



THE WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

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The TREE — of — LIFE

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President's letter

God's love to us

“For he is our peace; in his flesh he made us both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” (Ephesians 2:14, NRSV)

Our reconciling God does not merely bring peace; He **is** our peace. He has broken down the walls that separated us from each other and from God. As Paul says, “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” Sisters, let us love one another as Christ loves us.

As World Officers, we thank you for your prayers and love that carried us through our travels to the nine areas of our Federation for the Weaving Together Program and Area Seminars. Your prayers sustained us, and we truly appreciate your warm welcome and hospitality. In every area we felt at home and enjoyed our stay. The last area we visited was the South Asia Area, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 18th to 21st June 2025, for their Area Seminar. The theme, “She Will Be Fruitful in Every Season” (Jeremiah 17:7-8), reminds us that those who trust in the Lord are like trees planted by the water, unshaken by heat or drought, continually bearing fruit. Women rooted in Christ bear fruit in every season through joy and hardship, in times of abundance and in trials. Women in this area are being fruitful, empowering women and girls to reach their potential.

I thank God for His faithfulness and praise Him

for giving strength in moments of weakness, faith in times of doubt, and vision for a successful 15th World Assembly. Our Assembly theme is “Arise and Shine, for the Glory of God Is Upon You.” Planning for the 15th World Assembly in Auckland, New Zealand, in 2026 is progressing well. The Local Arrangements Committee in Auckland is actively working together with the Steering Committee, which consists of the five World Officers and the South Pacific Area President and Vice Area President. Online registration will be opening soon.

We thank God for all initiatives that promote peace and reconciliation and for those who risk their lives in this cause. Jesus came into the world offering peace through his way of love. At the same time, we confess that we sometimes create conflict within us and with others. Our own self-centeredness can raise walls of division even close to home. May the Lord bring down these barriers and guide us to live in unity and harmony. Let us continue to pray and bear fruit that will last.

- *Sipiwe Chisvo, World President*



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Editor's word:

Two Women, Two Paths

The Bible presents us with the lives of women whose experiences of rejection reveal both the depths of human pain and the transformative power of choice. Michal, daughter of King Saul, was promised to David in a political alliance, yet her father used her as a pawn in his struggle against David. He demanded the lives of 100 Philistines, hoping David would be killed. Instead, David killed 200 men. Michal desired much to be his wife; she is the only woman in the Bible explicitly said to love a man. After their marriage, Saul's hatred for David grew so strong that he even expected her to help kill her husband. Instead, she chose to save David. As punishment, Saul gave her to another man.

Years passed. When David sought to consolidate power and unify Israel, he demanded Michal back - not out of love, but as a political condition. By then he had taken other wives, and Michal became little more than a trophy. It is not difficult to imagine how bitterness consumed her. Her then-husband truly cherished her, but that did not matter to the new king: she was taken back. Her story ends sadly: when David danced with abandon before the Lord as the Ark of the Covenant was brought back from the Philistines, Michal watched from a window and despised him in her heart. When they met face to face, she mocked him for his behavior, and David's sharp reply ended the matter. Scripture adds only this: she died without children. Perhaps David never sought intimacy with her again. In that culture, childlessness was

considered a curse, and Michal's life stands as a tragic picture of love lost, bitterness taking over, and rejection unresolved.

Hannah, by contrast, lived a few years earlier. She too was childless and endured constant mockery from her co-wife Peninnah. Every family celebration, meant for joy, became for her a reminder of absence. Yet Hannah did not allow bitterness to rule her. She turned to God. Alone in the temple, she poured out her soul in prayer, vowing that if granted a son, she would dedicate him entirely to the Lord. Her transformation was immediate:

she ate, and her face was no longer downcast (1 Samuel 1:18). God answered her prayer with the birth of Samuel, who became a great prophet and judge, guiding Israel with faith and courage.

