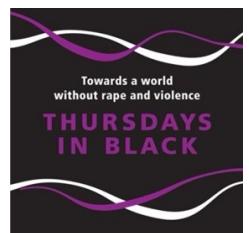
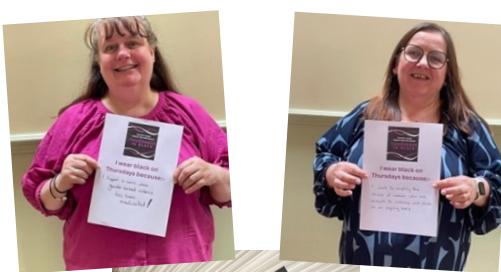


Annual Review

2024—2025





Methodist Women in Britain

For women, for justice, for Christ

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

As Christian women we are open to working with all and welcome women of all denominations and none to participate in our activities. At many events men are also welcome to join us. We work ecumenically but value our identity and place as Methodist women within the wider sisterhood of the World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women, of which MWiB forms the British Unit.

Our aims are three-fold:

- ~ to bring women together, encouraging one another to know Christ and to make him known, as Methodist women and as part of the wider Church in the world;
- ~ to encourage, resource and train women members of the Methodist Church, equipping them to participate more fully in the wider church and in society;
- ~ to connect women in Britain with women overseas, working in partnership with others to raise awareness of and act upon issues of social justice around the world.

We do this by:

- ~ providing fellowship and training events, including the annual residential conference, pilgrimage opportunities, and one-day events;
- ~ producing print and online resources and publications, for worship and spiritual growth, and for 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.

The MWiB Trustees are the main decision-making body of the charity. Outside of Trustee meetings the work of MWiB is taken forward by an Executive team: Two CoChairs, Finance Officer, Communications Officer, Digital Media Coordinator, Resources Officer, World Federation Officer & Helen Kim Memorial Scholar. Twelve Trustees represent between them the 28 Methodist Districts, their work supported by District Ambassadors. The Methodist representative on the England & Wales World Day of Prayer committee is a Trustee member.

The work, activities, events and campaigns undertaken by MWiB are largely based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and everything we do falls under one or more of four main areas: **Creative Spirituality; World Church Focus; Global Social Justice; Resourcing & Enabling.** Our website: www.mwib.org.uk has the latest news about MWiB.

Trustees

at September 2025



Executive Officers

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| CoChair | Leonora Wassell |
| CoChair | Olive Ruvimbo Ruzvidzo |
| Finance | Sheila Hall |
| Communications | Bronwen Braisdell |
| Digital Media | Ruth Dawson |
| Resources | Caroline Fillery-Brown |
| WFMUCW President Britain & Ireland | Barbara Easton |
| HKMS | Madeleine Reed |

Area Trustees

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| East Anglia / Lincolnshire | Rita Rowe |
| Scotland / Shetland | Barbara Harrison |
| Cornwall / Plymouth & Exeter | Vacancy |
| Birmingham / Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury / Mid Wales | Jenny Parnell |
| London / Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire / South East | Annah Zodwa |
| Yorkshire North & East / Yorkshire West / Sheffield | Janice Clark |
| Darlington / Newcastle / Cumbria | Debs Coggrave |
| Nottingham & Derby / Northampton | Menesia Chizaki |
| Bolton & Rochdale / Lancashire | Philippa Hill |
| Liverpool / Chester & Stoke on Trent / North Wales / Manchester & Stockport | Chris Thompson |
| Bristol / South Wales | Gillian Pengelly |
| Southampton / Channel Islands | Lix Chick |
| World Day Of Prayer | Charity Madenyika |

Trustees meet at least twice a year in person or online.

Executive meet online at least 10 times in the year in addition to the Trustee meetings.

A Finance Task Group meets 5 times a year.

Whenever possible MWiB seeks to work in partnership with other organisations whose work is in line with our own aims and purposes. The aims and activities of Methodist Women in Britain are summed up in our mission statement: For women, for justice, for Christ

Methodist Women in Britain : Review of 2024/2025

This year has been one of consolidation and raising the profile of our organisation. To this end publicity material was produced setting out our aims and objectives, advertising our Gifts and Grants and our current campaign. Maggie Woods and Leonora Wassell, our Co-Chairs have been travelling around the country meeting our local groups and giving talks. Leonora Wassell toured Scotland & the Shetland Isles with the Trustee Barbara Harrison.

Leonora Wassell attended the United Nations CSW(69) event in New York to take part in meetings concerning the Status of Women on a global platform. Maggie Woods had a trip to Rwanda with the Global Relations Team to visit projects supported by Methodist Women in Britain and find out more of what the Church is doing in Rwanda.

The World Federation Day event was held at Stamford Methodist Church, in October, entitled “Put your whole self in”, led by Dr Nancy Day, focusing on worshipping with our whole bodies.

Phill Davies hosts our website and Bronwen Braisdell, our Communications Officer keeps the site up to date. Most of our online events are recorded and placed on MWIB YouTube channel. Ruth Dawson oversees our Facebook page. A campaign for the 16 Days of Activism(25 November-10 December) launched our Instagram Account.

