

Focus on Europe: Britain and Ireland Area

**Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.
See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.**

(Isaiah 43: 18–19)

The bible text above has been significant for Carolyn Lawrence, Federation Vice-President for the Britain and Ireland Area. At the end of June, Carolyn will be installed as the Vice-President of the Methodist Church in Britain. This is a huge honour and responsibility for her, and we remember her especially in our prayers. Carolyn's specific requests for prayer are at the conclusion of this document.

Wanda Hogan and Rachel Allison, Helen Kim Memorial Scholars, invite us to thank God:

- ~ for the creativity that God has given us to adapt to our new way of life;
 - ~ for the healing going on in the environment/wildlife;
 - ~ for the selfless acts of so many people serving one another.
- Give thanks for those around us who are 'going the extra mile' to bring a smile to the face of a neighbour or delivering groceries for someone who is cocooning.
 - Give thanks for the refuse collectors, men and women, and the postal workers and other 'unsung heroes' who continue to do their jobs quietly as before, fulfilling a vital service to our communities.
 - Give thanks for churches who are adapting to meet the needs of their congregation through online resources, phone-calls and sermons sent through the post. Praise God for the many people who come across these resources that would not normally be a part of a local church.
 - Pray for families where there is abuse or neglect or the need for reconciliation, in particular for children in such homes during a lock-down where teachers and social services may not have as much contact with them, so that these situations may go undetected.
 - Pray for those who have lost their jobs or who are facing a measure of uncertainty about whether or not they will be able to return to their work when this is all over.
 - Pray for airline staff and those who work in the travel and tourism sectors, for their sense of self-worth and purpose.
 - Pray for those who feel lonely at this time, for grandparents missing their grandchildren and young people missing their friends.



- Pray for those who are learning to do their job in a different format – for teachers who are missing their children and are up-skilling and being as creative as possible as they teach online. Pray for office workers working from home who no longer have the daily camaraderie of their co-workers at the desk beside them.
- Pray for those in government, for wisdom and discernment as they make decisions that affect the nations. Pray for their families too, who are also affected by the decisions that are made and the media that surrounds them.
- Pray for School Leavers, College and University students whose exams this year were not the usual format and who are worried about receiving predicted grades.
- Remember too those experiencing homelessness, and those isolated by a lack of technology.

From Carolyn Lawrence:

Last year at Conference when I was elected as Vice President Designate for the Methodist Church in Britain, I really felt that like Esther, I was being called 'For such a time as this.' Little did I know at the time just what 'such a time' it would turn out to be! As I now prepare for a year of office with so many uncertainties ahead I am having to lean on God and trust that he has still got a plan in all this confusion! The verses that God gave me for the year ahead are from Isaiah 43:18–19, and little did I know how prophetic they would turn out to be.

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.
See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.'*

Many people are struggling just now as they travel through the desert wasteland of Covid-19, and more than ever we need to hear God's voice encouraging us that he is with us in all of the confusion, loneliness, disappointment and loss – and that as it says in Romans: 'NOTHING can separate us from the love of God.'

Our Conference won't take place as planned this June, and I am not sure how or when my induction as Vice President of Conference will now take place. Neither will my friends and family now be able to celebrate this momentous occasion with me. I can't help feeling disappointed about this change of events, and left wondering how my year of office will proceed if I am not able to visit Districts and churches as planned, so I would value your prayer for that.

Please also pray that despite the change and the difficulties, God will still use me to bring encouragement, inspiration and support to the churches across this nation, and that he will still work through this year to bring people to know Jesus, to help people to grow in their faith, and to help churches in their mission to others around them. Stand with me in believing that God's purposes will not be thwarted despite the peculiar way things have turned out, that I will be enabled to bring glory to Jesus in all that I say, do and write, and that we will indeed witness God doing a new thing amongst us and see those streams in the wasteland bringing life, strength, healing and wholeness wherever they flow.

Carolyn Lawrence
13 May 2020

*The Lord hears our prayers.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.*

Alison Judd
President, WFM&UCW