



Welcome to our summer newsletter

As I put this edition of our newsletter together in the last week of May the weather has turned a bit cooler and windier, and thankfully for our farmers and gardeners we have had the first rain for many weeks. Let's hope that we still have warm sunshine ahead of us after being blessed with an seasonably warm and sunny spring.

Whatever the weather outside our summer 2025 newsletter is full of rays of sunshine and good news from Methodist Women in Britain around the connexion. As well as finding out what Leonora and Maggie our CoChairs have been up to since last time, this edition also includes reports from some of the MWiB events that have been happening around the country.

It is always good to hear how local Methodist women are continuing to meet together at a variety of events and to hear news of the various projects and campaigns they are engaging in, as well as events that promote social interaction, fellowship and friendship and spiritual growth. For Women, For Justice, For Christ continues to sum up our vision that: all women will be empowered, encouraged, enabled and equipped to live a life free of injustice and inequality.

It was lovely to meet up with many of you at our annual Swanwick conference in April; have your diaries nearby as you read this newsletter as there will be dates for you to note of forthcoming events that might interest you. Our next big event is the third Mary Bosanquet Lecture, this year given by Kathy Galloway from the Iona Community. This is a fringe event at Methodist Conference in Telford on Friday 27th June, 7.30pm at the Telford International Conference Centre in Ludlow Room 1. No booking is required so if you are able to join us please do.

As a charity we are working hard to get our name 'out there' and Madeleine & Leonora certainly did that last weekend at Cliff College.

Look out for our new publicity material and keep spreading the word about our work.

Bronwen





Pay Attention Be Astonished Tell about it



Our 3rd Mary Bosanquet Lecture

will be given by **Kathy Galloway**
from the **Iona Community**

Friday 27th June, 7.30pm
in Ludlow Room 1
Telford International Conference Centre

No booking required; Light refreshments served from 7pm. This is a Fringe Event for Methodist Conference 2025.

**SAVE THE DATE—Our 2026 Swanwick Conference will take place
from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th April 2026 at The Hayes, Derbyshire
Extra rooms booked so why not invite a friend to join you next year?**



**World Federation
Day**

**Saturday 18th October
2025**

**at Starbeck Methodist
Church, 93 High Street,
Harrogate HG2 7LH**

*A day with a creative
advocacy and a
South American focus*

Look out for more
Information on our
website & social media



**Butterfly Movement Service of
Thanksgiving and Affirmation**

**Tuesday
25 November 2025
10.30 -12.30**

**UN Day for the Elimination
of Violence Against
Women begins the
16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM
against gender based
violence.**



The service will highlight the continuing
global issue of violence against women and
girls. It will include survivor stories,
presentations from charities, and material
from young people within the Methodist
Church.

Preacher

**Rev Richard Andrew
President(Elect) of
Conference**

**Wesley's Chapel
49 City Road
London
EC1Y 1AU**



www.mwiib.org.uk



Introducing Olive Ruzvidzo

Olive will become our new CoChair from September 2025 replacing Maggie Woods and working alongside Leonora Wassell to continue to lead Methodist Women in Britain forward.

Olive has sent this mini profile to introduce herself:

"My background in Business Management and diverse experience in Marketing, Public Relations, Hospitality, and project management from Zimbabwe and the UK complements my active involvement in the Methodist Church. I've embraced leadership roles, including church trustee, Local Preacher, and Ministry Training candidacy. I represent the church at various levels, including district and national conferences, and have engaged with Parliament on faith and politics related issues. My personal journey has profoundly shaped my perspective on how the church can advocate for asylum seekers and others on the margins, while also strengthening my faith and enabling me to inspire through spiritual leadership.

My vision is for Methodist women to unite and actively address public issues affecting women and families, cultivating safe, discrimination-free environments through cross-cultural engagement. I pray for women to courageously step into leadership, ensuring their presence in decision-making spaces. As Co-Chair, I commit to using my position to drive inclusivity and eliminate all forms of discrimination within the church. I would also champion integrating diversity into our structures, policies, and processes, fostering positive relationships and increased interaction among women through intentional events and fellowship."

Olive will be attending forthcoming events and shadowing Maggie and Lee over the coming months so look out for opportunities to meet Olive and say hello.

If you were at our Swanwick Conference this year you will have heard Olive sharing a poem during our Saturday night concert. Following requests for a copy of the poem Olive has kindly allowed for it to be published in our newsletter.

Caterpillar to Butterfly by Olive Ruvimbo Ruzvidzo

As the sun shines and the breeze gently blows, a leaf dances with the sparkle of the eggs glued to its surface.

Inside the egg I sit, curiosity heightening, wondering what lies beyond this enclosure. And with inquisitive zeal, I break the shell, explosions of light, a world full of wonder!