The Trustees and Ambassador's meetings were held on zoom in September and May. The October Trustees meeting was held at the Hayes Christian Conference Centre, Swanwick, when the Empowerment Gifts for 2024, and the finance accounts were approved. Trustees discussed the aims and objectives, issues faced by women, how to improve our profile and our branding. The February Trustees meeting was held at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire which included an update on area activities and a discussion on the design of the new publicity material.

The Executive Committee's retreat took place in November at Kent's Hill, Milton Keynes.

The Easter Offering service for 2025, entitled Education for All, Hope for All, was written by Ruth Parrott and the Easter Offering Task Group. Donations given at this service raise money for the Methodist World Mission Fund.

The Annual Swanick Conference was held in April, on the theme of “This Little Light of Mine”, led by Rev Dr Sonia Hicks. There were a variety of workshops, an evening of entertainment, a report from two Helen Kim Memorial Scholars and the Area President of World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, Barbara Easton. The conference concluded with a communion service.

Kathy Galloway was the keynote speaker at the Mary Bosanquet lecture at the Fringe Event at Methodist Connexional Conference in June this year. This is an annual event which highlights Women Theologians.

A stall promoting our work was held at the Cliff Fest in May and at the Methodist Conference in June. New ranges of merchandise have been sourced by our Resources Officer, Caroline Fillery.

We continue to support our partners All We Can, Action for Children, Methodist Home for the Aged, JPIT, the National Council for Women, the Domestic Abuse Steering Group, and the Global Relations Committee. We have continued support for the Dora project in Ukraine, and for Period Poverty when we have encouraged each church to provide Period Products in the church cloakrooms.

Leonora Wassell Co-Chair

Finance—Sheila Hall

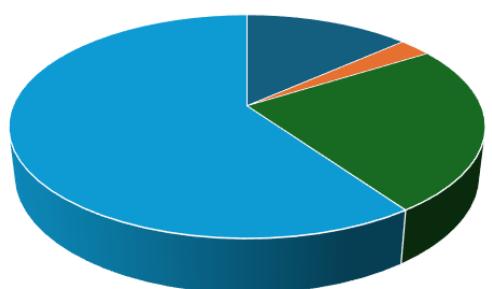
MWiB is a self-financing charity, We receive donations, interest from investments, the occasional bequest and sell resources which enable us to fund the running of our movement. This includes the work of our officers who are all volunteers. Throughout the year we offer gifts and grants that empower women and girls through various projects. We hold an annual conference at Swanwick and a fringe event at the Methodist Conference, The Mary Bosanquet lecture. This year we allocated money to spend on publicity to try and raise our profile, and introduced new resources and merchandise to sell.

Thank you to everyone for their donations.

We have funds held at CFB which at the end of August 2025 the balances were as follows:-
Welfare Fund:- £51131.10 Deposit Fund:- £12259.57

Donations can be made by contacting Sheila at: finance.mwib@gmail.com

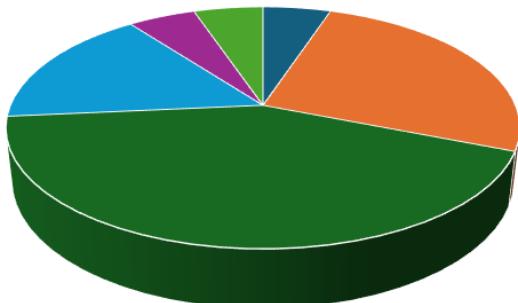
Income to 31st August 2025



■ Donations/Gift Aid ■ Resources ■ Swanwick/Events ■ From CFB

| Income | £ |
|----------------------|----------|
| Donations & Gift Aid | 16827.60 |
| Swanwick & Events | 30403.26 |
| Resources | 3338.98 |
| From CFB | 75000.00 |

Expenses to 31st August 2025



■ Office/Admin ■ Exec/Groups ■ Swanwick/Events
■ Gifts/Grants ■ Resources Publicity ■ Other

| Expenses | £ |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Office / Admin | 5731.33 |
| Executive & Groups | 29160.06 |
| Swanwick & Events | 47489.80 |
| Gifts & Grants | 18225.99 |
| Resources & Publicity | 5712.75 |
| Other | 5857.75 |

Empowerment Gifts 2024 —Sylvia White

In 2024 MWIB Trustees gave an Empowerment Gift to 5 Projects, totalling £15,000 – CONECE £4,346 in Uganda to support disabled women and children, COFCAWE £4,600 in Uganda training to set up their own businesses, Amigos £3,004 in Uganda training in menstrual health to combat period poverty, Bethlehem £2,000 to support women in self-employment and faith training and Kenya £1,050 support for knitting projects.

CONECE - UGANDA

Thanks to your commitment, we have witnessed disabled women and teenage mothers able to pay school fees for their children, support their families financially and being accepted in communities due to awareness creation on their rights and needs.

Our main focus is to counter the prevalent stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the community with an emphasis on women and teenage mothers. The project focuses on increasing awareness of the rights and needs of PWDs, improving their mobility, and empowering them economically through entrepreneurship skills training and the provision of startup capital for self-help projects. The words 'thank you' do not do justice to conveying what has been given and what has been achieved. However, they are the most appropriate as we rejoice in all that you, as our partners and the communities we serve, have gifted to us as we make efforts to fulfil our mandate as an organization.