The contrast is striking. Rejection can lead to resentment and mockery, as with Michal, or to prayer and hope, as with Hannah. Even in our deepest disappointments, we face the same choice. If we, like Hannah, bring our pain to God, He can turn it into purpose, blessing, and a legacy that outlives us.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)



**Hannah did not allow
bitterness to rule her.
She turned to God.**

- Ligia Istrate, Tree of Life Editor



From Sales to Souls: Living Out Faith in the Car Business

To pray without ceasing seems impossible in today's world. My name is Jamie Johnson and I own a preowned vehicle dealership with my husband of 30 years. Being in the car business comes with its stigmas and stereotypes, but we actively pursue a different business model. We decided a long time ago to have a family-friendly business, not understanding how our faith would be tightly woven into it as well.

As our business grew, the more opportunities we had to share our faith. Sharing stories of hardship and overcoming with prayer, or simply solving a problem biblically, became a way of life, not just celebrating in God's house on Sunday. We found that being a true Christ-follower did not mean checking off a box by going to church, but doing life Monday through Friday in a marketplace ministry was more of what God was calling us for. Implementing a short devotion after our sales meetings and offering prayer to those in need has also brought our staff closer together as a work family. We oftentimes have our pastor and his wife come to give a word of encouragement and prayer to them as well. It's incredible to see the atmosphere change when there is prayer. Being transparent with our customers and having upfront pricing, and no extra fees, made them more comfortable doing business with us. We have females on our sales staff as well, which makes the shopping process a lot easier, especially for ladies. We want our customers to walk in, feel at home, bring their kids, and enjoy the car-buying experience. In turn, they tell their friends about the easy process, and so our business has grown

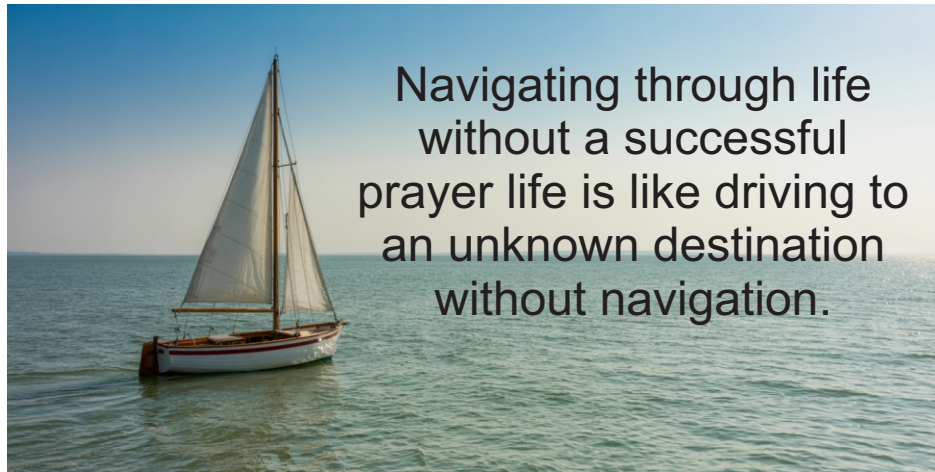
tremendously.

My husband and I feel strongly about our tithing life and how important it is to give back to God's kingdom. It's easy to sit back and reap the rewards of a successful business, but you'd better know who's in control and who to give all the glory to. We have raised all four of our children in and around our business, and try to lead by example, but you have to experience God's gift upon you for yourself when you are a biblical tither. The first check of the month that I write is back to the church and the act of preparing it with prayer and with the right heart makes all the difference in the world. When our kids say to us "I can't afford to tithe", my husband responds by saying: "You can't afford NOT to". Meditating and praying over our marriage, my husband taught me early

in our financial planning that "giving" and "tithing" are two very different things. Navigating through life without a successful prayer life is like driving to an unknown destination without navigation. My

husband and I actively pray with and for one another daily. Being obedient in this area of our life has become one of the biggest acts of worship that has strengthened our marriage tremendously. When we get still, trust, and listen to God's voice, life becomes more abundant and full.

- Jamie Johnson, DriveCrescent



Does Prayer Really 'Work'?