I pry myself out of the shell and slowly settle on what I soon discover will be my source of survival.... for a while.



I start to feel... the freshness of the breeze, the heat from the sun but even more pronounced, the grumbling of my empty stomach...I am hungry!

A very hungry caterpillar.

I must eat...because eat is all I can.... i must eat because eat is what I must do.

The eggshell looks delicious...let me start there...how crunchy...how tasty!

This new world is all food.... the fresh green leaves, I have enough legs to get to them all...how green...how fresh.

I am built to eat...my mouth is made for eating...because eat is all I can...I must eat because eat is what I must do.

Oh, this body I live in, is a hindrance to my purpose in life ...eating. I must get rid of it!

I must shed it...and shed it I do!

Phew...more space for food... I am built to eat...my mouth is made for eating...because eat is all I can do...i must eat because eat is what I must do!

The sun has risen...and set again and again on the other side...I am fulfilling my purpose, to eat and eat and eat. I now know how to stop my body from being a hindrance to my eating...i just get rid of it...shed it...and make a newer...bigger one...so I can eat.

Today the sun seems to be much warmer because I can't seem to walk very far. I have eaten...because eating is all I could do. Oh goodness, there is so much of me on this stalk...boy have I grown...Could it be that I am just tired and need to rest. This seems like a good stalk...for me to catch some Zzzzzz.

I must shed though, one more time.... I must protect myself from danger too. I shall spin a special thread and cover myself as I sleep. The cocoon I weave around myself gives me safety...to sleep. It is built for me to sleep in... because sleep is all I can do now...and sleep is what I must do.

How amazing that in my stillness, the Maker is transforming me.... equipping me for a new life. As I lay still...He is providing...strengthening me.... I've even forgotten about eating...because in my stillness, the Maker is transforming me.

The time has come.... the Maker says it has.... I crack open the cocoon...I've done this before, so I know how to munch myself out of this life. But this time it is different.... I am a new creation...i feel brand new!

I have feet that can taste sweetness.... because now I feed from the rich nectar of flowers. I use the built-in straw on my mouth to suck up the nutritious juices from the flower.

I have wings...but not just any wings...big multi coloured wings beautifully shaped wings...strong wings that allow me to fly. I flutter from one place to another...the world notices my beauty...the world sees my happiness...as I fly from one place to another.

I am built to fly...my wings are made for flying...because fly is what I can do...i must fly because fly is what I must do. I am liberated... I am free...I have life.

I am built to be beautiful....my colours are made for beauty...

And soon I must pass on this beauty to someone else....and give birth to another life but until then, allow me to fly gracefully and drink the sweet juices of this world.... My Maker equipped to.

I am built to fly...my beautiful strong wings are made for flying...I fly beautifully ... because flying is what I can do...I must fly because fly is what I must do. I am liberated... I am free...I have life.

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Swanwick 2025 “This Little Light of Mine.....

What a privilege it was to have been part of a weekend of Praise, Worship, Fellowship and making new friends at the MWiB Conference in the Hayes Conference Centre at Swanwick.

The Women’s Conference was a remarkable event that brought together around 200 women for a weekend of inspiration, connection, and personal growth.

The event was filled with powerful moments and memorable experiences, leaving attendees uplifted and energised.

The conference began with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, setting the tone for the entire weekend. The attendees were greeted with kindness and enthusiasm, creating an immediate sense of belonging.

From the start, it was clear that this was going to be an event that emphasized Christian values, and a community with lots of support.

One of the most cherished aspects of the conference was the opportunity to meet new friends. Attendees came from all parts of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, from different backgrounds and walks of life, creating a vibrant and diverse community. Many women formed lasting connections and were able to share in meaningful conversations and mutual encouragement.

The keynote address by REV DR Sonia Hicks was one of the standout moments of the conference. Her sermon was filled with insight, compassion, and wisdom, providing attendees with spiritual nourishment and a renewed sense of purpose.

REV DR Sonia's preaching resonated deeply with many, inspiring everyone to reflect on their own lives and faith journeys.

In true Methodist fashion, the food was outstanding, and the conversations that accompanied the meals had to be heard to be believed!

In addition to the main sessions, the conference also offered a variety of engaging workshops. These sessions were thought-provoking and covered a wide range of topics, ensuring there was something for everyone. Attendees left each workshop with new knowledge, practical tools, and a sense of empowerment.

Overall, the Women's Conference in Swanwick was a tremendous success. It provided a meaningful and enjoyable experience for all involved, and the atmosphere of fellowship and learning will surely be remembered for a long time. The event helped foster deeper connections among women, renewed spiritual strength, and a greater sense of unity in faith.