COFCAWE - UGANDA

On behalf of the entire COFCAWE team and the women of Namisamba village, I extend our heartfelt appreciation for your generous support through the "Improving the Socio-Economic Status of Vulnerable Women in Kamuli District" project. You have been a vital part of this journey and together, we are building stronger communities and brighter futures.

43 women have been equipped with vital entrepreneurial and financial literacy skills and have successfully formed a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). This initiative is already transforming lives—women are now saving regularly, accessing small loans, and building thriving small businesses. Group members have used acquired loans to expand their businesses and are now on track to sustainably support their families.

The Gift has enabled the training of 30 young mothers in sewing, knitting, and crocheting, providing them not only with practical skills but also hope for a brighter, self-reliant future.

AMIGO'S - UGANDA

With the purchase of a knitting machine in Dec 2024 and subsequent training, the workshop has made over 30 sweaters at a significantly reduced price of 750 from 900 in the earlier arrangement of purchasing from competitors. This is both beneficial to the workshop and customers too.

The workshop has continued to train new members especially the youth making a difference in their lives.

The workshop has given them a lifeline to shape their lives. With skills from the workshop because of the valuable empowerment gift input, we are transforming lives by bringing skills and income to homesteads and significantly making a difference.

Thank you so much for your interest and support in this wonderful small project making such a big impact on women and girls in Kenya.

KALITHERIA METHODIST CHURCH - KENYA

We supported a group of women at Kalitheria Methodist Church, who have a tailoring project, with a new venture by helping them to buy knitting machines and training which has enabled the women to start their own businesses and improve their financial situation and supported the tailoring project working from this church.

Empowerment Gifts cont.

METHODIST LIAISON OFFICE, JERUSALEM

Working through the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem we supported a project assisting women with counselling and faith training and supported women to become self-employed with projects such as embroidery and baking skills to improve their economic situation.

Methodist Women in Britain continue to support women and children in many parts of our world through the Empowerment Gift scheme which shows that even a small amount of money can make a difference to people we will never meet. What a testament to the work of Methodist Women in Britain in the various groups and fundraising initiatives across the United Kingdom.

Other gifts & grants given this year—Sheila Hall

During 2024/2025 we have awarded 5 grants totalling £1720.

Cornwall District £320.

This was to support their Annual Retreat. The money would pay to host the speaker for 2 nights and also cover any costs they incurred.

Newcastle District £300.

Newcastle, Darlington and Cumbria Districts were to hold an Area retreat. The money was to help in the organisation and running costs for the weekend.

Drybrook Methodist Church, Forest of Dean. £400

To provide activities for children and families during all the school holidays in a challenging area. The money would be used to buy craft supplies, play equipment and food and drink.

Aspull Methodist Church, Wigan. £500.

Supporting after school provision for young people aged between 11 - 16. They share time together in a safe place and enjoy a light meal. The Scripture Union resource 'Rooted' is used to gradually engage the young people with God, have respect for each other and the planet.

Rev David Palmer £200.

Rev Palmer has previously served in Sri Lanka. The money was to be forwarded to Sri Lanka to enable a day long excursion for young adults and women. This would give them time to share their experiences of the post war era and how they overcame difficulties and hardships.

For more information about grants, gifts and bursaries available visit 'Resourcing & Enabling' on our website: www.mwib.org.uk or contact our Finance Officer: finance.mwib@gmail.com

MWiB Merchandise & Resources

Caroline Fillery-Brown

This year saw the appointment of a new Resources Officer - Caroline Fillery-Brown. Caroline follows in the footsteps of the wonderful Elaine Banks who had held the role for five years. Huge thanks to Elaine for all her hard work in this role.

With two hundred miles between them (Devon and Cheshire), transferring the merchandise from Elaine to Caroline took some doing, but eventually Elaine found she had gained half a shed and half a spare room that she'd forgotten about, and Caroline gave up hope of ever seeing the inside walls of her garage again.

In September, the role of Resources Officer was co-opted onto the Exec Committee to ensure joined up working and communication moving forward. Caroline is relatively new to MWiB and has valued being part of the Executive Committee as she finds her feet in this role.

2024/25 saw the introduction of some new items to the MWiB merchandise range including:

Items to support spirituality and prayer life - prayer packs; embroidery labyrinth packs; Pilgrimage of the Soul packs; Crochet packs for mindful creativity; butterfly colouring cards – all designed and created by our Co-Chair Leonora

MWiB pencils

MWiB small notebook with pen

And of course our existing range of items continued to be popular including stationary items, wooden items, bags, butterfly scarfs, larger notebooks, notelets.

Our resources stall has been a great way to stay visible and engage in conversations at the events we've attended – the Methodist Conference, Telford; Cliff- Fest and the Methodist for World Mission Conference both at Cliff College, Derbyshire; as well as at our own Swanick Conference.

Resources can be purchased by visiting our website www.mwib.org.uk and placing an order with Caroline via resources.mwib@gmail.com or at our annual events, or your Area Trustee may have them for sale at local events.



