridge University. Her upcoming book Unmaking Mary: The Myth of Divine Motherhood will be published by Hodder & Stoughton in early 2025.*

**Booking for the Mary Bosanquet Lecture is through Eventbrite:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/casting-down-the-mighty-women-and-the-mission-of-god-chine-mcdonald-tickets-891085118577>

**Or you can access the link through our website: [www.mwib.org.uk](http://www.mwib.org.uk)**



## This is how an Empowerment Grant from MWiB can make a difference



This is Charity. I have met her and seen her at work as an apprentice tailor at Machaku Special Unit.. She was one of our students at the Unit for children with special needs in Machaku, Tigania West, Kenya. Susan, the teacher there, often keeps children on into adulthood if they have nowhere else to go. Charity has now graduated from the Unit as her skills in Tailoring have reached a level where she can now earn a living from it. Cyprian her trainer is funded by Friends of Kianjai and he spends two days a week at special units teaching the learners tailoring skills.

Sometimes they make bags to sell at the market to help run the units. The government of Kenya only provides a teacher at these units but no resources. Friends of Kianjai have supported these units ( with your valuable help ) for over 10 years now with resources and more notably with training and infrastructure to farm a small permaculture plot at each unit to feed the children.

Now back to Charity..... we have presented her with a sewing machine to ensure that she can use her precious skills to become independent and proud!

We are proud of her and so thrilled to share in her joy that we wanted to share it with you, our beloved supporters. We truly do make a difference!

*Sally Livsey (Treasurer & Trustee Friends of Kianji)*

The forms for this year's Empowerment Grants can be found on our website. MWiB has £15,000 to share between projects supporting women overseas. If you or your church are involved with a project why not consider encouraging them to apply for an Empowerment Gift. Full details are on the forms; closing date for this year 31st July.

**As Debs Coggrave, Area Trustee for Newcastle, Darlington & Cumbria says about Charity's story: "A wonderful success story that MWiB can be proud to be a part of."**

Remember MWiB has other grants available throughout the year:

Social & Community Action Grants; Enabling Grants; Discretionary Grants;  
Pastoral Care Fund.

See the Resourcing & Enabling page on our website or contact our Finance Officer

## Swanwick 2024

What a joy it was to be here again after so many years of lockdown and then I was only able to attend on zoom for the last two years. It was wonderful to be with so many people. The icing on the cake was that my room, on the first floor, had a view of the lake not hidden by the parked cars!



The theme for the weekend was “Words create worlds” and the lead speakers were Revd Jenny Pathmarajah and Becca Byass from “All We Can”. They shared the main sessions with talks and conversation between them. Jenny shared with us the pitfalls of translating—does one translate every word

literally or use the sense of what is said or written.

Becca spoke about the work “All we can” is doing. We shared with each other how words can heal or hurt and how careful we must be in how and what we say.



On Sunday morning the usual Bible study took a different form. There are hundreds of translations of the Bible into English and Jenny wanted us to see what a challenge translating is. We were all given a copy of the Lord’s Prayer in Greek. Each word was then followed by as many different dictionary definitions Jenny had been able to find and challenged to write the prayer using the words we felt expressed the meaning. Some people were very quick and their translations were read out. We were invited to finish ours at home and send them in. They will be made into a booklet.



There were a variety of workshops on Saturday afternoon. We were asked to select before coming. On Sunday morning we heard news from Global Relationships and the World Federation. The book stall and other stalls did good business. One stall raised money to help someone from an Eastern European country attend the World Federation meeting in Porto later on this summer. We were all asked to take a wrapped gift and then to buy one to take away. Several hundred pounds was raised.

There were morning and evening prayers and written “pyjama prayers” to use as we wished in our own rooms. The weekend concluded with morning worship led by the chaplain Revd Anne Cash on the theme of the Good Shepherd before we all went to lunch and then off to our various homes and circuits.

It wasn’t all hard work. Saturday evening we had a quiz with much hilarity with some groups saying the answers out loud which helped the others! There were also late night activities including circle dancing for those who wanted to wind down before bed. There was a good selection of food both for breakfast and lunch and dinner.



Thanks to all the organisers and speakers for their hard work which made this a wonderful weekend. Why weren’t YOU there?

Pauline West Norwich Circuit



We send our condolences to the families of Ira, Joyce and Vera whose deaths we have been informed of and give thanks for the many ways in which they supported the work of women in the Methodist Church over many years.

Ira Fernando passed away on Sunday 24th March. Ira was the Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit Missions Secretary for many years, she attended meetings, arranged fundraising Summer Fairs at the church and Easter Offering services.

Ira will be very much missed by all the people she met over the years. May she rest in peace.