We all headed home, tired but filled with the Holy Spirit, giving thanks for an amazing weekend of Fun, Food, Friends and Fellowship.

Thank you so much MWiB "To Know Christ & To Make Him Known"

Carmel Irwin (General Secretary MWI)

Pictured: Alexa Brown, President of Methodist Women in Ireland (MWI) with MWiB Communications Officer, Bronwen Braisdell



Communications Officer view of conference with our zoom participants joining in.



CoChair travels

Our CoChairs have been out and about meeting people across the connexion.

Maggie Woods has led several Easter Offering services and sent this photo:



Annah (Trustee for London & South East) and I enjoying tea and special cupcakes following the well attended Easter Offering service at St Leonard's Methodist Church in Hastings.

Maggie has also been getting to know more about some of those who have been involved in women's work in the Methodist Church for many years.

Meeting Lillian

I met with Lillian just after her 96th birthday to talk about her involvement with Network women's work in the Methodist Church. Now resident in a Methodist Care Home after a fall Lillian remains very interested in all that is going on,

Lillians husband worked in insurance and she had two children and worked as a school bursar in the City of London. She had served as a district president and been actively involved with JMA supporting the World Mission Fund and the Mission for Britain Fund.

Lillian told me about the holidays her local Network group had organised for the local children who would not normally be able to go on holiday. Many of the children were referred by the local social services. This involved lots of fundraising and planning meetings all year round. Mostly they were able to use a school premises during a school holiday for accommodation. She recalled the children were always hungry and the most popular meal was egg and chips. Despite her abilities for organisation and fund raising Lillian admitted she was no cook and was encouraged to talk with the children rather than get involved in the kitchen....much to her relief. Lillian said that it was not just providing a holiday it was an opportunity to engage with those children who were getting involved with crime and anti social behaviour and talk to them about Jesus.

Alongside that was a lively Sunday school each week where singing and drama was mixed with supporting gaps in schooling. Lillian is still in contact with a few children from that time and has followed their lives with great interest. Lillian enjoyed playing the piano and teaching new songs.



Pictured: Maggie, Dawn and Lillian

As President Lillian recalled there were lots of meeting that often involved long walks there and back. Minutes of meetings were detailed and carefully written by hand. A typewriter was made available towards the end of her time which was a great asset to her but she recalled that many preferred to record things in handwritten form. At times social and political things going on in the world impacted on the church generally as well as the group specifically and

Lillian felt that all you could do was to just keep going and ride the storms in faith. On a positive note Lillian recalled the impact of the evangelist Billy Graham and his rallies and the sense of revival that they bought. Again Lillian used her organisation and secretarial skills to good effect by being the local organiser for the Billy Graham rally follow up service linking new Christians to local churches for follow up support. This led to a greater commitment to Churches together.

When Lillian retired she decided to give the extra time to God and began to get involved with prison work. She said it was a challenge at times as the prison officers were not always helpful and it took time to get the trust of the prisoners but once they got to know each other it was possible to offer good support and opportunities to explore and talk together about Gods love.

Lillian spoke of the excitement of the rallies where women came together in fellowship and worship and the craft sessions where women could work on projects as they shared experiences.



Local MWiB contact Dawn visits the home where Lillian now lives on a regular basis and leads fellowship sessions. She brought along two exquisite hand embroidered plaques as examples of work that was produced.



It was a joy to speak to Lillian and to get a sense of how the women of Methodist Network and other women's groups helped set the foundation for the work MWiB is engaged in today. ***Maggie Woods***

Leonora's trip to the UN CSW(Beijing 30) in New York

I flew out to New York on 8 March so that I could adjust to the time difference but also to go to a United Methodist Church and meet American Methodists. The Church in the Village is a progressive Church, welcoming all in the name of God. Set out in a café style, I was greeted and invited to sit and asked what I would like to drink, coffee or warmed cider! I opted for the coffee. Michael joined me and we proceeded to introduce ourselves. He then felt it his mission to introduce me to everyone, during the service! People came off the street and joined in the service entitled Scandalous Love. The preacher was a visiting professor and spoke of the woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her tears. How scandalous was that! We were challenged to love all with that scandalous love.

That evening I attended the UK Mission to meet with other delegates and Ministers from the Women and Equalities Team. Anneliese Dodds had resigned just before we left so was unsure who would be there from the Government. I was heartened to think that women's rights were deemed extremely important.



There were high level discussions behind the scenes which proved difficult because of the American stance on Gender issues. However a deal was struck with most countries signing a declaration of commitment to improving women's status across the world.