Development of New MWiB Publications

Leonora Wassell

When I spoke to the Trustees and Ambassadors before I took up my post as CoChair, they expressed concerns regarding declining membership numbers and the overall visibility of MWiB. These concerns prompted constructive discussion and careful consideration of how the organisation presents itself and communicates its work to a wider audience.

In response, trustees and officers worked collaboratively to review existing publicity and to identify areas where clearer and more consistent communication was needed. This process resulted in the development of a coordinated suite of new publications designed to strengthen awareness, improve engagement, and support future growth.

A general information leaflet was produced to provide a clear overview of MWiB and its activities. In addition, a Grants and Gifts leaflet was developed to explain the support available and to encourage informed and purposeful giving. To articulate the organisation's direction and underpinning values, a Vision leaflet was created, setting out MWiB's aims and mission.

These materials are supported by a series of posters promoting HKMS and Gifts and Grants, as well as a new "We are here for you" poster, designed to emphasise accessibility, support, and welcome. These posters are intended for display in relevant settings to increase visibility and reinforce MWiB's supportive role. A bookmark was also produced as a simple, practical resource to maintain awareness of MWiB beyond initial points of contact.

Collectively, these publications represent a strategic response to trustees' concerns. They provide a clearer and more consistent public profile for MWiB and form an important foundation for increasing awareness, engagement, and participation in the coming years.



The Easter Offering Service 2025

Education for All, Hope for All

Ruth Parrott



Having spent most of my working life as a teacher, the theme of Education is close to my heart and seemed to be an obvious theme for my term of office. Therefore, I chose 'Education for All, Hope for All' as the theme for the 2025 Easter Offering Service. The world would be a much better place if every person was given a good education. As lead writer, I was ably assisted by Maggie Woods and Barbara Easton.

Every day, girls face barriers to education, caused by poverty, cultural norms and practices, poor infrastructure, violence and fragility. Ensuring that all children receive a quality education is one of the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDG4), aiming to eradicate poverty. Education transforms the lives of people, families and communities, opening God's promise of fullness of life for all people.

Every year, the money donated at these services across the connexion, raises money for the World Development Fund, providing emergency funding where it is most needed and supporting Mission partners.

World Day of Prayer 2025

WDP 2025 was written by the Women of the Cook Islands 'I made you wonderful' based on Psalm 139:14. This tiny island nation is only two thirds the size of the Isle of Wight. However,



the surrounding sea, the island's exclusive economic zone, is seven times larger than that of New Zealand. The first World Day of Prayer (WDP) service was held on the island of Rarotonga in 1971. In 1990, WDP Cook Islands formed a committee with a total of 13 women from 6 different denominations. Money collected from WDP services totalling £50,000 is given to different charities around the world. **Charity Madenyika** is the

Appointed Officer & Fieldwork Coordinator (SE region) Methodist Church Representative



MWiB Social Media

Ruth Dawson



MWiB has had a private Facebook page for several years. Following the development of a Media Officer role, discussions took place during 2024 regarding which platforms would be appropriate moving forward, keeping the movement up-to-date and relevant to all age groups of women. Following healthy discussion with the Trustee Group, it was decided to launch an open Facebook page alongside the private page, and an Instagram Account. Each would appeal to different age-groups of women.

MWiB Exec took advantage of the 16days of Activism Campaign in 2024 to launch both the open Facebook and Instagram platforms.

Both platforms are growing in popularity. Take a look at @mwibfa on Instagram or Facebook at www.facebook.com/profil.php?id=61569162727684

The Mary Bosanquet Lecture ‘Pay Attention. Be Astonished. Tell About It’

The purpose of the Mary Bosanquet Lecture is to highlight the work of Women Theologians. It is a gift from Methodist Women in Britain, to the Methodist Church.

The 2025 lecture, inspired by Mary Oliver’s poetic injunction—“Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”—wove together theology, ecology, history, and lived experience to create a tapestry both profound and deeply moving. Kathy Galloway began by drawing attention to the quiet miracle of gardens tended by women, their hands nurturing green things—ferns, flowers, stones, and pools—investments in a future beyond their own lifetimes. This motif of hope and selflessness set the tone for a meditation on our interconnectedness with nature, each other, and the divine.

Anecdotes from personal history enriched the narrative. Kathy recounted an invitation by the Methodist Women’s Network in 1999, which inspired poetry about the spirituality of the Beatitudes. This experience resurfaced when invited to speak at the Mary Bosanquet Lecture, offering an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of Mary, a pioneering figure who opened doors for Methodist women. Kathy’s gratitude for encounters with women preachers and garden-makers underscored the theme of astonishment at quiet acts of faith and endurance.

Drawing inspiration from poets and prophets, the lecture explored the role of attention and wonder as spiritual practice. The rhythm of poetry and prayer, felt viscerally through the body, was presented as a way of connecting with the earth and the Creator. Scriptural references—especially the Book of Job—served to remind listeners of human embeddedness in creation, and the necessity of humility before mystery.

Cultural and ecological observations added depth. Kathy noted that a sense of place, formed in childhood, profoundly shapes identity, patriotism, and belonging. The alienation of modern society, mediated by technology and individualism, was contrasted with the wisdom of close communion with nature. The urgency of ecological crisis and the dangers of collective denial were candidly addressed—reminders that consequences, though delayed, cannot be avoided.