Joyce Hearn from Oakham passed away peacefully on 18th April. She was actively involved in MWiB, a loyal supporter over many years and will be remembered by many. She will be missed by her family and many friends. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Vera Nelson passed away on 1st May. A lovely, beautiful soul who was steeped in mission, network and MWiB. She was Bolton & Rochdale's first forum rep when the groups were all reformed as MWiB and had visited a number of national events over the years. Vera went to Texas for the World Federation event and was due to go to Gothenburg when it was cancelled.

She was District president on 2 occasions and worked tirelessly to enthuse her circuit and the district with all things MWiB. She was the inspiration behind the large number of ladies who came to Swanwick conference from her own church - usually at least 10 — and she will be greatly missed. Her memory will live long in the Bolton & Rochdale District MWiB. May she rest in peace.

Items for the next newsletter can be sent to [communications.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:communications.mwib@gmail.com)  
Please notify to the same address any changes to the mailing list.



## MWiB Summer Newsletter, HKMS Report     Madeleine Reed

Since I had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful women at the World Federation Day in Congleton back in October, I have been seeking more opportunities to engage with the MWiB community and develop my skills.

Every Saturday in January, I wrote the Prayer for the Week on the MWiB website, which was a challenging and moving task; I got to look into Epiphany, and really push myself by following the lectionary readings instead of choosing easier passages to write about.

In March, I had the wonderful opportunity to write an article for the Methodist Recorder on the origin of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, which was incredibly fun – the kick I got from seeing my article in a newspaper necessitated a prayer for humility!

While things at home are ever hectic, I have found that being on the planning team for the Area Seminar which will be hosted in Portugal by the World Federation women of Europe in June has been nurturing in me a deep longing for the familial warmth and welcome of being among MWiB women; I have never felt more at home or at ease among strangers than I have at, for example, the Swanwick weekend in April, which I always look forward to with many prayers of thanksgiving.

It's always exciting to think of what will come next – God has blessed me so richly since I became the Helen Kim Memorial Scholar for Britian, and now I wait on my metaphorical tippy toes by the door to see what He has planned for tomorrow, next week, next year.

### **The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, and the Women who Change the World**

***By Madeleine Reed, Helen Kim Memorial Scholar (First published in Methodist Recorder)***

The world, despite being declared good multiple times at its creation, has become a very bad place; it's dangerous and frightening and full of all kinds of evil. It is therefore very easy to believe that we can't do anything to make it better. We tell ourselves that there's only one of us, and that *'I'm only me'*, completely ignoring the fact that history was written by people who were only themselves but went out all the same and changed everything. Some obvious examples are people like Alexandra the Great, but he wasn't exactly fighting alone. Then perhaps we could talk about Moses, but he was raised by a princess in a palace; he had a head start. So, let's jump forward to recent history and look for heroes in the last century.

Corrie Ten Boom was a Dutch girl who helped to hide Jews from the Nazis. She was sent to a concentration camp where she held secret bible studies. After the war, she went on to write books and give talks, discussing such topics as faith, forgiveness, and hope.

Jackie Pullinger was an ordinary woman living in England when she felt God call her to the Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong, where she helped a huge number of people to escape the bonds of addiction.

These women changed lives. They saved lives.

There's a woman who isn't so well known. Her work started off as a pipedream and grew into something that spread across the entire face of the planet. Her name was Helen Kim, born 1899, and her Wikipedia page is depressingly short.



In 1923, she had an idea that many probably thought was *nice*— but ultimately unrealistic. She may have essentially established the YWCA in Korea and been the dean of a university, but a *worldwide organisation – for women?*

In October 1939, 27 countries signed the first Charter of Assent for what Helen Kim named the World Federation of Methodist Women. In 1954, this new organisation, which was still finding its feet, was welcomed and recognised by the World Methodist Council.

Helen Kim passed away in 1970, so she sadly never got to see just how far the World Federation would reach. In 1983, it was recognised by the UN as a non-governmental organisation, and representatives were chosen from among the members, ensuring a voice for Methodist women on an international stage.

In 1996, the name of the World Federation was changed to the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, which is what we still call ourselves today. The World Federation says this on its website: *'90 units, 71 countries, 3,500,000+ women, 1 Lord and Saviour!'* One wonders what Helen Kim might have said if she had been told those numbers back in 1923.

It's always a sad thing that organisations such as the World Federation need to exist. The website calls women to be *'hope for the hopeless; security for the insecure; sufficient for the impoverished; freedom for the oppressed; and a voice for the voiceless.'* How utterly devastating that there are people in the world who are hopeless, insecure, impoverished, oppressed and voiceless. It's so easy to believe yourself to be one of those voiceless people, born as a child of God, but raised as a victim of the times. I wonder how many of those 3,500,000+ women in the World Federation feel helpless and unheard? Are they *'only me'*?