A Call to Justice and Joy was the title of the morning worship at the UN Church Centre which is a Methodist building. We meditated on the word 'Peace' to begin with and it was a marvellous way to kick off my experience. It was a joy to worship with so many women from different denominations and different cultures. The Church Centre

not only hosted daily morning worship at 8am but also many NGO CSW parallel events.

On the first day I managed to get a ticket to the opening session where young women from Spain, China, Indigenous women and more shared their experiences. On the second day, at the Town Hall meeting, The Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, spoke of Women's Rights as Human Rights and should not be an aspiration but a reality. He told us that no matter how small a Civic Society Group is (that includes our MWiB meetings), it underpins the work done at the United Nations. It was an absolute privilege to sit in the chamber where world debates happen. There were 2000 different events to go to. I chose to go to ones highlighting violence against women and girls.





I was moved to hear from Afghan women who spoke of the Taliban's roll back of women's rights. Girls are barred from education from Secondary School upwards. Women cannot be midwives, be employed, go out unless accompanied by a male, speak in public. They are being

completely erased from society except as wives. Girls are being married as young as 8. This puts an enormous strain on the men in the families as they must earn the money to sustain the family. This pressure in turn leads to domestic abuse as well as suicide in the men. However, the women declared that they are not to be seen as victims as they see themselves as changemakers, working underground for the wellbeing of girls and women. Their challenge to us was 'what are we doing to support them?'

I was moved again by the event which talked about FGM/C. As we gathered a video was playing with a beat which struck every 12 seconds. We were informed that the beat represented a girl being cut. Yes, every 12 seconds a girl is cut and mutilated. It is called a 'practice', 'a cultural norm' but make no mistake this is child abuse and pure misogyny. Women are trapped within their communities to conform otherwise they are ostracized.



*Not my problem! **Yes it is.** Not happening near me. **Yes it is.***

It is a global issue. It is not a practice. It is child abuse. Speak out now.

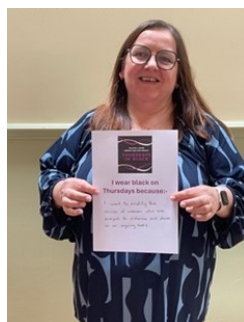
I did not only attend events but sat in the coffee area in the UN and met many other women from the Sudan, France, America, and Finland, listening to their experiences, their hopes and their aspirations. We connected over our common passion for the rights of women. Since Beijing, 30 years ago, women's rights have moved a long way in the right direction. There are more women in education, politics, science, and technology. However, misogyny is on the rise, emboldened by certain world leaders.

What I have taken away from my time at CSW is the strength of women worldwide saying 'No further, we stand together in our goal of women's equality'. We need to be at the table at the highest levels to ensure this happens. Women also need to be involved in the peace-making process where there is conflict. Rape is being used as a weapon of war, as was highlighted by women who are living in conflict areas. As the UN Secretary General said, where women are involved in the peace process, the peace lasts longer.

It was an inspiring and positive experience which I am grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in. My rainbow clerical shirt garnered attention from many, which gave me the opportunity to say who I was, whom I represented and what we stood for.

Thursdays in Black

At the Manchester and Stockport District Day after sharing my experience at UN CSW69, I spoke about violence against women and girls. I highlighted the organisations Press Red and Restored, who work in the field of Domestic Abuse, both of whom I've made connections with. I then challenged the members to support the Thursdays in Black campaign. Here are 4 who made that pledge and why.



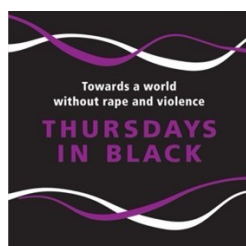
We took all our new publicity material to Cliff Fest earlier in May. This included the Thursdays in black small card and wristband.

Once again, we challenged people to support the campaign and were pleased that Carolyn Godfrey, Vice-President took up the challenge.

It was a great time at Cliff Festival sharing who and what we represent. Many conversations were had, including some sharing their very personal stories of being survivors of domestic abuse. I was able to speak with young girls and boys as well as men about the issue of safety and respect. I was also challenged about why we have a women's only movement.



*Our new resources for
Thursdays in Black*



Trip to the Shetland Islands and Scotland

Leonora and Trustee for Scotland, Barbara Harrison are embarking on a tour of the Shetland Islands and Scotland. We will be flying to Shetland on 12 June and staying until 15 June, meeting members, and visiting projects. We will then be stopping off in Inverness, Perth, Glasgow, and Edinburgh where Leonora will share her visit to the UN. We will also be meeting members during the day for an informal time of fellowship. A visit has been arranged for us to visit a Women's Refuge Centre to see how we can work more closely with them. **Leonora Wassell**

Methodist Women in Cumbria in Zoom link up with Methodist Women in Argentina!