The lecture moved seamlessly through themes of trauma, healing, and justice. Stories of suffering—historical and contemporary—were recounted with compassion, from the plight of children in war to the resilience of athletes and artists. Kathy called for a revaluing of bodily experience, intimacy, and kindness, urging listeners to act as agents of hope and transformation.

In closing, the lecture affirmed that loveliness endures, even in the most hostile places. To pay attention, be astonished, and tell about it is both the poet’s and preacher’s calling—a path toward communion, compassion, and renewal.

Sadly, just two months after giving the lecture, we heard that Kathy had passed away. It was a privilege to have spent time with her. We are grateful to have a recording of her lecture as a permanent reminder of such a grace filled minister, theologian, and poet.





World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women

Barbara Easton—Area President Britain & Ireland Unit

The work of the Area President for the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women is both inward and outward facing.

Inward-facing work includes involvement in the wider work of the Methodist Church. One of the most important aspects of this is developing the Easter Offering service. This supports the fund-raising for the wider world church at Easter. The EO is a significant contributor to the World Mission Fund. In 2025, the theme of the worship

materials was girls' education. Methodist Women in Britain also has a seat on the Global Relationships Committee of the Church, which discusses a range of matters arising from our partnerships with Methodist Churches across the world.



The annual highlight of the Area Presidency's work within MWiB is the World Federation Day in October. This year's event was hosted by Methodist Women in the Stamford area and led by the British Kenyan musician, Dr Nancy Day. The day focused on the Christian expression of African people, and we thought particularly about our sisters in that part of the World Federation. The day's title was borrowed from the popular song, 'You Put Your Whole Self In' and looked at the ways in which

African worship more readily uses music and dance in a holistic response to the gospel.

While this style of worship is more unusual to western Methodists, it more closely echoes Paul's instruction to offer our whole bodies as an offering in worship to God.



We danced and sang, we had our prejudices challenged and looked at traditions in new ways. It was a day that equipped believers, strengthened fellowship and fostered spiritual growth amongst those who attended.

The outward-facing work of the Area President is the work with the World Federation. Following the success of the Area Seminar in Porto in the summer of 2024, on-line European meetings were organised at the key festivals of the Christian year. These were particularly inclusive and drew a strong attendance.

Helen Kim Memorial Scholar

Madeleine Reed

And just like that, my third year as Helen Kim Memorial Scholar slips on by. They say that time flies when you're having fun!

2024 feels like a very long time ago now; so much has happened since then. This working year has rushed by like a fairground ride, up and down and all over the place.



HKMS continued

In September 2024, I stayed for a weekend at Hilfield Friary in Dorset, not connected with Methodist Women in Britain, but just exploring the life of the Franciscans. For a long time, a cloistered or community life has appealed to me and I was enthused by my visit to begin researching convents or abbeys that I could go to stay at. At the MWiB Trustee Meeting in October, I told people with absolute confidence that I would be going to live as a nun in the new year. Needless to say, God had different plans.

Later on in October, I had the pleasure of attending the World Federation Day in Stamford. The title was 'You Put Your Whole Self In', and Dr Nancy Day was introducing us to the type of fully embodied worship with which she grew up in Kenya. As someone who deeply loves song and dance, this message was music to my ears (to coin a phrase), and I was probably quite joyfully disruptive in my home church in the months following. In November, the MWiB Exec met in Milton Keynes for our annual retreat. We had a lovely time being led in contemplation and activities. One of the things we did was connect wires and flashing things to make a butterfly. This taught us that, while the shiny stand-out people are important, it's the quiet connectors who make the whole thing run.

In November, MWiB took part in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, publishing prayers and reflections on our social media channels. This was a very important thing for us to do and we were glad to be able to participate in it. It's something which MWiB plan to continue doing every year, with our Butterfly Service.

In December, Methodist and Uniting Church Women from across Europe met on Zoom to worship and share together about Christmas and the different ways in which we celebrate. This was hosted by the team who ran the Joint European Area Seminar in Porto, and it was an absolute delight. It happened to fall on a day when my street had a power cut, so I was banished from the Zoom room, but I heard such positive feedback on it that I was deeply grateful when it was announced that we would have another similar meeting at Easter.

In January, things began to change. My sister, who came to Christ in 2022, was doing an Alpha Course in her town, and she invited me to go along with her. I had done an Alpha Course in 2016 when I first became a Christian, so I was happy to join her as moral support.



In February, the MWiB Trustee Meeting was held at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire. This sparked up my dream of living in a Christian community which I had been nursing since my visit to the Franciscan friary in September. When I came home, all walking on air and feeling very spiritual, I was met with a sharp turn in my journey. In March, I crashed my car. Suddenly, I was reliant on trains and friends. I'm not good at being reliant. This was a hard lesson, but I resolved to learn from it. My brother-in-law drove me to the Alpha Course with my sister each week, and when I was invited to give the Sunday address at Stubbington Methodist Church with Alison Judd, the President Emerita of the World Federation, I took a train there, and my brother-in-law came and drove me home. I loved Stubbington. It was a lovely church and the people were wonderful; one of my favourite parts of the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship is visiting new churches and meeting new people wherever I go.