There are approximately 2.4 billion Christians worldwide, 4 million of which are Methodists. Out of those, over 3.5 million are women who weren't satisfied to just turn up to church on Sunday; they want what Helen Kim wanted – they want to see the world change. The World Federation is something of a grassroots organisation; everything that happens begins among the members and grows up to the executives, where the work already in progress is reinforced and facilitated. In our local unit, Methodist Women in Britain, we have funds, grants, bursaries, campaigns, and training, among many other things. Social action projects are what define us; not turning away but stooping down to lift up the downtrodden. This is a group of women who aren't silenced by fear, threatened by power, dissuaded by failure, or corrupted by compromise; we know what we want.

Sometimes, it seems that most of the trouble in the world is because so many people don't know what they really want. How do we know what we want? One supposes that our true goal is whatever we are willing to live and die and fight for. We want to end world hunger, but we are oppressed and depressed by a false sense of our own inadequacy. We want to get to work faster, so we break the speed limit. What are we really willing to risk ourselves to achieve?

*'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.'* - 1 Corinthians 12:12. As soon as we gave ourselves to Jesus, we stopped being *'only me'*, facing the world alone; we became a member of a huge, worldwide, divinely inspired and divinely motivated Body. Perhaps, then, the question that should plague the world today should never have been *'What can I possibly do?'* Perhaps it should always have been, *'What can they possibly do to stop us?'*



## **One of our ongoing campaigns as Methodist Women in Britain is 'Period Poverty'.**

*Madeleine explains why we are supporting it:*

Period poverty affects hundreds of people in the United Kingdom. In 2023, a poll found that the number of people who were struggling to afford menstrual products had risen from 12% to 21% in just one year. During the Coronavirus pandemic, over one million girls in the UK struggled to access period products.

Being unable to tend to your most basic sanitary needs is a deeply painful experience, and when nobody seems to want to help, it can feel as if your dignity and humanity is being overlooked and undermined.

But there are people who want to help.

Methodist Women in Britain is a self-financing volunteer-run charity within the Methodist Church in Britain.

Our mission statement is '*For women, for justice, for Christ*', and part of that calling includes advocating and providing information on issues of social concern, highlighting areas of need, and raising funds or providing other goods or services to support partners and agencies working to alleviate poverty and injustice.

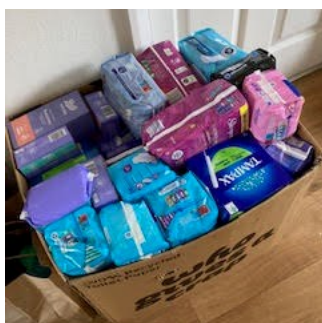
Our innate dignity as humans made in the image of God means that we all deserve to have our most basic needs met.

*Madeleine has put this wording into a poster (sent along with this newsletter) and we encourage you to print it out and display it in your church toilets alongside a basket of sanitary and continence products that are freely available for anyone who needs them.*

### **Garden Party supports our Period Poverty Campaign—Bronwen Braisdell**

At the recent Garden Party held at Epworth Old Rectory those attending were invited to bring donations of Sanitary Products. I was overwhelmed by the response and say a big 'thank you' to everyone who brought donations—these will be distributed to Foodbanks, homeless shelter and women's refuge in the North Lincolnshire area.

The sun shone for our event and everyone enjoyed the occasion, learning more about the Methodist



Women's Collection, touring the house, and meeting friends old and new.



## MWiB MERCHANDISE

This year, we have been fortunate to link up with some new and talented merchandise providers.

Ian Lindley is a Lincolnshire farmer who does a nifty sideline in small wooden objects, all made of local oak. So we have been very pleased that he has provided us with keyrings and bookmarks and crosses, with appropriate logos. The prices and the quality [and the faint whiff of linseed oil] mean that every time I order a batch, they fly out again. We hope our partnership with Ian will continue!



We have also been fortunate to have a beautiful design made by Sue Reed [artist mother of Madeleine, our current Helen Kim scholar], of purple hairstreak butterflies. Purple hairstreaks are a native species, so very appropriate for us! The design has been turned into scarves by sinosilk, a company in China [yes, we couldn't find anyone nearer!], and we have chosen a fabric that is part silk, and part eco-friendly bamboo. Again, they have been in great demand since we took delivery.



Our old standbys - pens and mirrors and bags and candles - continue to sell steadily; and I'll just share that the stickers on the candles are made by 'Stickers and That', a small firm started by young entrepreneur Tom Goetz in Nottinghamshire [we do try to support where we can!].

And our rather luxurious new notebooks that come in different colours are very popular - some people even buy one of each.... Our cards come with eight designs, and at £3 for 6 are an amazing buy! Again, we have been grateful for the skills of a talented British artist, Di Sutton, for most of the designs. We are also promoting our jute shopping bags - much more eco-friendly than plastic carriers!