Good Friday 2025 included a 'first' for the Cumbria – Argentina partnership when 4 Cumbrian women shared in a Good Friday time of reflection with women from across Argentina through a Zoom link. It had been an enthusiastic and spontaneous invitation from Ana Bustos, co-ordinator of 'FeMMA' (the Argentine equivalent of MWiB), with little opportunity to prepare! However, what couldn't be understood in all the talking in Spanish was conveyed through the warmth of participants in Argentina to each other and to 'Cumbria'! Occasionally someone expressed something in English and Cumbria were able to give a greeting (in Spanish!) and share a Taize song which was much appreciated. There was a strong sense of us being held together through the Holy Spirit during readings, prayer and individual 'testimony' on the theme 'Jesus- remember me'. The atmosphere was one of joy and warm hospitality, along with listening to people's stories – with sensitive support and care being conveyed on 'chat'. For the Cumbrian four it was a very special experience to mark Good Friday. We could have chosen to opt for a future occasion so we could be better prepared – but it seemed right to 'just do it' and rely on God to enable the special closeness which emerged. *Joan Wager April 2025*

Chester and Stoke on Trent District Event

On Saturday 17th May we held an event to launch our new fund raising project which is to support GLOW. The Glow Charity funds and supports three Women's Refuges in our District as well as organising several 'safe homes' for women to rent at an affordable price. This charity was chosen as we thought it fitted in well with the MWiB Connexional Project which is trying to raise the profile of everything around Domestic Abuse and all violence against women and girls. Two young ladies from Glow came to speak to us and gave us an insight into their work. The statistics they quoted on how many women suffer domestic abuse, how many calls the police have to respond to regarding domestic abuse, the number of hospitalisations and even deaths were quite horrifying. Although quite a large proportion of their work is supported and funded by the Local Authority extra funds are always needed to support the women and children as they often arrive at the Refuge with just a small carrier bag and the clothes they have on. It is also nice to have some funds to give the children some positive and pleasant memories of their time spent in these situations eg. Taking them on a day trip to the seaside and making Christmas and birthdays special. After an interesting and informative talk a light lunch was served which included some delicious homemade desserts which were enjoyed by all. Although this event was not well supported £60 was donated to start the fund and hopefully we can now get our District groups behind the fund raising for this extremely well needed project.

Margaret Lindley – Trustee for Chester & Stoke on Trent

MWiB Area Retreat Minsteracres 14-16 March 2025

Fifty-six ladies gathered from the Cumbria, Darlington and Newcastle Districts for the first Area Methodist Women in Britain gathering in eight years. There was a joyous cacophony of sound as the ladies arrived, some after long journeys, all excited to be back, or visiting Minsteracres for the first time. And once old and new friends had met, and bedrooms been found a refreshing and much needed cuppa was enjoyed as everyone settled in for a special time together.



Barbara Easton, current President of WFMUCW Britain and Ireland, was our Facilitator for this thought provoking and enlightening weekend. We were not disappointed as we were ably and gently led by Barbara with her unique style of teaching and insights of scripture into the theme of 'Wells in the Wilderness'.

In the tranquil and beautiful setting of Minsteracres our weekend away was mixed with study, prayer, praise and worship, crafts, enjoying the outdoor setting, sharing delicious meals, good company, evenings filled with good old-fashioned fun and laughter, even the occasional tear. But don't just take my word about it here are a few messages received after the event, which might make you wish you had been there!

Debs Coggrave
MWiB Area Trustee

'It was a wonderful weekend, which I thoroughly enjoyed and got a lot from. It was wonderful to meet so many like-minded ladies. I was warmly welcomed from the minute I stepped outside my car. Everyone was extremely helpful and kind and made me feel thoroughly at ease after my journey alone. The whole weekend had been well planned and an easy agenda to keep old brain cells working. The food was amazing and the accommodation very comfortable, but the most I got out of the weekend was the fellowship of all the lovely ladies who had travelled from so many different places. I found listening to their stories in such a relaxed setting enlightening. Thank you once again for such a wonderful weekend'.

Jan (first-time at Minsteracres)

'Can you please pass on my thanks to the team who organised the 3-District retreat? Barbara was a fantastic speaker and the whole weekend seemed to run very smoothly to everyone's benefit and enjoyment. There were some challenging and thought-provoking moments'.

Thank you all. Best wishes, Irene

'I loved seeing all the banners - I do not know how you sought them all out from their hiding places. I thought the love feast and holy communion was beautiful - never experienced such a blessing before'.