Since lockdown in 2020, I had been struggling with a time of spiritual wilderness in which I struggled to pray, I felt perpetually distant from God, and I was even more enslaved to the anxiety I'd been living with for as long as I could remember. I wore a headscarf for the Lord, in a desperate attempt to feel close to Him in this dark time. Somehow, I had convinced myself that I was on fire for God, and that this life was all I could hope for. One evening, I was sitting with my friends discussing the last session of the Alpha Course we had attended together, when I felt the Lord prompt me to take my headscarf off. The next morning, when I woke up, the anxiety which I had grown up with, which I had nursed, on which I had based my identity – was gone. It had just... vanished in the night. For the first time in my life, I wasn't afraid.

HKMS continued

When I attended the annual MWiB conference in Swanwick, I was more than happy to tell as many people as I could about the healing and deliverance I had experienced. A friend drove me, and I think she could probably recite the story herself by the time we arrived. The conference was titled 'This Little Light of Mine' and the keynote speaker was the Rev Dr Sonia Hicks, who spoke powerfully about the struggle to let her light shine in a context of racism and misogyny. I ran a workshop that weekend on Neurodiversity in the church and was humbled by how many people showed up for it. I'm glad it happened after I had been released from anxiety; the last workshop I had led (in Porto with Maggie Woods), I had become so overwhelmed that I was nonverbal for most of it, and Maggie had been forced to pick up the slack.



When I got home and Easter was approaching, I became uncomfortably aware that God was calling me out of my church. I had been attending this beautiful little Methodist church for nine years (since I became a Christian), and it frightened me to realise that God wanted me to leave it, to leave my friends and my beloved minister, the building, and possibly the Methodist tradition, in favour of attending the large, loud non-denominational church which had been hosting the Alpha Course I was on. On Palm Sunday, my mother church prayed me out, and on Easter Sunday, I was in a new congregation, watching my sister and her husband being baptised. In this church, I have been able to put Dr Nancy Day's advice from the World Federation Day into action and embody worship with dancing and waving and crying out as much as I wanted. I also got a new car. Praise the Lord for all His blessings!

When May rolled around then, we find the coming together of some threads. Hilfield Friary and Launde Abbey had both been sitting on my heart, and I was becoming quite put out that the Lord hadn't made me a nun yet. Then our Co-Chair Leonora invited me to join her at the annual festival hosted and held at Cliff College in Derbyshire. She needed help on the MWiB stall in the marketplace. I could talk about Cliff Festival forever and a day, I'm sure of it. Leonora told me when we arrived and had set up that she would man (woman?) the stall so that I could attend all the activities. I went to Bible studies, seminars, worship sessions, and sermons. It was a weekend so monumental that, when I learned that Cliff College have a gap year programme where young adults can come and live onsite in the community for a year, I sat down on a bench in the rain and filled out the application form right there and then.

In June, while I was waiting to find out if I would be going to live in Derbyshire or not, I had the great pleasure and honour of being keynote speaker at the MWiB Lincolnshire District Day in Epworth! It was hosted at Wesley Memorial Church, and after my talk (which was called 'The Challenge of Comfort'), we popped on over to Epworth Old Rectory for a guided tour! I was so happy!

July. The working year was nearly over, but there was one thing which hadn't turned out how I hoped. I wanted to live in Christian community. Being a nun was obviously not happening; But I had set my heart on Cliff College now, and the process was taking a long time. When I received the email telling me that I had been turned down from the Cliff Year programme, however, it came with an unexpected footnote: they wanted me to apply for the three-year Theology and Mission BA.

I am writing this report from a cosy room at the college. I submitted my fifth assignment this morning. The MWiB annual review is prominently displayed in the reception. At 26 years old, having not gone to school, having no qualifications, and having never lived away from home, I am now a fulltime BA student, living in Christian community, and with a peace and a joy in my heart that I can't even begin to describe. What a blessing 2025 has been!



Swanwick Conference 2025

'This little light of mine'

Bronwen Braisdell



Our annual conference took place at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick from 4th—6th April 2025. This year we changed our main conference venue to one that was more accessible and were rewarded with a full house of 200 ladies all eager to participate in all that was on offer. Our keynote speaker, Rev Dr Sonia Hicks, a former President of the Methodist Conference, spoke powerfully about her life and the struggles she had been through to overcome misogyny and racism. Sonia was inspirational and conversations continued long after she finished speaking. We also heard from two HKMS who shared stories of how the scholarship programme has impacted their lives. CoChair Maggie Woods was unable to be with us but joined on Zoom and shared highlights from her time in office; CoChair Leonora told us about her trip to the UN. Delegates chose from a wide variety of workshops on Saturday afternoon including Soap making & Mosaics with All We Can, a Bible Study with Barbara Easton, learning Circle dancing or Belleplates, considering Neurodiversity in worship with Madeleine Reed, Gender, Justice & Power struggles with Rev Charity Ngezwu and hearing more from Action for Children & Fund for Human Need.



Saturday evening highlighted the wealth of talent amongst Methodist Women in Britain with an Open Mic Night featuring singing, poetry readings, musical offerings and drama all compered by a special guest, our CoChair Leonora in the guise of Susanna Wesley!