The answer, I guess, depends on what you expect it to do. Do just what you want? Accept whatever

had numerous x-rays, scans, MRI, electrical, blood and breathing tests, infusions, tablets (28+ a day) and had to use a breathing machine. Groups of medical students came to study me. It was all very scary!

But that was without the prayer factor. Dozens of emails, texts, cards, and phone messages came

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the outcome might be? Believe a miracle will actually happen?

In the middle of the year, I had a mysterious series of physical symptoms that made me wonder if I'd had a stroke. Firstly, I had blurred vision followed by double vision. Secondly, my speech became nasally and blurred. Thirdly, my jaw and my tongue wouldn't work properly and I couldn't swallow. My optometrist said my vision was ok. The local hospital declared I had a virus but pronounced my sinuses ok!?! Luckily, my doctor daughter and anesthetist son-in-law suspected they knew what I had and sent me to the Neurology Department of a major hospital. Seventeen days later I came home, having been diagnosed with myasthenia gravis at crisis level. MG is an auto-immune disease with neither known cause nor cure. It is a breakdown between nerves and muscles, which affected my lungs. I

from family, friends, church community and the world-wide family of the World federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women I had got to know during my five years as World President. All over the world people were praying for me! I knew it – and felt it! It wasn't a cure I was hoping for: it was that I knew I was being supported, loved, and upheld. My grandparents' grave has these words on it: "Underneath are the everlasting arms." I certainly felt God's arms holding me up! That, for me, is how prayer 'works'. And to you all, I am very grateful that you were praying for me.

Philippians 4:6b "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God."

- Ann Connan, World-President (2011-2016)

The Bat, the Butterfly, the Blackbird, the Bee and the Beloved

It was Pentecost Sunday and Les and I were leading the morning service together at Hedge End Methodist Church. We had sung the opening hymn and I began praying, that God would bless our time of worship and be present with us through the power of the Holy Spirit. I concluded the prayer with:

“Come, Holy Spirit of truth. Remind us of the gospel of Christ that our sins are forgiven.

Come, Holy Spirit of love. Fill us anew. Refresh us. Renew us. Restore us.

Come Holy Spirit. Come.”

When I looked up after the prayer, I noticed one of our members going around the church asking people to open windows. A bat had entered the church and was flying around looking for a way out. After some time, it settled exhausted on the radiator cover at the rear of the sanctuary. The same member gently cupped it in her hands and released it through the open door. We all remarked on how unusual it was for a bat, a nocturnal mammal, to be active at that time of day. We were grateful it was possible to rescue it and liberate it. I wondered, “What does this mean? What message does this creature bring us today?”

A few days later, my daughter called to me from our dining room, “Mum there is a butterfly in here and it is trying to get out”. She opened the window and it was freed, but not before we had identified it as a peacock

butterfly, the variety that has appeared indoors at significant moments in my life. Once more, I was thankful to God for this sign of divine presence and reassurance. I was thankful it was now enjoying freedom.

At our group for morning prayers on the Wednesday, I shared my delight at the liberation of the bat and the butterfly. One member then told us about a blackbird that comes regularly to her garden for food and had recently come right inside her flat. It was getting distressed when she found it and she was relieved when she managed to coax it back into the garden. I now had three accounts of people releasing one of God's creatures into freedom. Three images of liberation. “Lord, you sometimes speak in whispers” begins the second verse of a hymn (*Singing the Faith* 158) by Christopher Idle. I always feel that when God says something three times it is important to listen! But this time, God underlined the message. A day or two later, we noticed a bumble bee crawling on the carpet under our coffee table. I quickly grabbed a plastic tub with a lid, trapped the bee safely inside and released it out through the back door. When we are grieving the loss of a loved one, a funeral service can enable us to release the beloved, to let them go into God's keeping. I can think of several people I know who are currently feeling trapped, stuck in grief, trauma or feelings of guilt. They long to be liberated from their pain. I pray that God will send someone to release them and bring them hope. I believe that God wants each of us to play our part and bring the whole of creation into a state of liberation. Has God spoken to you recently through the natural world?