Love, Jane



Darlington District MWiB Project 2024-2025 Hope Church East Cleveland

Hope Church East Cleveland is a lively church family where the door is open to all. Children and young people of all ages are very welcome to all its groups:

Messy Mondays 1pm for 0-4s, exploring faith through messy play & Toddler Thursdays 10am, a drop-in toddler group; Blast youth 6pm on Fridays for 5-9 years followed by Ignite and Blaze for 10-16 years; 1st Loftus Rainbows, Brownies, Guides & Rangers from 5pm on Wednesdays for girls 4-18 years;

Holiday clubs and special seasonal events for children, young people & adults as publicised, as well as regular adult groups that welcome all-comers: e.g. Tuesday Small Groups from 10.15am for informal chat and fellowship around faith, Here to Help sessions with support and advice on housing, benefits and other social issues as well as a home educated families support group.

Not to forget regular worship, of course, including Forest Church once a month.

The Community Grocery is a low-cost shop, costing £2 per basket, open to the community and their way of supporting households where you can also grab a brew and there is always someone at hand to chat. This runs alongside the warm space, where company, conversation and free refreshments are on offer most weekdays.

Worship takes place on a Saturday, which is lively, creative and welcoming for all the family with a variety of speakers, contemporary worship and prayer, alongside time to build connections and relationships.

As a church it connects with the community and also takes part in community events and the venue is available to hire. During the week they work alongside local schools such as St Joseph's RC primary school.

As part of circuit worship challenge Hope Church decided to take their worship outside – the start of a monthly Forest Church pilot from the first Sunday in March that allowed people to notice God in the environment around them, encourage nature to flourish by making some bird feeders, and to join in reflection and prayer around the campfire.

On Friday evening 16th May the Rev Helen Cameron visited the Hope Youth Group where she was welcomed at the start of her Presidential weekend in the Circuit.

To date Darlington District has raised more than £1,000 for Hope Church which is being used e.g. during their Advent Narnia event to provide each child who experienced going through the Wardrobe Door into Narnia with a new Nativity Story book to take home along with other Christmas treats.

Pamela Stenson

Darlington District President & Ambassador

MWiB Plymouth & Exeter area of SW Peninsular District 'A Taste of India' 17th May 2025

by Margaret Leach



20 of us met at St Thomas Methodist Church for the Spring District (Plymouth and Exeter area) Day. After refreshments, provided by two of the ladies from Elburton, the programme began with a time of Worship led by our District MWiB President, Pat Stead, when we sang 'Be still' and 'Come now is the time to worship'.

Following this, Anne Browse spoke about the two visits she had made with a group from our District, to the Cuttack Diocese of the church of North India, with which our District is in Partnership. Anne showed photos & videos of several churches, a kindergarten, the Christian Hospital in Berhampur and the Orissa Christian Theological College, which they had visited, accompanied by the Bishop of the Diocese, Rt Rev K Nanda. We saw and heard excerpts of worship songs from the churches; one which meets in the open air, one in a hall, beautifully decorated with Christmas decorations, and one congregation where everyone was sitting on a tarpaulin, spread on the rough earth floor. We saw a clip of young children in the Kindergarten, who sang a song in English, with the words 'Listen to the music and clap your hands, stamp your feet, jump in the air, and turn round'. A second video showed the newly built Maternity unit in the Berhampur Hospital, the funding for which had included a modest contribution from MWiB. The original hospital building dated from 1900, and when Anne had last visited, the conditions had still been very basic. Now the facilities for both mothers and their babies has greatly improved.



The second speaker in the morning was Eunice Halliday, from Plymouth, who had also visited the Cuttack Diocese on two occasions - with the group from the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District, and also with her husband. She gave us some statistics about the Cuttack Diocese, which has 39 pastorates and 135 congregations. She mentioned the different training institutions, and talked about a District Rally, in a tent, when many of the congregation attending had had to walk for 4 hours, to reach the rally.

The hour-long lunch break, for which we had taken a picnic lunch, and teas or coffees were again provided by the Elburton ladies, gave us time to catch up with friends, and to make new ones. Our afternoon sessions began with an opportunity to take part in a variety of craft activities, led by Anne Browse. She had provided sheets printed with a Prayer for Cuttack, written by Rev Dan Haylett, the Chair of the District, and with a decorative border. We were invited to colour this in, while we prayed for Cuttack. There were sheets of small photos which we could use to make a keyring or a small zigzag book, as a reminder for us to continue to pray for the people of Cuttack.

The next session was led by Ruth Hartley, from the Transforming Conversations group, who invited us to discuss, thoughtfully, some of the things which we had learnt about India, and to try to sum up our discussions in five words. These words - or phrases - included learning, supporting, friendship; gratitude, determination, no old-age pensions, prayer and love; music from a different tradition, unfamiliar food, worshipping together without words. The final session was led by Eunice, who talked about the more recent visit which she and her husband had made to the Orissa Christian Theological College, when they had spent some time teaching English to the Bachelor of Theology students, in the evenings. All the students - 15 women and 21 men, live on site. They are expected to do jobs around the college, such as gardening. Some of the lectures are delivered - and some essays are written - in English. She gave us some of the history of the influence of missionaries in India. William Carey, the Baptist Missionary to India, had originally set up a Theological University, and German Lutheran Churches had funded schooling.