Times of worship and prayer scaffolded the weekend as well as plenty of opportunities for fellowship, catching up with friends old and new or simply taking time to enjoy the beautiful gardens. As usual our conference ended with a service of worship and Holy Communion led by our guest speaker, Rev Dr Sonia Hicks. Both those able to be present in person and those who joined by Zoom went home

determined to let 'their little light shine' and make a difference.



MWiB partnership with Epworth Old Rectory

Bronwen Braisdell

With the increasing number of events taking place at The Old Rectory more people will be visiting the Women's Collection in the MWiB room. Visitors this year included the President & Vice President of Conference, as well as guests from around the world and more local visitors including some from the Lincolnshire District Day led by Madeleine who were treated to tea & cake and a guided tour of The Rectory. Following a grant from the Lottery Heritage Fund work has been taking place to build a new storage facility for the collections held at Epworth including the Methodist Women's Collection and going forward the hope is that with the new facilities more people will be able to use these objects for study as well as creating future exhibitions.



Gifts to Presbyters & Deacons entering circuit were again presented to Queen's students, both part time (L) and full time in July offering them a taste of MWiB. & our hope that they will engage with us in their ministry.



Overseas Visit

My Trip to the United Nations in New York

Leonora Wassell

In March, I travelled to New York to attend the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69). It was an intense, challenging, and deeply moving experience that has stayed with me.

My time at CSW began with worship at Church in the Village, a progressive United Methodist Church that immediately felt welcoming with its café-style hospitality. The service, *Scandalous Love*, reflected on the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with her tears. Her act of courage, tenderness, and radical devotion challenged us to love with the same inclusive, boundary-breaking love. It was a grounding and fitting way to begin a week focused on justice and dignity.

That evening, I attended a reception at the UK Mission, where I met fellow delegates and members of the Women and Equalities Team. Against a backdrop of political uncertainty and often difficult negotiations—particularly around gender and sexuality—it was heartening to witness countries commit, once again, to improving the status of women and girls globally. While the declaration was not perfect, its signing by most countries affirmed that women's rights remain firmly on the global agenda.

Each morning, worship at the UN Church Centre became a source of strength. One service, *A Call to Justice and Joy*, was especially powerful. Worshipping alongside women from many denominations, cultures, and countries reminded me that faith can be both deeply personal and profoundly political. The Church Centre also hosted many NGO CSW events, making it a vital space of learning, solidarity, and prayer.

Attending the UN opening session and Town Hall meeting was a highlight. The Secretary-General reminded us that women's rights are human rights, and that even the smallest civil society organisations are essential to the work of the United Nations. With over 2,000 events taking place, I chose to focus on those addressing violence against women and girls.

The voices that affected me most were those of Afghan women, who spoke about the devastating rollback of women's rights under the Taliban. Despite unimaginable oppression, they refused to describe themselves as victims. Instead, they named themselves as changemakers—working underground to educate, support, and protect women and girls. Their courage challenged me to reflect honestly on how we, in the global community, can better support and amplify their work.

Another event, focused on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), was deeply harrowing. A drumbeat sounded every twelve seconds, marking the moment a girl somewhere in the world is cut. The message was unmistakable: this is not culture or tradition, but child abuse rooted in global misogyny. It happens everywhere, and it is everyone's responsibility to speak out and act.

What I took away from CSW69 was a profound sense of cooperation and solidarity.

Again and again, I encountered courageous women who are saying a firm no to rollbacks of rights and who are committed to holding the line against rising misogyny.



Their resilience, faith, and determination left me both humbled and hopeful—and more committed than ever to playing my part in the work for justice and equality.



Overseas Visit

Rwanda

Maggie Woods

As Co Chair I was delighted to fly out to Rwanda in June 2025 as a guest of Bishop Samuel, Bishop of the United Methodist Church of Rwanda.

I was travelling with Revd Dr Andrew Ashdown who is the Methodist Co-ordinator for all of Africa who went out of his way to support the visit and to open the door to many and varied experiences for me.

I had the opportunity to travel down to the south west border with Congo and experience the Nyanga rain forest which is one of the oldest and most diverse rain forest in Africa and a UNESCO world heritage site.

In line with this I was impressed with the commitment to environmental and conservation issues both in the churches and in daily life. In my time in the capital Kigali I saw no litter on the streets and there was a real commitment to recycling along with a ban on single use plastics.

I travelled to Kibogora to visit the hospital and the university. The hospital had wonderful treatment and training facilities. At the university I spent time with those training for ministry and was encouraged to hear that the number of women on the course was increasing with each intake. Women were seen to be taking the lead in many projects both within the church and the community. The 5 year development plan for Rwanda showed the empowerment of women was high on the agenda in all key areas.

I had been warned before the visit that new Health and Safety laws imposed by the government had led to the closure of thousands of places of worship including churches. Concerns had been expressed about both the physical and spiritual safety attending some places of worship. The new rules meant that those leading worship had to have theological training to degree level and churches must demonstrate they are accountable for their operation. Buildings had to prove they were sound with drinking water and flush toilets available.

I visited a rural area where all the small churches had been closed but a new large church was being built to replace them. Pastors were operating a cell church model to support congregations until the new church was complete.