And don't forget the well-researched and very useful 'Dementia Friendly Churches' Packs - every church should have at least one. [to share a small story, I was told this week that someone decided to join our church, when she was casting about, because she was impressed by the 'dementia measures' we had put in place....and of course, they had come from our DFC Pack!]

For "Thursdays in Black", we carry badges and t-shirts. The t-shirts come from a Somerset firm called Imprints that are very helpful. The models are my daughter and her boyfriend - I couldn't persuade her to change her shoes, sadly - but the t-shirts are excellent quality.....



All our 'merch' can be viewed on the MWiB website; and ordering couldn't be simpler - \*send me an email to [resources.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:resources.mwib@gmail.com) \*I will pack up your order, with an invoice \* I will shlep up to the nice lady at my local post office \* she will send you your goods \*you pay by BACS or cheque as shown on the invoice. It really couldn't be easier! If anyone would like to send us a few words about anything they have bought, we will happily add it to the website page - and send them a small gift as a thank you? If they send us a POEM, we will respond with something even better as long as it is a decent poem of course, not something along the lines of :

*" I bought a new keyring from merch, I wanted it made out of birch*

*It came, but was oak, Made by some bloke*

*And I couldn't get it out of my pocket in order to use the key and put it in the lock and open the door to the church"*

No, that sort of poem just won't do, unfortunately! **Elaine Banks** [resources.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:resources.mwib@gmail.com)

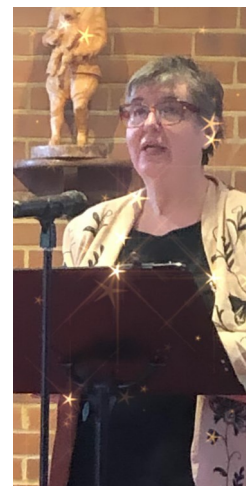
## CoChair South Maggie writes:



Just recently I took part in the Easter Offering service for the Hastings, Bexhill and Rye circuit. It was held in the beautiful leafy village of Pett where the chapel was packed with representatives from all the churches and others joining on zoom. The singing was amazing and I was pleased to chat and answer questions afterwards over tea and coffee from both men and women about scope of the work of MWiB.



Special thanks to Dawn Novis, an MWiB stalwart, for pulling it all together.



### Date for your Diary

**World Federation Day—Saturday 19th October**

**to be held at Stamford Methodist Church, Lincolnshire**

### **STOP PRESS!**

A new CoChair North to replace Ruth Parrott from September has just been appointed.

We look forward to getting to know **Leonora Wassell** in our next newsletter.

### **News from Action for Children**

#### **Action for Children's new quarterly online forum**

On 10 July, Action for Children is launching a quarterly online forum for Methodists and other church supporters to hear first-hand about their work and how your support makes a difference. In just under an hour, you will hear interesting updates from their staff who work in frontline services, young ambassadors, and fundraisers. You will also be able to sign up to take part in their petitions and give them direct feedback. Sign up to get invitations to each forum: <https://forms.office.com/e/y2701CkN5e>

#### **Honouring our Heritage with Action for Children**

Join Action for Children throughout June in honouring their heritage by looking at how their residential homes have changed over the years. A lot has changed since 1869, but their ambition – to give children safe and happy childhoods – shines just as bright. Alongside learning about their history, you can enjoy four Bible reflections on the importance and impact of legacy gifts on your own or within a group. All the information will be online here: [actionforchildren.uk/heritage](https://actionforchildren.uk/heritage)

## MWiB Area Trustees

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Scotland and Shetland - Barbara Harrison

Cornwall, Plymouth & Exeter - Elaine Banks

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Bristol & South Wales - Gillian Pengelly

Southampton & Channel Islands - Liz Chick

**Next Trustee meeting: 4th—6th October 2024 at Swanwick** Please use [communications.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:communications.mwib@gmail.com)

initially to make contact with your area trustee and let them know what's happening in your local MWiB group.

## Contact us: PLEASE USE THESE EMAIL ADDRESSES

MWiB Co-chair North: Ruth Parrott - [cochairnorth.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:cochairnorth.mwib@gmail.com)

MWiB Co-chair South: Maggie Woods - [cochairsouth.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:cochairsouth.mwib@gmail.com)

Finance Officer: Sheila Hall - [finance.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:finance.mwib@gmail.com)

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Helen Kim Memorial Scholar: Madeleine Reed— [hkms.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:hkms.mwib@gmail.com)

MWiB Resources : Elaine Banks - [resources.mwib@gmail.com](mailto:resources.mwib@gmail.com)

General enquiries: 0300 030 9873

or post to MWiB, c/o Stamford Methodist Church, 11 Barn Hill, Stamford, Lincs. PE9 2AE

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