The day ended with a closing worship led by Anne Browse. She thanked all who had taken part, and read Luke 13:29:- "People will come from east and west, and north and south, and take their place at the feast in the Kingdom of God." We then sang the hymns 'Beauty for Brokenness' and 'The Day Thou Gavest Lord, is Ended', and a final prayer was said, before a final cup of tea and cakes. We had had a very interesting and inspiring day, with much to share with the folk in our home circuits, who had not been able to join us.

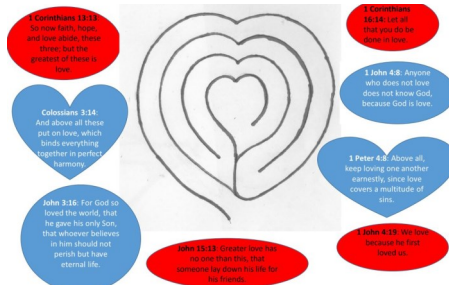
Yorkshire North & East Activities—Janice Clark Area Trustee



In December we had an Advent day focusing on the various faith traditions of festivals of lights. This involved making christingles, and colouring wooden menorahs, along with some singing and readings.



Early in February we had a Valentine's party which included a quiz with love as the



had a Valentine's party which included making "Danish Hearts", focus, and a heart finger labyrinth.

In May Naomi Prince, our district administrator came to speak to us about her research into Methodism and hymns. Her title was "Sing and Make Music to the Lord" What does congregational singing look like in the modern Methodist Church? We had an interesting discussion on how singing and hymn singing in particular is important for both our spiritual life and our wellbeing. As a follow up to that we plan to learn some of the hymns from Singing the Faith that many of us are not familiar with.

Excerpts from an article by Madeleine Reed HKMS published in Methodist Recorder

An Opportunity of a Lifetime – The Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship

We live in an era of monumental change – from politics to technology to the climate emergency, it's near impossible to tell what tomorrow will look like. For many younger people, this means a deep sense of uncertainty and hopelessness about the future.

We as Christians know that we have an eternal hope. We also know that God equips His church to usher in His kingdom and to be lights in the darkness. But are we, as the church of Christ, actually going out and shining our lights? Are we helping others to feed their dying flames?

Changing the world requires two things: the Holy Spirit, and people who walk in



obedience to Him. The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW) has, since its first charter of assent was signed in 1939, been a charity dedicated to not only acting as Christ's body on earth, but also helping others to join the fight.

Pictured in Porto from L to R: Alison Judd (President Emerita), Heidi Hogan (HKMS Europe: Britain & Ireland), Ivonne Pereira Diaz (Vice President), Louise Wilson (World Secretary), Sharon Schuler (HKMS Europe: Continental), Mrs Sipewe Chisvo (World President), Verena Glueck (HKMS Europe: Continental), Madeleine Reed (HKMS Europe: Britain & Ireland), Mrs Ngui Ting (World Treasurer)

One of our biggest strengths as the worldwide church is our diversity. Covering the whole globe, we are made up of men, women, young, old, rich, poor, and everything in between – but we live in a fallen world, and some of us are given more voice than others. Into this context comes the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship (HKMS), a leadership development opportunity which seeks to restore self-advocacy to young women, a category of people who are all too frequently overlooked, if not silenced, by the world – and even by the church.

WFMUCW took the name of its founder, Helen Kim, and created this scholarship programme in 1986. Two young women between the ages of 18-30 were chosen from each of the nine World Areas (two for Europe: Continental, two for Latin America, two for West Africa, and so on), to be trained and equipped for leadership for the growth of the worldwide church, within a term of five years in keeping with the workings of WFMUCW. I became one of the two Helen Kim Memorial Scholars for the Europe: Britain & Ireland Area at the World Assembly hosted on Zoom in August, 2022.

The thing I really want to highlight in this article is the outworking of God's grace in this scholarship. 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 reads:

'Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.'

I can attest to this! God gave me a gift with words, but I was too afraid to use it. God gave me a voice for speaking, but I was too shy to lift it. God gave me a worldwide sisterhood to empower me – and I was empowered.

In 2026, the next World Assembly will be held in Auckland, New Zealand. There, the next World Officers will be appointed, and the next Helen Kim Memorial Scholars.

The question of the hour is this: who will they be?