The church in Kibogora had met the criteria and I preached there on Pentecost Sunday at the first of 5 services that day with people travelling long distances to worship.

Another challenge for the Churches centred around the genocide in Rwanda thirty years ago. Almost everyone I met had a genocide story to tell. I was able to visit three genocide memorials that brought home the truly horrific events of that time. Those convicted of serious atrocities at that time were sentenced to thirty years in prison so would soon be free. The churches are being called to take a key role in facilitation, reconciliation and reintegration at this time.

I was able to visit projects that showed hope and resilience. One in particular was a pineapple plantation called A friend in Need which provided a living for genocide survivors. It was moving to hear their stories not only about the genocide but also about rebuilding their lives.

Rwandan people are no longer referred to by ethnic groupings in place before the genocide. This is reinforced by legislation under the statement “we are all Rwandans now”.

I will be forever grateful for this wonderful opportunity to visit Rwanda.



Overseas Visit

Sri Lanka

Leonora Wassell

As part of my role as Co-Chair, I participated in an overseas visit organised through Global Relations as a working partnership engagement. Prior to the Methodist Conference, I had the opportunity to meet with leaders of several global partner churches. During these conversations, I was particularly struck by the work being undertaken by the Methodist Church Sri Lanka in the areas of reconciliation and their committed ministry with war widows. Deeply impressed by this faithful and courageous work, I expressed my interest in visiting Sri Lanka should the opportunity arise. Later in the week, I was invited to travel to Sri Lanka in August to represent both the Methodist Church and Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB). This invitation was a great honour, and I was grateful for the trust placed in me to serve in this representative role.



Pictured with President Rev Kinglsey Weersinghe & Secretary Rev Leslie Dareeju

While in Sri Lanka, I attended both the Presbyteral Session and the full Methodist Conference. The hospitality extended to me throughout my visit was exceptional; I was warmly welcomed at every stage, and it was a genuine privilege to be present at such significant gatherings in the life of the Church. I had the opportunity to meet with members of the Methodist Women's Executive, as well as many ordinary members, whose faith, openness, and commitment were both humbling and inspiring. At the conclusion of the Conference, I was invited to preach, an experience I regarded as a profound privilege and a sign of the generous spirit of partnership that characterises the Sri Lankan Methodist Church.



Pictured with World Federation Area President, Methodist Women in Sri Lanka Exec members and Anne Baldwin past Mission Partner

During my visit, I travelled to the north of the island, an area that had been particularly affected by the civil war. There, I encountered communities still living with the long-term consequences of conflict, yet demonstrating remarkable resilience and hope. I also visited several historical sites, learning more about the early missionaries whose legacy includes the establishment of hospitals, schools, and churches—stitutions that continue to serve communities today and bear witness to a long tradition of practical Christian service.



Pictured : Members of the Methodist Women of Sri Lanka at Moratuwa, Western Province

Sri Lanka continues to face significant social, economic, and political challenges. However, the faith, perseverance, and outward-looking ministry of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka are truly inspirational. The Church's commitment to reconciliation, justice, and compassionate service offers a powerful testimony to the Gospel and a model of faithful witness from which we have much to learn.

I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to share in this partnership and to experience firsthand the life and work of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka.



Pictured with Mrs Sumitha Weersinghe, the Minister and his wife at the church in Moratuwa

Events Diary: 2025—2026

2025

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 8th September | Trustees & Ambassadors Zoom meeting |
| 21st September | CoChair Commissioning Service for Olive Ruzvidzo |
| 25th September | Webinar—Menopause |
| 10th—12th October | Trustees meeting at Eastwood Hall, Notts |
| 18th October | World Federation Day, Harrogate |
| 23rd October | Webinar—Intimacy |
| 6th—8th November | Executive Retreat, Holyrood House, Thirsk |
| 25th November | Butterfly service at Wesley's Chapel, London |
| 27th November | Webinar—Female Genital Mutilation |
| 25th Nov—10th Dec | 16 Days of Activism |

2026

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|-------------------|---|
| 22nd January | Webinar—Mental Health |
| 5th—6th February | Trustees meeting at Swanwick |
| 26th February | Webinar—Domestic Abuse |
| 6th March | World Day of Prayer |
| 26th March | Webinar—Social Justice |
| 10th—12th April | MWiB conference at Swanwick. Keynote: Mrs Carolyn Godfrey |
| 11th May | Trustees & Ambassadors Zoom meeting |
| 28th May | Webinar—Immigration |
| 25th June | Webinar—Gender & Sexuality |
| 27th June | Mary Bosanquet Lecture Fringe event at Methodist Conference, Telford |
| 23rd July | Webinar—Faith & Politics |
| 25th-30th August | World Federation World Assembly, Auckland NZ |
| 14th September | Trustees & Ambassadors Zoom meeting |
| 9th-11th October | Trustees meeting |
| 17th October | World Federation Day |
| 25th November | Butterfly Service |
| 25th Nov-10th Dec | 16 Days of Activism |





Hybrid gathering at our annual Swanwick Conference



www.mwib.org.uk



Methodist Women in Britain



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for all

And find us on Instagram



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