- Alison Judd, President Emerita

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News

Latin America News

97th Anniversary – Latin America Area: Weaving lives, raising leadership, strengthening unity

On 18th August 2025, the Latin America Area of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women celebrated with joy and gratitude the 97th anniversary of the Confederation of Methodist Women of Latin America and the Caribbean (CMMALC), the body that coordinates the work of women across the region.

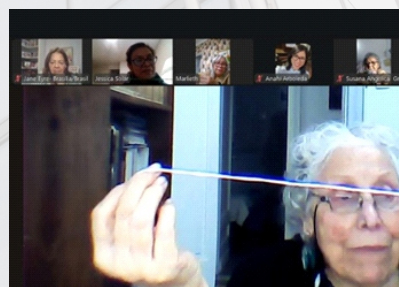
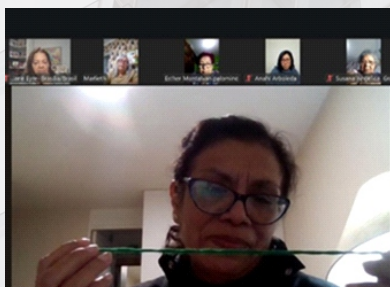
The virtual gathering brought together more than 100 Methodist women from different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, connected in unity and sisterhood. Under the theme “Weaving lives, raising leadership, strengthening unity”, the one-hour program included a thanksgiving service, short messages in Spanish and Portuguese, and the participation of the Area Executive Board.

The reflections reminded us that:

- ✓ *The mission of CMMALC is to keep weaving lives with threads of faith and hope.*
- ✓ *Our leadership is service, not privilege.*
- ✓ *The unity we nurture is a space of solidarity and transformation.*

This anniversary was a moment to honor the journey of women who have sustained the mission throughout the decades, and to renew our commitment to walk together in Christ’s mission. Looking ahead, the Latin America Area prepares with hope for the Centennial in 2028, trusting in God’s grace to continue weaving lives in service of the Kingdom.

A symbolic highlight was the “wool yarn dynamic,” in which women held threads of colored yarn that intertwined on the screen, forming a visible network of unity. Each participant also shared a personal commitment, reminding us that when every life is woven together in Christ, our leadership and mission of hope are strengthened.



“Roots and Wings” Mentorship begins in Latin America



Starting on 4th September 2025, the Latin America Area launched the Therapeutic Mentorship “Roots and Wings”, a Bible-based program designed especially for women to help them manage their emotions in a healthy way.

The mentorship is facilitated by Débora Corsi, a theologian and well-known international speaker, founder of the *Solo Rosa* project in Brazil. The program includes twelve virtual sessions, held once a week, each lasting two hours.

This initiative seeks to strengthen the participants' faith, emotional and spiritual roots, while allowing them to spread their wings to grow, heal, and lead with hope.

- Jessica Solar, Latin America President

REMINDER: October Study Day

We look forward to our October Study Day! As you gather for this special time of learning, fellowship, and reflection, please remember to take up the Study Day offering. All contributions should be sent to the World Treasurer to support the ongoing work of our community.

Thank you for your generosity and for helping make this Study Day a meaningful occasion for all.

An Opportunity to Serve as a World Officer

We are delighted to invite you to prayerfully consider and submit nominations for our next World Federation World Officers. These sisters will be elected and installed at the 15th World Assembly in August, 2026 and will serve until the next Assembly in 2031.

POSITIONS OPEN FOR NOMINATION:

World President	World Vice-President
World Secretary	World Treasurer

Descriptions of each role can be found in the Federation Handbook (Pages 20-23, Bylaws, Article 11, Sections A - D). You can download the Handbook from our website www.wfmucw.org

We encourage you to pray and discern carefully as you think about women who could serve and lead our worldwide movement with wisdom, faith and courage from 2026-2031.

For further information and a nomination form, please contact your Area President.

With gratitude and hope,

Nominations Committee

Alison Judd, President Emerita

Jessica Solar, Latin America Area President

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ROMANIA