Are you a young woman? Do you know any young women? Do you want those young women to be blessed? Do you want to see them shine their light in the world? Do you want to see them grow, and grow Christ's church?

Methodist Women in Britain, our local unit of WFMUCW, is now looking to appoint the woman who will come after me as one of the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars for the Europe: Britain & Ireland Area. Five beautiful years of fellowship, of sitting on the Methodist Women in Britain executive committee, of attending events across the country, of going to the World Assembly in New Zealand, of helping to prepare and run the Joint European Area Seminar, of worshipping, working, and seeing God change both the world and your own life, in WFMUCW via Methodist Women in Britain.

I entreat you, I very nearly beg you, if you are a young woman and you know that God has a purpose in your life, if you don't know what your next step should be, if you feel like the future is too big and frightening and terrible to face, learn more about the scholarship at wfmucw.org and look out for the autumn adverts on the Methodist Women in Britain website, mwib.org.uk – start preparing the young women you know, or yourself, because bright days and rich blessings lie ahead.

Become a Helen Kim Memorial Scholar and see God working in the world today.

If you want to learn more, email me at hkms.mwib@gmail.com **Madeleine Reed**

Editors note: We will also be looking for a WFM&UCW Area Vice President for Britain & Ireland; look out for advertising in the autumn or for more information email Barbara Easton britainireland.president@wfmucw.org

Susanna's Kitchen, Epworth Old Rectory shares Wesley's Story

Susanna Wesley would be delighted to know that on 18 March 2025, her kitchen was being visited by members of the Epworth Old Rectory (EOR) Trust as part of their annual meeting. The governing body of the Old Rectory, in Epworth, North Lincolnshire, England, is made up of trustees nominated by both the British Methodist Church and the World Methodist Council. It was a pleasure to welcome both the General Secretary and the Vice President of the World Methodist Council, two of our international trustees, to the Old Rectory. They joined with British trustees in person and later other trustees joined the business meeting online.

During the day the trustees were excited to hear from the Outreach, Learning and Engagement Officer, about her work with schools, families and community groups. This is a growing aspect of EOR's work, giving the opportunity to share the story of the Wesleys and the values of the Methodist Church with school children and young people visiting with their families. A monthly Reminiscence café gives older people with dementia and their carers a safe space to share fellowship over conversations sparked by items in the museum collection.

On the day of the meeting the staff and volunteers were busy preparing the house to re-open to the public from 1 April. The trustees were shown how the house has been set out as it might have looked in 1716, with portraits of the family as well as items of furniture and artefacts from the period. One room houses the Women's Collection, the archive of Methodist women throughout the centuries, and this particular focus is a great strength of EOR and fits so well in the place where Susanna Wesley nurtured her children.

Outdoors the Physic Garden, inspired by John Wesley's Primitive Physic, is poised ready for its new planting and new signage and an existing out-building is due to be transformed later this year into a expertly-fitted collections store. This work will be carried out mindful of the need to make the building as environmentally sustainable as possible. Both of these projects have received external funding.

Once the business of the annual meeting was complete the trustees discussed ideas for the Old Rectory's new Forward plan which will take its work forward beyond 2026. There is a strong staff team at the Old Rectory who are working hard to widen the appeal of the museum to new audiences. The garden is a huge asset and is increasingly used for outdoor events with plans for a memory garden to link with the Reminiscence Café work. There are plans to set up an online shop and improve the social media presence, making the Old Rectory accessible to a worldwide audience. The trustees were keen to explore links with the WMC theme of 'On the Move', in particular linking with pilgrimage.

We are grateful to all the trustees for bringing their expertise and enthusiasm to guide the strategic direction of Epworth Old Rectory, a place of such deep significance to the people called Methodists. What a rich legacy we have and what an opportunity and privilege to share our story with visitors and the communities we serve.

Submitted by Sarah Friswell
Chair of Trustees



Photos from Epworth Old Rectory



World Methodist Council

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Living Stones

Wesley House:
past, present & future

Open Day: 21 June 2025 from 2pm



Wesley House
Cambridge

You are warmly invited to Wesley House's Open Day 2025 in which we will explore the theme of Living Stones. The day will include the last public service in the College chapel, tea and a series of reflections on the life of the College past, present and future as we give thanks for all that the Jesus Lane site has made possible and set out in faith towards the future.

<https://livingstones.eventbrite.co.uk>

Contact us: PLEASE USE THESE EMAIL ADDRESSES

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Find us on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube

Use the QR code to access our website



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Liverpool, Chester & Stoke, North Wales, Manchester & Stockport - Margaret Lindley

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Southampton & Channel Islands - Liz Chick

Trustee meetings: 8th September Zoom; 10th—12th October St Katherines; 5th—6th February 2026 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.